

Applicator Certification: Soil Fumigation Manual & Exam Item Bank

NASDA Research Foundation

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In the fall of 2010 the NASDA Research Foundation (NASDARF) initiated an effort to develop an applicator certification training manual and corresponding exam item bank that could be adopted by states to revise or implement a Soil Fumigation Category for certified applicators.

This effort was undertaken since all soil fumigants are now Restricted Use Pesticides and certification could be used in lieu of registrant-training requirements for all applicators who supervise fumigations.

Steering Committee

NASDARF convened a steering committee with members from state lead agencies (SLAs), university Extension Services, US EPA, and soil fumigant manufacturers. The committee provided guidance on the goals of the training manual, scope of the framework document, and project timeline.

Framework Document

NASDARF, the University of Wisconsin, and Cornell University developed a framework document to serve as a blueprint for a manual and exam item bank. The document outlines the knowledge and skill requirements and learning objectives for an entry-level soil fumigant applicator, and reflects the new soil fumigant labeling requirements.

Training Manual

NASDARF contracted with a two-author team to draft text for the manual. With permission, the team used text and graphics from materials developed by the universities of California-Davis, Florida, Wisconsin, Virginia Tech, and Washington State.

The draft underwent two technical reviews by university specialists, SLAs, registrants, an applicator, and EPA. Two university publication specialists with experience with pesticide

Manual Authors

Lisa Blecker and Jane Thomas

Exam Author

Roger Flashinski

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education publications completed grammatical reviews. Images were gathered from around the country to augment the manual.

On completion in February 2012, NASDARF selected a vendor for printing. In March 2012, NASDARF will post a PDF version of the manual on their web site (www.nasda.org, under Programs & Services) for review by the States. NASDARF intends to pay for the initial printing needs for states in 2012 (up to a 3-year supply). A mechanism to pre-order an initial supply will be managed by NASDARF in April 2012. NASDARF anticipates states will receive their shipments in June 2012.

Exam Item Bank

An exam item bank was completed in November 2011. The item bank was developed by a service provider with use of the framework document and draft training manual.

Before completion, the item bank was reviewed by a committee with members from EPA, SLA, Extension, and registrants. The committee endorsed the final exam and noted that states have ample questions from which to formulate their exam as well as the flexibility to edit questions and prepare additional questions.

Any state choosing to use the item bank will have to contact EPA for a password-controlled document and security agreement.