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Contact: Charlotte Fadipe
916-445-3974 Charlotte.Fadipe@cdpr.ca.gov

March 19, 2015 (15-2)
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

California Honors Three Groups for Reducing Pesticide Risk



(Editors/reporters: Honorees work in San Francisco, Riverside and Del Norte Counties.)

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) has announced the winners of the 2014 Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Innovator Award, the department's highest honor. The awards go to three organizations for their work in finding innovative ways to solve pest problems while reducing the use of chemical pesticides.

"These awards are a way of recognizing the creative and effective methods people are using to tackle pests," said Mark Robertson of DPR's Pest Management and Licensing branch. "Their approaches often involve huge commitments of time, research and a determination to effectively control pests without harming the environment".

The awards will be presented at a ceremony on Thursday, March 19, at 1:30 p.m., at the California Environmental Protection Agency headquarters at 1001 I St. in Sacramento.

DPR encourages California to tackle pests in a manner that reduces the risks associated with pesticide use. The IPM approach employs monitoring, record keeping and other non-chemical means to help prevent and treat pest problems.

The 2014 IPM Innovator Award winners are:

Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District (CVMVCD): This organization increasingly uses a variety of non-chemical means to tackle mosquitoes. For example, the district produces 200,000 mosquitofish annually. These fish eat large numbers of mosquito larvae, and so help to prevent the potential spread of the West Nile Virus and other diseases. In addition, the district has invested in a cutting-edge computer program to help determine where problems with mosquitoes may arise. As a result of these practices, the district has reduced the amount of money it spends on pesticides by almost 50 percent. Media interested in this project may also directly contact: Jill Oviatt at joviatt@cvmvcd.org or (760) 342-8287.

Easter Lily Research Foundation (ELRF): This organization has a research facility dedicated to finding new ways to control pests and diseases of Easter lilies. On its 1,800 acres of land in Del Norte County, the foundation has adopted a number of practices to reduce their pesticide use. This includes developing a strategy to tackle aphids without increasing the use of organophosphates. The organization, headquartered in Oregon, works closely with the University of California at Davis to control nematodes while reducing the use of fumigants. With the help of a USDA Specialty Crops Block Grant, the foundation is researching how to breed a new Easter lily that requires less production time, acreage, and pesticide use. Media interested in this project may also directly contact: Lee Riddle at easterlilyresearch@gmail.com or (541) 469-2215.

San Francisco Recreation and Park Department (SFRPD): Despite managing more than 220 parks, playgrounds and open spaces in San Francisco, the department has significantly reduced its pesticide use over the last decade. This has been achieved in a variety of ways. For instance, the department eradicated an invasive frog from an area pond by changing the pH of the water, which only affected the offending frog species. The department has also tried tackling a cockroach problem in the Golden Gate Park's Conservatory of Flowers by introducing lizards, and has used herds of goats to clear away poison oak and other problem weeds in parks. Media interested in this project may also directly contact Connie Chan at connie.chan@sfgov.org or (415) 831-2796.

DPR has given more than 140 IPM Innovator Awards to organizations that take significant steps to reduce risks associated with pesticide use and share their research and practices with others.

Here are more details on the [IPM Innovator Awards and previous winners](#).

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