



# Pest Management Transition Program

*The Washington State Horticultural Association requests \$550,000 to phase-out the use of some insecticides by the apple industry. The transition to new insect management strategies benefits growers, their employees, and consumers, and will save the state money.*

---

**Washington's \$6 billion apple industry proposes a pest management transition program to reduce the use of certain organophosphate (OP) insecticides.** Recently apple producers' use of these chemicals to protect crops against codling moth and leaf roller has declined significantly. New research has developed safer and more effective strategies for protecting crops. Recently the federal Environmental Protection Agency announced the phase-out of a key insecticide – azinphos-methyl – by the year 2012.

**State investment in this transition literally will benefit the entire state.** The program:

- **Saves the state money** budgeted for the Cholinesterase Monitoring program. The phase-out will result in the reduction of specific group of pesticides, eliminating the need for a Cholinesterase Monitoring program.
- **Eliminates most pesticide-related concerns** of growers, pesticide handlers, and other farm employees.
- **Boosts the confidence of consumers** in Washington and around the world in apples — the state's top agricultural crop.
- **Reduces real and perceived environmental concerns** about insect control, including pesticide "drift."
- **Strengthens the economic viability of the apple industry** and the families, schools, businesses, and communities whose own economic viability depends upon it.

**Leaders in the Washington apple industry recognize the need to act now** to help growers understand and implement new strategies for pest control. Initially, moving to softer crop protection materials will increase apple growers' production costs. Some new applications are more expensive

and less effective. Use of the new pest control strategies requires additional orchard-management, because people will more closely monitor the presence of pests. And growers and their employees will have to learn new ways of timing and using applications.

**State support will be absolutely necessary to change the direction of one of the biggest industries in Washington's economy.**

Replacing old practices with new technology is a challenge in any industry, and agriculture is no different. Changing attitudes and practices will require a five-part approach, in which effective education and communications will be crucial:

✓ **Education & Communication.** A Project Coordinator for Education and Communication would lead this critical component of the transition program. Understanding and sharing the benefits and problems faced by these growers will help others in the adoption process.

Field study tours will focus on management and technology, implementation, and assessment. A newsletter and web site will highlight developments, growers' experiences, and educational workshops. Information will be available on the newly developed internet-based Pest Management Decision Aids System. The program will accommodate the practices of both small- and large-scale orchards as well as private-sector technical consultants.

✓ **Administration:** Providing a relevant administrative structure will increase the success of a project seeking to implement changes in practice that are in many respects profound and complex. A project board will oversee the transition program, and provide a structure for managing and supervising the transition.

✓ **Implementation:** The project board will develop a specific plan for transitioning pest control programs away from OP insecticides over the next four years. The plan will include goals for reducing dependence on these applications. Two Implementation Specialists would work with key growers and orchard managers to introduce new crop protection strategies, review strategic direction at critical points in the growing season, and address transition issues with growers.

✓ **Assessment:** The Transition Program would work with the Washington State University Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center and the Washington Tree Fruit Research Commission to measure the progress of the transition by monitoring the following:

- Efficacy of pest control
- Conservation of beneficial insects.
- Economics of production practices.
- Perceptions of growers and employees.
- Reduction of environmental risk.

The program would provide partial funding for an economist (CSANR), a graduate student and some operating costs to supplement WSU resources, which otherwise would be insufficient to assist in this transition effort.

The apple industry also is committed to continuing research to develop new control tools and to expand basic knowledge of insect pest biology, bio-control, and integrated pest management strategies.

**It’s important to include all industry stakeholders in the transition program.**

Clear and regular communication with stakeholders, such as policymakers, industry employees and environmental groups, will be a key part of the educational effort. To ensure a full and effective transition to new pest control strategies, it will be important to build a culture of patience and support.

**The viability of the state’s \$6-billion a year apple industry depends upon the successful transition away from certain insecticides.**

The new technologies this proposal seeks to implement results in higher input costs and require greater management expertise. However WSU research has shown that these new products can be implemented and effectively control pests. The transition would eliminate the need for the state-funded cholinesterase testing program. Investing in this program benefits Washington consumers, the state’s economy, and the families, schools, and communities whose own viability depends upon the success of the state’s apple industry.

Preliminary OP Transition Timeline 2006 - 2010	
Activity	Time Line
Form advisory board.	Summer 2007
Establish insecticide use baseline.	Winter 2007, spring 2008.
Adopt working group	Winter of 2006 through 2009
Conduct educational workshops, develop educational materials.	Winter of 2007-09 and as needed.
Begin implementation.	Fall 2007.
Document change in practices, costs and risks of transition.	2008 production season and each production season until transition goals are achieved.
Produce annual report on OP transition effort.	At the end of each production season; final report at the end of the project.