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DPR Recognizes Eight Organizations for Reducing Pesticide Use

(Editors/reporters: Honorees are based in Marin, Napa, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, San Luis Obispo, Sonoma, Siskiyou and Yolo counties.)

SACRAMENTO – A diverse group of businesses and organizations and the city of San José are being honored Thursday, March 18 as 2009 IPM Innovators by the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) for controlling insects, weeds, rodents and other pests with a combination of natural and preventive strategies and pesticides less toxic than traditional treatments.

“From vacuuming cockroaches infesting a café to building bird and bat houses to attract natural predators that eat insects and rodents in vineyards and parks, this year’s honorees exemplify pest control strategies we call integrated pest management, or IPM,” DPR Director Mary-Ann Warmerdam said today. “IPM is more protective of public health and safer for the environment whether you have a pest problem in a home or office building, agricultural fields, garden or park.”

Warmerdam will present the IPM Innovator Awards at 1:30 p.m. in the Sierra Hearing Room on the second floor of the California Environmental Protection Agency in Sacramento. The public is invited.

The recipients are:

- ATCO Pest Control, Marin and Sonoma counties
- Central Coast Vineyard Team, Paso Robles
- Clark Pest Control, Lodi
- Community Alliance with Family Farmers, Davis
- Marrone Bio Innovations, Davis
- Prather Ranch, Siskiyou County

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- City of San José, Santa Clara County
- Spring Mountain Vineyard, Napa County

Since IPM Innovator awards were initiated in 1994, more than 100 California organizations have been recognized for their efforts to reduce risks associated with pesticide use and for sharing their research and methods with others. Candidates are evaluated in seven categories: innovation; value; effectiveness; supports research; organizational education; outreach; and leadership.

A brief description of the 2009 IPM Innovators follows:

ATCO Pest Control

This business established in 1985 provides pest control services in Marin and Sonoma counties. Marin County government buildings are one of owner Richard Estrada's clients and the Civic Center designed by renowned architect Frank Lloyd Wright is one of the buildings he services. ATCO works closely with the center's staff to balance historic preservation with inventive IPM strategies to address unique pest challenges at the spectacular complex.

For example, the Civic Center and café had a history of cockroach infestations. Previous pest control companies had routinely used harsh insecticides. ATCO cleared the facility of cockroaches using baits, vacuums and monitors. The company continues to closely monitor for pests and uses least-toxic baits as needed. ATCO has also implemented a process in which rodents are controlled in the landscape without the use of rodent poisons. As a result, raptors and other predators are not adversely affected by secondary poisoning.

ATCO utilizes mechanical methods and equipment such as vacuuming, steam, trapping along with bait and organic materials to control rodents, cockroaches, bed bugs and other pests without traditional pesticides. More information about the business is available at www.Atcopestcontrol.com or by calling ATCO President Richard Estrada II at 415/328-0799.

Central Coast Vineyard Team

The team was honored for its Sustainability in Practice (SIP) certification program that requires growers to use a variety of practices that protect air and water quality, food safety and worker health. Since SIP's 2008 implementation, certified acreage has increased from 3,700 acres to more than 10,000 acres. To date, more than 50,000 cases of wine have been produced from SIP-certified vineyards.

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The team is a nonprofit grower group that promotes sustainable winegrape growing. Although the team is based on the Central Coast, SIP certification is open to any vineyard regardless of region. The collaborative partnership includes growers, wineries, consultants, researchers and natural resource professionals working to increase use of environmentally friendly farming practices.

DPR presented the team with an Innovator Award in 1997 for developing a Positive Points System to evaluate IPM success in vineyards. More information about the team is available at www.vineyardteam.org or by calling Executive Director Kris O'Connor at 805/369-2288.

Clark Pest Control

The West's largest pest control business is shifting from more traditional pest control methods to IPM, including heat to manage drywood termites and bed bugs. Clark recently launched a large-scale IPM program for its residential accounts in which technicians replace regular perimeter spraying of pyrethroid pesticides with site evaluation and customized pest control. Pyrethroid pesticides have been detected in urban waterways at levels toxic to small aquatic organisms. Clark also has been exploring alternatives to pyrethroids for pest control.

The company uses IPM methods to service buildings with Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification, including California Environmental Protection Agency headquarters in Sacramento where DPR is based.

Clark helped develop GreenPro, a pest management certification program, and was one of the first companies to become certified in California and nationally. It also has the highest number and percentage of GreenPro-certified technicians. More information about the business is available at www.clarkpest.com or by calling technical director Darren Van Steenwyk at 209/368-7152, ext. 235.

Community Alliance with Family Farmers

For more than 30 years, the alliance known as CAFF has helped growers reduce their environmental footprints with farming practices that protect and preserve natural resources and earn them a living.

CAFF offers field days and grower meetings throughout the Central Valley so growers, University of California Cooperative Extension farm advisers and researchers, and others can share IPM-related practices. Examples include a project in Fresno, Madera

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and Merced counties that resulted in a significant reduction in traditional, broad-spectrum pesticide applications on cotton and an effort in Colusa, Sutter and Yuba counties that reduced pesticide runoff from almond, peach, walnut and prune orchards.

