Synergizing Organic and IPM: Market drivers and barriers to IPM adoption

S. Futrell, March 2015
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Barriers to IPM in Marketplace

• Definition of IPM covers a wide range of practices and levels of adoption
• IPM practices can vary by season, crop, region and farm, even blocks within farm
• IPM is not generally based on black/white, all or none categories of practices and substances.
• So broadly practiced it has not coalesced a strong community of advocates especially among consumers.
Opportunities for IPM in Marketplace--depend on how we respond to Barriers

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- IPM practices can vary by season, crop, region and farm, even blocks within farm
- IPM is not generally based on black/white, all-or-none categories of practices and substances.
- IPM so broadly practiced it has not coalesced a strong community of advocates especially among consumers.
Early Efforts to Market IPM: 1980s-90s
Wegman’s IPM Label collaboration with Cornell
Marketing programs based on IPM

• **Responsible Choice** is a program of the Stemilt fruit company, modeled after Integrated Production standards developed in Europe. The program addresses pest management, irrigation, fertilization and post-harvest practices and chemical use.

• **Protected Harvest** is a collaboration between the University of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association and World Wildlife Fund.
Marketing with IPM as a basis for standards or certification
Farming stories that include IPM
Current Initiatives ongoing

- Potato Sustainability Initiative—McCain, ConAgra, Simplot, McDonald’s, Sysco, IPM Institute and others.
- Equitable Food Initiative—Oxfam and collaborative of farm and farmworker organizations, Costco, and others, using IPMPRiMe.

- See the poster session here at IPM Symposium for more information on these and other initiatives.
Sustainability ratings & certifications with IPM components

Whole Foods Rating: Responsibly Grown - proprietary

Walmart Sustainability initiative – based on Stewardship Index

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF RESPONSIBLY GROWN?

☑ Reward farmers who work hard to protect human health and the environment.
☑ Prohibit the most harmful chemicals; measure and reduce the rest.
☑ Provide shoppers with an at-a-glance Good, Better or Best rating for sustainable farming practices.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

This system was developed to address some of the serious challenges facing agriculture today.

- An estimated 5.2 billion pounds of pesticides are used worldwide each year.
- Agriculture uses 70% of the world’s accessible fresh water.
Section 1 – Eco is everywhere
[IFOAM 3.0 DRAFT—used with permission]
2015: Label/shopping environment

Lots of stand-ins for ‘good’
  Natural – Farmstand– Artisan—
Organic isn’t the only stand-in for good/safe anymore.
  Mainstream organic: is still a stand-in for “good, no pesticides, safe” ie S&S
Just Organic isn’t enough anymore
  • Cutting edge organic is Organic +++ : organic as the starting point, plus lots of other attributes—fair, local, farm, grassfed, etc etc
Local +++ is continuing to be a strong stand-in for a whole range of values
  Farm and producer stories abound on packaging
Getting more sophisticated --
Multiple claims: free of, made with respect for the environment, many ‘soft’ claims
Traceability as a market position
Lots of ‘splainin going on
Thank you!

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