IPM Institute of North America, Inc.
Harnessing Marketplace Power to Improve Health, Environment and Economics

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

October 1, 2025

Dear Secretary Kennedy and Secretary Rollins:

We applaud the Trump Administration's commitment to reducing the risk of the chemical pesticides needed to grow America's vital food crops. Fifty years ago, this same commitment led a group of American scientists to develop a new science specifically focused on reducing agriculture's pesticide dependency.

That science is known as Integrated Pest Management, or IPM.

IPM works. In the mid-1990s, for instance, cotton growers in Arizona sprayed insecticides over their fields a dozen times a year. This year, more than 40 percent of Arizona cotton acres didn't need a single insecticide application and the rest needed just one or two. Since 1996, IPM techniques and technologies have kept 40 million pounds of insecticide out of the environment and reduced the risks posed by pest management—a measurement known as eco-efficiency— by 1,000 times over. These IPM practices also saved cotton growers $600 million over that same period. Growers in specialty crops and commodity crops experience similar benefits.

Integrated Pest Management creates smarter, safer and more sustainable solutions to pest problems. IPM leverages biology to combat pests rather than relying solely on the chemistry of synthetic pesticides and emphasizes using natural factors in the environment—combining biological, cultural, physical and chemical tools to control pests in the most efficient, economical and environmentally responsible way. IPM includes precision agricultural technologies to reduce the amount of pesticides applied, but goes well beyond what precision ag alone can achieve.

Put more succinctly, IPM creates effective alternatives to chemical pesticides for growers so they may become less reliant on pesticides.

Integrated pest management research is actively taking place in all 50 states, solving pest problems for conventional and organic growers alike. However, funding for IPM research has languished since the Obama administration and IPM has remained an alternate method of pest control while the traditional pesticide-dependent paradigm has largely continued. That can change.

What's needed is an investment in IPM: $100 million in new annual funding as a rocket fuel to propel American agriculture into a new era of safer pest management.

Investing in IPM is the surest way to reduce pesticide risk in agriculture without reducing growers' productivity or profits. IPM researchers and extension specialists working for the nation's Land Grant Universities have built trust with America's farmers through decades of cooperative problem-solving and productive research. Growers know IPM and support its research and researchers. They do not see IPM as a threat to their production or profits, but as effective new tools they need to combat an ever-growing array of damaging pests—many of which are invasive species.

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The infrastructure to succeed is in place. IPM coordinators in every state focus on state-specific needs. Four Regional IPM Centers identify wide-area pest problems and direct novel research into those priorities. Researchers and evaluators have developed far better ways to document and quantify pesticide risk reduction than the old crude standard of "pounds of active ingredient applied," and professional IPM communicators make the science understandable to everyday Americans.

Breakthrough technologies are poised to overcome the key barriers that keep growers from fully utilizing IPM: the time required to actively scout and monitor pests and beneficials, and the complexity of deploying, rotating and combining multiple IPM tactics to manage multiple pests over long growing seasons. To solve these problems for American farmers, researchers are developing and validating remote sensing technologies to make pest scouting easier. They are creating AI-assisted pest- and beneficial-insect identification tools that give growers real-time insight into their fields. Innovative technologies precisely target weeds with tiny puffs of pesticide and eradicate powdery mildew with ultraviolet light rather than fungicides. And researchers are programming intelligent decision-support tools that help growers evaluate their options and make informed and forward-looking pest-management decisions.

These emerging tools will empower growers to manage pests confidently using the whole arsenal of IPM tactics, rather than simply reaching for pesticides they've relied on in the past. But because managing pests is always site specific, these technologies have to be developed, tested and proven effective in a crop-by-crop, state-by-state basis.

America needs the funding to make that happen. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's current dedicated funding source for IPM is the Crop Protection and Pest Management Program. CPPM is appropriated at $21 million annually and has built the IPM infrastructure that can deliver quickly. Our nation's entomologists, plant pathologists, weed scientists, agricultural technologists and other IPM researchers are ready to conduct the applied research focused on growers' needs. Extension specialists are prepared to help growers adopt these newly developed pest management techniques and technologies. In construction terms, we're shovel-ready.

Invest in IPM. $100 million in new annual IPM research can change America's pest-management paradigm, making pest management safer and America healthier.

Sincerely,

Christopher Stevenson
Executive Director
IPM Institute of North America, Inc.
on behalf of the attached signatories