



A Professional Society Representing the Nation's Crop Production, Research Consultants and Quality Assurance Professionals

IR-4 PROJECT

NAICC POSITION ON IR-4

The National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC) supports IR-4 and their activities and service to the public under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). The Alliance supports the request of the Friends of IR-4 to increase IR-4 Project funding from \$11.9 million to \$25 million. Congress has authorized funding up to \$25 million, however IR-4 Project funding has been flat at approximately \$12 million for more than a decade. Because of the long-term funding shortfall, the number of projects and specialty crop product registrations will continue to decline if funding is not increased. IR-4 is considered one of the most efficient uses of taxpayer money as far as return on investment to the public regarding support of a safe and plentiful supply of health promoting specialty crops.

The NAICC strongly supports that Congress increase the budget for the IR-4 Project to \$25 million because it provides an invaluable and indispensable service for the agriculture industry and the public.

BACKGROUND

In 1947 the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) was enacted by Congress to employ a strategy that mitigated issues related to safety of agricultural and homeowner pesticides. In 1972 FIFRA amendments paved the way that began the regulatory processes that are currently employed to ensure that pesticides are safe to the public.

The IR-4 Project is a USDA-funded national research program that was founded in 1963 and whose goal is to develop data required by US EPA under FIFRA to support the registrations of chemical and biological/organic crop protection products on fruits, vegetables, nuts, herbs, ornamentals and other high value, specialty crops. IR-4's mission also includes crop protection products for organic specialty crop agriculture.

There is a drastic need for new pest management products to fight the ever-increasing number of insect, disease, weed and nematode pests that attack specialty crops. There is also an urgent need to provide alternatives to fit into IPM programs (including biopesticide and organic products) and to replace crop protection products that are losing their registrations or have pests becoming resistant to them. IR-4 has the ability to facilitate approval of the newest generation of safe and effective pest management solutions to protect specialty crops from

destructive pests and assist growers of these important crops with the tools they need that would not normally be supported by the manufacturer for economic reasons.

ISSUE

Opportunities for exports of US produced specialty crops are expected to double by 2025. Product enhancement activities by IR-4 help remove pesticides as trade barriers. Domestically, there is a continuing message to the public to consume more fruits and vegetables to maintain health. One barrier to that goal is consolidation within the crop protection sector (e.g., Dow/DuPont-Corteva, Bayer/Monsanto-Bayer, etc.) which has reduced company investment in specialty crops. The crop protection companies (small and large) simply are not motivated to support registration of products to enhance and protect minor/specialty crops because there is not a significant enough return on the investment required for registration like there is for major/high acreage crops like corn and soybean.

- IR-4 benefits society in many ways including the following:
 - The farm community-specialty crop growers have access to needed crop protection products that are centerpiece of Integrated Pest Management programs.
 - The economy- IR-4 contributes \$9.4 Billion to the annual US GDP and supports >95,000 jobs (Miller 1).
 - Enhance public access to fruits, vegetables, nuts that contribute to a healthy diet and plants that enrich the environment

IR-4 is a critical component of our nation's food security research infrastructure. IR-4 helps the agriculture sector meet the demands for high-quality food now and into the future. IR-4 remains a sound public investment that produces significant, tangible results.

However, the importance of the IR-4 has historically been overlooked by our lawmakers and funding for the IR-4 has remained flat for the past 10 years in the face of continued rising expense. Due to increasing costs, the IR-4 Project has reduced new research efforts by almost 14% over the past three years. At the same time, their budget is effectively being reduced by over 10% due to USDA's recent change in the IR-4 funding process allowing them to pay indirect costs to host institutions starting in 2022. IR-4 has been forced to close two laboratories that provide analytical support for the studies which are required for product registrations. The result of all this funding restriction is that IR-4 must reduce the number of registrations they can pursue each year. Maintaining the viability and robustness of the IR-4 is crucial to national security and the health of our citizens. IR-4 will find it increasingly difficult to continue their mission amidst ever increasing expenses. The requested increase in funding would allow IR-4 to continue to provide their valuable service to the US population and to the world through commodity exports.

Miller, Steven R. "Report Shows The IR-4 Project is an Excellent Return on Investment." The IR-4 Newsletter, vol. 49, no. 1, 2018, p.1,

https://www.ir4project.org/wp-content/uploads/Newsletters/vol48no4_2nomarks.pdf

[IR-4 Project Funding Request](#)