

Spanish Pesticide Safety Training Program draws new audience to UI Extension

AT A GLANCE

A Pesticide Safety Training Program by UI Extension across southern Idaho targeted agricultural workers who want important educational pesticide safety programming in their first language.

The Situation

Spanish-speaking agricultural workers represent a large portion of the agricultural workforce across the state of Idaho. There is a need to educate Spanish-speaking agricultural workers through well-organized Extension programming. Cultural and language barriers have impeded Hispanic audience participation in many University of Idaho Extension programs. Presenting educational workshops in Spanish expands educational opportunities to diverse audiences.

Our Response

UI Extension sought to break through cultural barriers by teaming up with Idaho State Department of Agriculture's Worker Protection Standard (WPS) program specialist, Luis Urias. Together the team presented unbiased research-based educational programming on several topics during the Spanish Pesticide Safety Training Program. Pesticide safety training, WPS information and other agricultural topics of interest were presented during the day-long program at each location. Specific presentations included insect identification, biological control of voles, weed identification and vole/gopher management.



Jason Thomas, Extension educator, teaching Spanish-speaking agricultural workers about insect identification. Photo: Stokes.

Pesticides, insects, biological control, weed and gopher management topics are extremely relevant to agricultural producers in southern Idaho. Spanish-speaking agricultural workers encounter all or most of these issues on a daily basis working in agricultural fields. Their formal educational background may not be adequate to recognize potential pests or safety issues that should be reported to supervisors or farm managers immediately. In addition, WPS information is extremely important to any agricultural worker who is around pesticide use, especially considering that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced new WPS requirements in January of 2017 and 2018 (<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/agricultural-worker-protection-standard-wps>).

Due to the complexity of these topics, presenting this scientific information in a second-learned language (e.g. English) may not be as beneficial to the program participant as learning in their first language. Spanish-speaking UI Extension educators Jason Thomas and Joseph Sagers, as well as Luis Urias from ISDA presented and responded to questions in Spanish, enhancing the learner's success through the UI Extension Spanish Pesticide Safety Training Program.

Program Outcomes

The UI Extension Spanish pesticide safety training reached some of the Hispanic population in rural and urban Idaho through this educational Extension program. As a result of their attendance in the Spanish pesticide safety training, attendees indicated their agricultural and pesticide best management practices improved. Of the 137 participants, a total of 83 percent responded that they work in the agricultural sector and 77 percent responded that they only communicate in Spanish, showing that this program is relevant and needed in southern Idaho for agricultural producers and their Spanish-speaking workforce.

- A total of 137 Spanish-speaking participants attended this educational program in four different rural and urban locations across southern Idaho: Mountain Home, Caldwell, Rupert and Rigby. Of the 137 participants 48 percent responded they have never had formal pesticide training before this educational program.

- 97 percent of attendees plan to be more careful when handling pesticides to protect themselves and/or their family.
- After attending this program, nearly 95 percent of participants indicated they are able to identify important pest insects they encounter in the field, as well as learning to identify what weed species are present in the field.
- 86 percent of Spanish-speaking agricultural attendees indicated after this educational program that they plan on asking questions about the pesticides they directly work with during their employment in agriculture.

The Future

The UI Extension Spanish Pesticide Safety Training Program will continue to educate Spanish-speaking populations as well as seek out new rural or urban locations for Spanish-only training opportunities across the entire state of Idaho.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

Collaboration between UI Extension and the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) made this program available. Programming support was sponsored by UI Extension in Canyon County, Elmore County and central district; Elmore County Hispanic Organization (ECHO) and Jefferson County Farm Bureau.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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27-19-bstokes-spanish-pesticide • 9/19