



# COST OF IPM IN SCHOOLS



*a fact sheet from the Safer Pest Control Project*

## Why IPM in Schools?

Routine pesticide spraying is common in Illinois schools. A recent survey found that 82% of the 106 schools and school districts surveyed regularly spray pesticides on school property.<sup>1</sup> Spraying pesticides in school buildings and grounds unnecessarily exposes children to potential health risks.

Fortunately, IPM is a proven and cost-effective alternative to routine pesticide spraying and is used in some Illinois schools. Organizations that recommend IPM for schools include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the PTA and the Illinois Department of Public Health.

## Effective and Cost Efficient – IPM Works

Everyone agrees that a good IPM program effectively controls pest, but what about the bottom line? According to the US EPA, “preliminary indications from IPM programs in school systems suggest that long term costs of IPM may be less than a conventional pest control program.”<sup>2</sup> And schools around the country have saved with IPM

- One Maryland school district reported savings of \$6,000 in the three years after implementing IPM and additional savings in reduced food infestations.<sup>3</sup>
- Illinois Community Consolidated School District 181 adopted IPM in 1992. Facilities Services Coordinator Sue Kamuda says that IPM has been **easy, cost effective and successful**.
- Schools in Monroe County, Indiana and Susqueanna, New York documented thousands of dollars in long term cost savings through IPM. (*Details on the back.*)

## Additional Benefits

In addition to getting rid of pest cost efficiently, an IPM program can also have some indirect benefits. For example, IPM may improve staff and student attendance, minimize emergency repair expenses and reduce the amount of waste attributable to infested food products. IPM investments may also result in improved maintenance and sanitation.

## Getting Started With IPM

You will find more examples of successful school IPM programs on the other side of this page. For further information about implementing IPM in your local school or school district, contact the Safer Pest Control Project at 312/ 641-5575. We can help you get started!

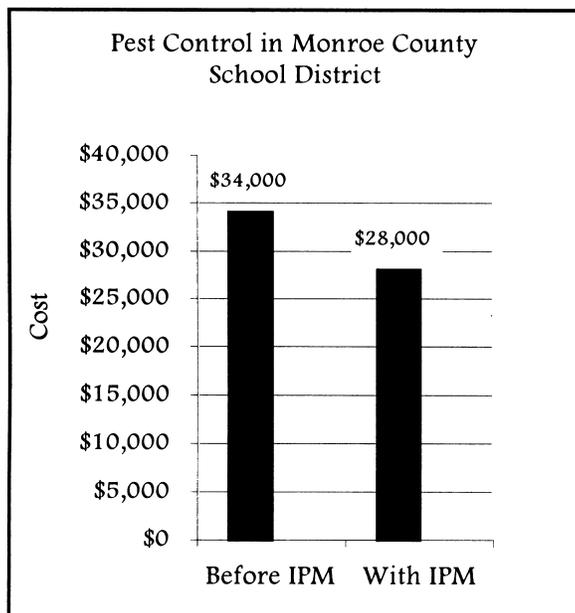


### What is IPM?

Integrated pest management (IPM) is the practice of determining and implementing the most appropriate and least hazardous techniques for controlling pests. It controls pests by emphasizing prevention and by employing physical, cultural, biological and, only as a last resort, least hazardous chemical controls.

## Monroe County Schools, IN

Nineteen schools make up the Monroe County School District in Indiana. Before an IPM program was implemented, the school district spent \$34,000 on pest control each year, approximately \$1,800 per school per year. During an IPM pilot program implemented over a period of two years, costs decreased by \$6,000. Monroe County has now been using IPM for 4 years. They have hired one in-house half-time IPM technician to handle the program for \$28,000/year, which includes both personnel and materials.



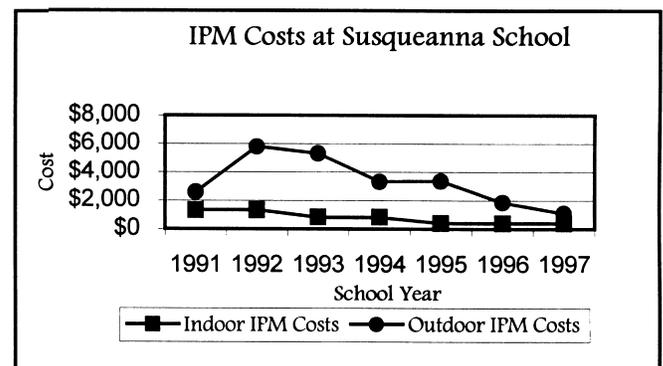
The IPM specialist at the Monroe County School states that, "costs are dependent on the condition of the school. We were lucky in this case that Monroe County began this project with a history of good management practices and a structurally sound school building. If a school isn't in good shape maintenance wise, the start up costs of an IPM program can be a little higher in the beginning."<sup>4</sup>

Monroe County's IPM program has not only been cost effective, but also less hazardous. Pesticide use has dropped by 90%, and all aerosol and liquid pesticides have been discontinued. Instead, a bait system (baits used only as a last resort) based on monitoring is used. School staff and the IPM technician note that there have been fewer pest sightings since establishing a solid IPM program. That means less staff time is needed to handle pest problems.

## Susqueanna School, NY

After Susqueanna School children were accidentally exposed to pesticides and became ill in 1991, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation ordered the school to halt all routine pesticide applications and to implement an IPM program. Indoors, engineers and the pest control company on contract are now pleased with the change. Prior to the IPM program, the school was sprayed monthly for recurring ant problems. Now with monitoring, increased sanitation, education, and least toxic baits used only when needed, the number of ant sightings has decreased substantially, while costs have also declined.

Outdoors, Susqueanna's engineers manage the turf and playing fields, where pesticide application has been discontinued altogether. They now use organic fertilizer and compost twice a year on the athletic fields, aerate the soil four times a year, mow high, and mow often. An engineer at the school says, "cost will depend somewhat on how much labor you need to get the job done. In our case, we spent the first year doing some preventative maintenance such as putting plastic lining under the bleachers, and deeply aerating the fields. We have now cut costs and labor across the board for the past 7 years and the turf looks better than ever."<sup>5</sup> Susqueanna School is currently saving over \$1,000.00 on pest control annually with their new IPM program.



<sup>1</sup> Safer Pest Control Project and Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (1997): Pesticide Use in Illinois Schools Survey Findings.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. EPA. (1993): Pest Control in the School Environment: Adopting Integrated Pest Management. August 1993. 735-F-93-012.

<sup>3</sup> Sheila Darr et al (1997): IPM for Schools: A How-to Manual. Bio-Integral Resource Center, Berkeley, CA.

<sup>4</sup> Marc Lame (1998): Monroe County School District, Indiana, IPM Specialist. Personal Communication (September 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Angelo Ranieri (1998): Susqueanna School District, New York, Building Engineer. Personal Communication (October 1998).