CAFF also conducts extensive outreach efforts to educate Californians about where their food comes from and develops markets for regionally grown products. More information about the alliance is available at www.caff.org or by calling Program Director Marcia Gibbs at 530/756-8518, ext. 34.

Marrone Bio Innovations

Pam Marrone founded the company to discover, develop and market environmentally friendly and effective natural products for pest management, including organic weed control. The company's products include biopesticides that reduce or replace traditional, more toxic chemicals; reduce sulfur applications; control invasive species; and lower emissions that contribute to smog. Marrone and her staff regularly present their research at scientific meetings.

The company's efforts include development of a biopesticide to control invasive zebra and quagga mussels fouling freshwater ecosystems and a microbial-based weed killer for rice and cereal crop production. It is screening new microorganisms and plant extracts against nematodes, weeds, insects and plant disease.

Marrone also offers an accredited, educational course for crop care professionals about the successful use of biopesticides in IPM programs. More information about the company is available at www.marronebioinnovations.com or by calling Julie Versman, vice president of marketing, at 530/750-2800.

Prather Ranch

Organic production manager James Rickert has applied his great-grandfather's practice of integrating animals and crops with the help of modern technology to run his family's organic strawberry plant nursery and cattle operation in Siskiyou County. Strawberry plant cultivation is rotated with irrigated pasture intensively grazed by the cattle to rebuild the soil and preserve biodiversity. Soil fertility is sampled routinely to monitor nutrient levels.

The ranch is the only organic strawberry plant supplier to the general public in California. The nursery sells approximately two million plants for commercial organic strawberry growers and the general public annually throughout the United States.

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Prather Ranch also sells seeds online to home gardeners and to commercial growers through Seeds of Change, Johnny's Seeds, Mountain Valley Growers and others.

The combination of IPM practices and organic production addresses food safety and worker safety concerns, helps reduce pesticide emissions and prevents runoff of pesticides in an environmentally sensitive area. University of California Extension agents, agricultural colleges and many other groups tour the livestock processing facility and innovative strawberry nursery operation. The ranch has been featured in many publications and Rickert speaks about his practices at numerous conferences, field days and meetings. More information about the ranch is available at www.pratherranch.com or www.pratherranchnursery.com or by calling Rickert at 530/941-0810.

City of San José

This city of one million people and home to Silicon Valley has made an overall commitment to environmental protection and sustainability, including IPM. Its pesticide management plan was adopted in 2002 to reduce pesticides in urban runoff known to be toxic to aquatic life in creeks and the San Francisco Bay. The city's Pesticide Management Committee is comprised of representatives from major departments and meets monthly to discuss pest management issues to coordinate IPM projects and to share ideas. Staff members who handle pesticides receive safety and IPM training.

The city uses a variety of IPM practices to reduce pesticide use, including goats and sheep for weed control on parklands. By 2009, the grazing program had expanded to nearly 600 acres and avoided the use of approximately 77 pounds of pesticides. Barn owl and bat boxes have been installed in city parks and community gardens to control gophers, mosquitoes, gnats and other pesky insects. To control the destructive tussock moth, the city removes cocoons from trees by power washing, followed by releases of parasitic wasps.

The grazing program and owl and bat boxes are extremely popular with the public and provide a valuable way to communicate the city's IPM message. The grazing program alone was featured by 11 different media outlets in 2009. San José conducts outreach about IPM practices through collaborative efforts with local and regional agencies. More information about San José's IPM efforts is available at <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/esd/stormwater/pesticides.asp> or by calling James Downing, supervising environmental services specialist, at 408/277-2765.

Spring Mountain Vineyard

Spring Mountain's IPM strategies, developed in collaboration with University of

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California scientists, include introducing beneficial insects and birds into the vineyard's management practices to eliminate the use of herbicides and insecticides. For example, the vineyard builds and installs birdhouses for bluebirds that eat blue-green sharpshooters and uses sheep to graze on grasses between the vine rows.

The vineyard property has been opened to UC Berkeley researchers for vine mealybug and native bumble bee and bee studies, to UC Santa Cruz for bluebird studies and the Napa County Resource and Conservation District for numerous erosion control studies and research into soil particulates in streams for fish habitat. In 2006, Spring Mountain received permission from the Napa County Agricultural Commissioner to control mealybugs with an aggressive bio-control program rather than insecticides.

Through various trials, it was determined that two insects were effective: *Cryptolaemus*, a beetle commonly known as the vine mealybug destroyer, and *Anagyrus*, a parasitic wasp. This approach controlled the spread of the vine mealybug at Spring Mountain and is now being copied in vineyards around the state. More information about the program is available at www.springmountainvineyard.com or by calling Ron Rosenbrand, vineyard manager, at 707/967-4188.

One of five departments and boards within the California Environmental Protection Agency, DPR regulates the registration, sale and use of pesticides to protect people and the environment. For more information about DPR and previous IPM Innovators, see www.cdpr.ca.gov.

* A map of the meeting location may be found at www.calepa.ca.gov/EPAbldg/Location.htm. All visitors to the Cal/EPA building are required to sign in and receive a security badge. Valid picture identification may be required. Please allow up to 15 minutes for this process.

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