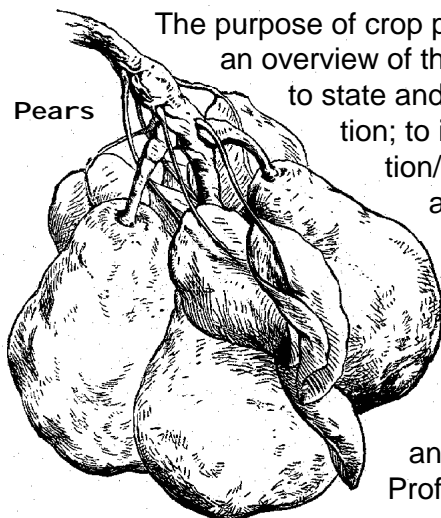


Crop Profiles: What they are, why they are important

In 1998, the US Department of Agriculture's Office of Pest Management Policy (USDA/OPMP) requested "Commodity and Pest Management Profiles" for the important crops in each state. This request came in response to the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) mandate that USDA and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) obtain pesticide use data for the nation's major and minor crops in the course of reassessing tolerances.

What Is a Crop Profile?

A Commodity and Pest Management Profile, also known as a "crop profile," is a condensed production story of an individual agricultural commodity for a given state or region. Profiles include basic production statistics (national ranking, percent of U.S. production, total acres, etc.); typical cultural practices (soil types, irrigation, timing, planting and harvesting techniques, etc.); insect/mite, weed, and disease problems (damage from various pests, percent of acres infested, yield loss, etc.); typical control measures (chemicals used, type of application, timing, etc.); and more. They also address whether Integrated Pest Management (IPM) or resistance management programs are in place or under consideration, and discuss alternative strategies including cultural and biological controls.



Pears

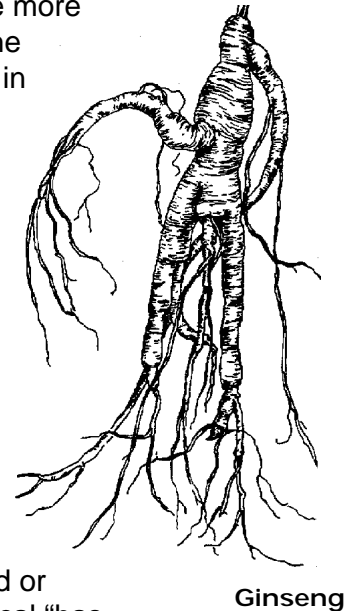
The purpose of crop profiles is to provide an overview of the crops' importance to state and/or national production; to identify crop production/protection issues; and to suggest pest management alternatives, research needs, and opportunities for risk mitigation during the tolerance review process. Profiles provide a "big

picture" view of how a particular chemical is integrated within a comprehensive crop protection program. Consequences of removal of that chemical, or of changes to its use pattern (referred to as "risk mitigation"), can be more readily determined when the chemical's use is explored in context.

How Will Crop Profiles Be Used?

Besides assisting the USDA and EPA in reassessing tolerances, crop profiles will assist university and Interregional Research Project No. 4 (IR-4) personnel in quickly identifying research needs once a tolerance is revoked or lowered. What if the chemical "has to go," but is the only control for a production-crippling pest? That's when researchers go to work on a substitute strategy, armed with the crop profiles relating to the crop(s) and chemical(s) in question. USDA has pledged to work with the affected industry, crop production experts, and EPA in developing transition strategies so that catastrophic losses don't occur and the affected industry remains viable (see related article "FQPA: A USDA Perspective," in *AENews* No. 152, December 1998).

While the immediate request for crop profiles comes from USDA/OPMP for the purpose of assisting in tolerance reassessment, profiles of crops not subject to tolerances will prove useful as well. For one thing, crops not subject to tolerances (e.g., Christmas trees; seed, nursery, and landscape crops) may utilize some of the same pest-control agents as crops subject to tolerances, so the non-tolerance



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crop's profile will help provide a more complete context for studying the pesticide's use.

Besides assisting in the immediate process of tolerance reassessment, crop profiles will benefit agriculture in many ways over the long term.

The profiles can play a role in shaping market forces. What if, for example, an important but small-acreage crop's only viable pesticide was also used on a large-acreage crop, and the latter's use was discontinued? The manufacturer of the pesticide might find that production of the agent was no longer profitable, and could discontinue it, resulting in devastation for the small-acreage crop. With crop profiles in place for all important commodities, such disasters could be forestalled.

Which Crops Should Be Profiled?



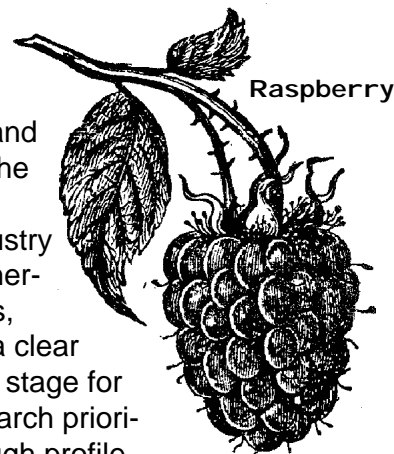
Currants

Every state has been instructed to compile profiles for each of its important commodities. "Important," however, is undefined. Washington, a major producer of minor crops, is preparing profiles on a number of crops we find extremely important for a variety of reasons, including their role in worldwide production and their potential effect on other crops.

(For example, beet seed production uses only 1000 acres of Washington's agricultural lands, but these thousand acres represent a whopping 95% of U.S. beet seed production, and 50% of the world's beet seed.) Minor crops are also valuable in their contribution to ecosystem diversity.

The information in crop profiles has already proven valuable in Washington State as a reference for,

among others, state legislators, Washington State Department of Agriculture personnel, and university specialists. The process of compiling a profile serves each industry by identifying and enumerating pest control needs, putting those needs in a clear context, and setting the stage for determining future research priorities. In reading a thorough profile, someone unfamiliar with crop specifics can understand the nuances of that particular crop. (For example, the typical machine-harvest method for raspberries essentially "shakes" the berry—and whatever insect passengers the berry is hosting—onto a receiving surface. Industry-wide hand-harvest or hand-sorting is cost-prohibitive, and the geometry of a raspberry can hide a multitude of sins, so a pest-free berry is essential.)



Where Can I See Completed Profiles?

Scores of crop profiles are currently underway nationwide. As profiles are completed, they become available on the National Agricultural Pesticide Impact Assessment Program (NAPIAP) web site, <http://ipmwww.ncsu.edu/opmppiap/subcrp.htm>. Lists of profiles in progress can also be found at that site. The information for completed Washington State profiles can also be found at <http://www.tricity.wsu.edu/~cdaniels/wapiap.html>.

For questions relating to Washington State crop profiles or Pest Management Strategic Plans (PMSPs), you may contact Dr. Catherine Daniels, Washington State University Pesticide Coordinator and Washington State Pesticide Impact Assessment Program (PIAP) liaison, cdaniels@tricity.wsu.edu or (509) 372-7495.