



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

## IR-4 Project

### **NAICC POSITION ON IR-4 PROJECT**

The National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC) supports IR-4 Project 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 to allow them to support as many projects and product registrations as possible to adequately support the growers of minor/specialty crops. **NAICC strongly supports that Congress increase in FY 2024 appropriations for the IR-4 Project<sup>1</sup> from \$15 million to \$25 million and an increase in authorization in the 2023 Farm Bill to \$50 million.**

IR-4 funding has been nearly flat for more than a decade. During this same period, the demand for IR-4 Project's services to support the registrations of chemical and biological crop protection products in conventional and organic production on fruits, vegetables, nuts, herbs, ornamentals, and other high value, specialty crops continues to increase. IR-4 is finding it increasingly difficult to continue their mission amidst ever increasing expenses and continue to provide their valuable service to the US population and to the world through commodity exports.

### **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 we currently employ to ensure that pesticides are safe to the public.

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 replace crop protection products that have lost or are losing their registrations and/or manage the increased problem of pest resistance to pesticides. 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

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<sup>1</sup> Minor Crop Pest Management (IR4) line in USDA-National Institute of Food and Agriculture-Research and Education section

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. Enhanced activities by IR-4 Project to help remove pesticides as trade barriers. Domestically, there is a continuing message to the public that is gaining traction daily to consume more fruits and vegetables to maintain health, which includes the minor/specialty crops. One barrier to that goal is consolidation within the crop protection sector (e.g., Dow/DuPont-Corteva, Bayer/Monsanto-Bayer, etc.) which have 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. Only about one in 10,000 discoveries makes it from the lab to the farmer's field in a process that can take up to twelve years. IR-4 continues to develop the data needed to protect the minor/specialty crops.

The IR-4 Project is funded by the Federal Government with taxpayer money. We believe that these resources are probably one of the best uses of taxpayer funds since a good portion of the funding is returned directly to the public in the form of wholesome food to support their health and well-being as well as their quality of life.

- IR-4 benefits society in many ways including the following:
  - The farm community-specialty crop growers have access to needed pest management technology that is the centerpiece of Integrated Pest management Programs.
  - The economy- Michigan State University reports that the IR-4 Project contributes \$8.9 Billion to the annual US GDP and supports 123,260 jobs.
  - Enhance public access to fruits, vegetables, nuts that contribute to a healthy diet and plants that enrich the environment.

The IR-4 Project 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 Project has historically been overlooked by our lawmakers and funding for the IR-4 has remained nearly flat for the past 12 years in the face of continued rising expense. The result of all this funding restriction is that IR-4 must reduce the number of registrations they can pursue each year to remain viable and the process becomes more and more selective in the face of existing crop protection products getting continually reduced through government cancellation or the development of resistance to existing plant pest control products. Maintaining the viability and robustness of the IR-4 Project is crucial to national security and the health of our citizens.

For further information, please contact Todd Scholz, VP Research & Member Services, USA Pulses and Chair of the IR-4 Commodity Liaison committee at [toddscholz@usapulses.org](mailto:toddscholz@usapulses.org).