



HIGHLIGHTER

PROJECT TITLE
IMPLEMENTATION OF
PESTICIDE APPLICATOR
CERTIFICATION SCHOOLS AND
CONTINUING EDUCATION
WORKSHOPS

FINAL REPORT ~
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ODOT SP&R 2156 TASK 1

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FINAL REPORT:**
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IMPLEMENTATION OF PESTICIDE APPLICATOR CERTIFICATION SCHOOLS AND CONTINUING EDUCATION WORKSHOPS for FFY 2016

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OVERVIEW The Oklahoma Department of Transportation (ODOT) continues its use of an integrated roadside vegetation management (IRVM) program to provide cost-effective management for vegetation on roadside right-of-way. This effort involves proper vegetation selection, installation and post-installation management. After vegetation installment, management involves selective mowing and weed control and occasional re-establishment.

Because there is some turnover in ODOT roadside vegetation management field staff each year, an on-going pesticide applicator training and certification effort is necessary. This is due to changes in state and federal rules/regulations, new herbicide product development, new pesticide application equipment, product patent expiration and subsequent generic product offerings, changes in industry product marketing agreements, changes in products being awarded through the state competitive bid contract, and lastly, evolving weed problems. The dynamic nature of the vegetation management profession necessitates an on-going education effort to train ODOT herbicide applicators.

RESULTS This project developed the ODOT herbicide applicator training program, which consists of initial pesticide applicator training schools, independent certification testing, sprayer calibration workshops and on-going yearly continuing education sessions. Four Pesticide Applicator Certification Schools were presented to ODOT staff in FFY 2016. These schools provide timely initial training of ODOT personnel who want to become Oklahoma Certified Pesticide Applicators. These Schools were conducted on October 13-15 at the High Plains Technology Center (Woodward); November 3-5 at ODOT Division 7 Headquarters (Duncan), November 17-19 at the Kiamichi Technology Center (McAlester) and December 8-10 at ODOT Division 8 Headquarters (Tulsa). The number of participating ODOT staff at the certification school locations were 20, 26, 12, and 42, respectively, for a total of 100 participants. The 100 ODOT staff trained in the initial certification schools in FFY2016 compares with a total of 128 ODOT participants in FFY2013, 103 in FFY2014 and 79 in FFY2015. Topics included were: integrated pest management (IPM), IPM terminology, state and federal rules and regulations, pest identification, mechanical and cultural pest management strategies, understanding pesticide labels and material safety data sheets (MSDS), personal protective equipment (PPE), pesticide selection, pesticide application techniques, spray system technologies, environmental protection, application recordkeeping, proper pesticide storage and disposal and how to obtain pesticide applicator continuing education. These topics were drawn from the three key training manuals that Division and/or Maintenance Engineers had acquired for their employees in advance of the training. The training

included and was consistent with the information in the three training manuals. OSU personnel also handed out copies of supplemental information that would be useful to ODOT personnel as they assumed their roll in ODOT vegetation management activities following initial certification as Oklahoma Pesticide Applicators.

The pesticide applicator testing was administered by representatives of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (ODAFF). Passing the core exam and category-specific exam is required to become a Certified Pesticide Applicator in Oklahoma. ODOT personnel first took the core exam. Personnel that passed the core exam were allowed to take the category-specific exam. The exam of most interest to ODOT was the Category 6 (Right-of-Way) exam, although some ODOT personnel also took the Category 5 (Aquatic Weed Control) exam. Of the 100 participants in the four certification schools, 99 people tested for certification and 68 of those that tested passed both the core and Category 6 (Right-of-Way) exam to become Oklahoma Certified Pesticide Applicators in Category 6. Thus, the FFY2016 ODOT Certified Applicator School participants had an overall 69% pass rate in taking the certification exams compared with an overall pass rate of 86% for participants in FFY2011, 93% in FFY2012, 79% in FFY2013, 79% in FFY2014 and 68% in FFY2015.

CEU Workshop Dates	Day of Week	ODOT Division	Location	Attendance by Division
February 16 - 17	Tuesday - Wednesday	Div. 2	Antlers HQ	Div. 2 - 77
February 23 - 24	Tuesday - Wednesday	Div. 3	Ada HQ	Div. 3 - 91
March 1 and 3	Tuesday and Thursday	Div. 7	Duncan HQ	Div. 7 - 90
March 15 - 16	Tuesday - Wednesday	Div. 5	Clinton HQ	Div. 5 - 103
March 17	Thursday	Div. 6	Woodward High Plains Technology Center	Div. 6 - 36
March 22 - 23	Tuesday - Wednesday	Div. 8	Tulsa HQ	Div. 8 - 86
March 29 - 30	Tuesday - Wednesday	Div. 1	Muskogee HQ	Div. 1 - 90
April 5 - 6	Tuesday - Wednesday	Div. 4	Perry HQ	Div. 4 - 83
			Total ¹	656

Fifteen Pesticide Applicator Continuing Education (CEU) Workshops were conducted in FFY2016. The locations, dates and attendance of each workshop are shown in the table. The workshops were approved by ODAFF and awarded up to five pesticide applicator CEUs in Category 6 (Right-of-way) and up to four CEU in Category 5 (Aquatic). A total of 656 Certified Pesticide Applicators were trained in the FFY2016 CEU workshops as compared to a total of 605 individuals in FFY2011, 610 in FFY2012, 640 in FFY2013, 637 in FFY2014 and 642 in FFY2015. Instructors for the CEU Workshops were Extension Associate, Mr. Clayton Hurst, B.S., and Extension Assistant, Mrs. Lydia Calhoun, B.S. The ODOT participants also gained knowledge on various Integrated Pest

Management (IPM) and Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) products, topics and techniques. This increase or maintained operational knowledge of the participants should insure continued effective vegetation management skills. The agenda included the following topics:

- Pesticide Spill Cleanup and Proper Pesticide Waste and Container Disposal,
- Strategies to Minimize Spray Drift,
- Pollinator Health Consideration for Applicators,
- Late Winter Early Spring ODOT Herbicide Application Programs and
- Summer ODOT Herbicide Application Programs.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS The Pesticide Applicator Certification Schools train participants to understand the basics of integrated pest management (IPM) as well as to become Certified Applicators by passing the designated tests. After gaining a fundamental understanding of IPM and becoming a Certified Applicator, the individual is usually ready to be given specific assignments by in-house ODOT mentors. Trainees are prepared to be successful at managing weeds on Oklahoma roadsides. The initial Pesticide Applicator Certification prepares the new Certified Applicators for participation in annual pesticide applicator continuing education (CEU Workshops) so that they can comply with ODOT policy as well as maintain their certification in Oklahoma.