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DATE: Feb. 15, 2024
TO: Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry
John Pietroski, Acting Director of the Board of Pesticides Control
FROM: Samantha Warren, UMS Director of Government & Community Relations
samantha.warren@maine.edu / (207) 632-0389
RE: **Annual Report on Use of Funds Provided for Pesticide Safety Education**

For more than three decades, University of Maine Cooperative Extension has provided science-based pesticide safety education and outreach through a memorandum of understanding with the Board of Pesticides Control (BPC). Maine's pesticide safety program is recognized as a national leader, in part because of this long-standing partnership that the BPC underwrites with an annual \$65,000 grant to UMaine Extension subsidized by pesticide registration fees.

Public Law 2019, Chapter 243 was enacted to clarify this funding arrangement and foster flexibility to allow for future expansion of funding and scope of work. As part of our continued commitment to public accountability and transparency, the University of Maine System (UMS) now reports annually to this Committee and the BPC on the funded activities undertaken in the previous year. This memo serves as that report for Jan.1 – Dec.31, 2023.

Supported by the \$65,000 BPC funding and also university resources, UMaine Extension employs a Pesticide Safety Expert as part of its comprehensive Pest Management Unit. This professional, Kerry Bernard, writes and regularly updates the Maine-specific pesticide application manuals that instruct those seeking to become licensed how to appropriately apply pesticides in a way that minimizes impacts to public and environmental health while preserving the quality and quantity of the crop being treated. In 2023, several applicator training manuals were developed, revised and reprinted/distributed, including those pertaining to outdoor ornamentals, biting flies and other arthropods, and structural general pest control. Additionally, a new one-hour worker protection standard training video was produced.

The BPC-supported UMaine Extension Pesticide Safety Expert also delivered multiple in-person and virtual trainings, including sessions at the Agricultural Trades Show in Augusta that were attended by hundreds of individuals. Other popular credit-bearing trainings throughout the year included the fall agriculture meeting (209 attendees), browntail moth training (132 attendees), structural pest management (111 attendees), rodent academy (99 attendees), and forestry and rights of way (44 attendees). Additionally, the UMaine Extension Pesticide Safety Expert helped facilitate the Maine Invasive Species Network Annual Meeting and the Greenhouse Best Practices Workshop. Training presentations for Lucas Tree Experts and the MOFGA Farmer to Farmer conference were also conducted.

The Pesticide Safety Expert also maintains the pesticide safety education pages on the UMaine Extension website at extension.umaine.edu/ipm/pesticide-safety/,

reviews quizzes and reports scores to the BPC, attends state and regional meetings, and regularly responds to requests from individuals, businesses and municipalities related to pesticide safety, regulations, licensing and recertification.

UMS and its land grant, UMaine, are proud of the ways the Pest Management Unit and Cooperative Extension brings R1 university research and technical assistance to tens of thousands of Maine homes, businesses, farms and communities each year.

We look forward to continued collaboration with this Committee and the BPC in 2024.