



# Pesticide Safety Education in the Treasure Valley is needed annually

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## AT A GLANCE

**University of Idaho Extension Pesticide Safety Education is needed on an annual basis to address the demands of industry.**

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### The Situation

In Idaho, users of restricted use pesticides (RUP) are required by law to obtain a private or professional pesticide applicators license before they can apply these materials. A RUP is a pesticide that is available for purchase and use only by certified pesticide applicators or persons under their direct supervision. The RUP designation is assigned to a pesticide product because of its relatively high degree of potential human and/or environmental hazard if used incorrectly. Pesticide applicator licenses are administered by the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA).

To obtain a private or professional applicator license, applicants must pass ISDA proctored examinations to show they have adequate knowledge and prove a core competency level for the type of pesticide application that he or she intends to perform. University of Idaho Extension and ISDA work collaboratively to develop and implement educational programs to prepare applicants for taking these examinations. Once a license is obtained, we are assured the person applying restricted use pesticides is knowledgeable and qualified to apply these materials in a safe manner.

### Our Response

In past years pesticide safety education was held every other year in the Treasure Valley. However, when the economy worsened a few years ago the demand for this educational program increased dramatically. Successful applicants who obtained a professional

license were able to get a job in their community and earn more money. In response we began to conduct this program every year. The class is very popular, and since seating at the Caldwell Extension Complex is limited, we sometimes have to turn people away.

Every year in March, University of Idaho Extension and ISDA personnel host a three-day (excluding examination day) pre-license pesticide safety education class in Caldwell. Participants include farmers and farmworkers, agricultural and landscape industry employees and government employees from a variety of agencies.

Topics in the curriculum for the training include:

Day 1 for Private and Professional Applicators Pesticide Formulations

- Pesticide Labels and Safety
- Pesticide Fate in the Environment
- Introduction to Controlling Pests
- Pesticide Recordkeeping
- Review and Practice Quiz

Day 2 for Professional Applicators

- Controlling Agricultural and Ornamental Weeds
- Herbicide Families
- Weed Identification
- Insect Pests
- Plant Diseases and their Control
- Category Specific Topics to be Determined at Each Training Location
- Review and Practice Quiz

### Day 3 for Private and Professional Applicators

- Review Take Home Tests
- Pesticide Storage and Spills
- Rodent Pests
- Chemigation
- Equipment Calibration
- Calibration Math and Review
- Final Review for Exams

Day 4 Exams are given for both Private and Professional Applicators.

The curriculum is delivered the first three days of the program. The fourth day consists of a review period followed by the examinations. The greatest benefit for those who attend this class is that they are more successful at passing the examinations versus those who do not attend a pre-license pesticide safety education educational program. A survey conducted at the University of Missouri in 2002 indicated that the overall success rate of examination takers was higher for those attending a class, especially when the class attendees also studied outside of class time.

### **Program Outcomes**

The “hands-on” and in person nature of the class has increased the level of knowledge and retention of the pesticide safety information. The class participant success is indicated by the pass rates and overall exam scores for a variety of licensing categories.

The March 2015 and 2016 pesticide safety education classes were attended by 47 people each year, from all over southwest Idaho. Educational instruction and examinations were given in the following nine categories: Law and Safety, Agricultural Herbicide, Agricultural Insecticide, Ornamental Herbicide, Right of Way, Aquatic Pest, Chemigation, Restricted Use and Statewide Consultant. Fifty-five examinations were given with an overall pass rate of 78 percent. The overall pass rates before the classroom instruction programs were started averaged 55 percent. University of Idaho Extension and ISDA Pesticide Safety classes are increasing the number of individuals passing the state pesticide exams and subsequently obtaining a pesticide applicator license. The license is valuable to this group of individuals. It gives them an advantage for gaining employment in the pest management industry, and often helps them to negotiate higher salaries.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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