

impact

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Power of feedback: Shape the future of PNW Pest Alert Network

AT A GLANCE

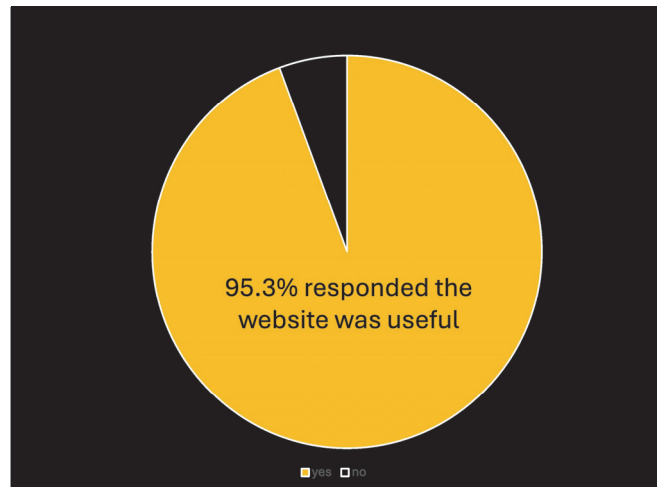
The PNW Pest Alert Network, a pest management resource, has successfully empowered growers across the Treasure Valley. The 2021 survey shows its success, driving the network's expansion.

The Situation

The PNW Pest Alert Network <https://pnwpestalert.net> has grown to serve a wide range of agricultural producers across the Pacific Northwest, providing timely, localized pest alerts based on real-time research. Over the years, the importance of the service has escalated due to increasing concerns over environmental sustainability, pesticide overuse and the need for more precise pest control measures. The network supports crucial crops such as potatoes, onions, dry beans and tree fruits, ensuring pest management strategies are aligned with sustainable practices. However, with changing agricultural challenges and leadership transitions in 2023, it became evident that a renewed effort was necessary to address evolving needs.

Our Response

The comprehensive survey results, particularly from 2021, done by Jerry Neufeld, retired University of Idaho Extension educator for Canyon County, revealed that the PNW Pest Alert Network had a positive impact. This data served as the foundation for the renewed commitment under new leadership by Area Extension Educator Jemila Chellappa in 2023. The primary goal moving forward is to expand the network's reach, improve pest forecasting models and ensure



Sixty-four responses, one clear message: our website is unlocking potential — time to expand and thrive.

that the alerts continue to be relevant to all sizes of operations, including small-scale producers and home gardeners. The 2021 findings highlighted the effectiveness of the network, motivating its statewide expansion and encouraging further collaboration with specialists to enhance pest management across diverse regions.

Program Outcomes

High Utilization of Resources — An overwhelming 95.3% of respondents found the website and its resources useful, with 45.3% rating it as “very useful” and 48.4% describing it as “somewhat useful.” This demonstrates high satisfaction with the accuracy, relevance and timeliness of the alerts and information shared through the network.

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Increased Scouting and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Adoption — The alerts have notably increased scouting efforts, with 39.1% of respondents stating they have increased their field scouting to monitor pest levels more closely. Additionally, 36% of respondents have integrated additional IPM strategies into their pest control practices, further aligning with the network's goal of fostering sustainable, environmentally friendly pest management.

Reduced Pesticide Use — One of the most significant impacts of the pest alerts is the reduction in pesticide use. A total of 18.8% of respondents reported reducing the number of pesticide sprays due to timely alerts. Furthermore, 46.9% indicated that the sprays they did apply were more effective, thanks to the strategic timing of the alerts. This reduction in pesticide use contributes to both cost savings for growers and a reduced environmental impact.

Helpful and Timely Information — The pest information on the website was found to be helpful and timely by 95.3% of respondents. Many growers indicated that they not only paid attention to alerts but also acted on them promptly, with 80% of respondents acknowledging they took action based on the alerts received. Additionally, 65% utilized available resources to navigate further references on specific pest-related topics, demonstrating the value of the network's comprehensive approach.

Pests of Concern and Zebra Chip Threat — Respondents frequently mentioned common pests such as aphids, blight, cutworms, mites and codling moths. Notably, 72.2% of participants considered zebra chips to be a significant pest threat, particularly for potato growers.

Pioneers and Legacy — The network's success rests on the pioneering efforts of its founders at institutions such as the University of Idaho and Oregon State University, who laid the groundwork for the initiative. Their vision of delivering research-based, real-time pest alerts has remained at the core of the program's mission.

The Future

Reflecting on the significant results of past evaluations and assessments, the PNW Pest Alert Network is poised for continued success, advancing its legacy of promoting sustainable agricultural practices and expanding its impact statewide. This growth is further encouraged by feedback from the community, such as requests for more region-specific information, particularly for northern Idaho. There has also been an increased demand for more targeted alerts on specific crops and pests, highlighting the need for continued communication about how to access the website and its resources. These insights will guide future work, ensuring the network evolves to meet the unique needs of growers across the Pacific Northwest.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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