Our Ask

The IR-4 Project is currently funded at $11.9 million under USDA-NIFA’s Minor Crop Pest Management (IR4) line. The Specialty Crop Industry believes that increased funding is ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY and requests IR-4 funding be increased to $19 million!

Why is this Important?

Crop protection products help conventional and organic farmers grow quality crops. Specialty crop farmers depend on The IR-4 Project to gain EPA approved registrations.

Benefits

• Growers
  — Legal access to safe & effective pest management technology...grow high quality crops
  — Access to lucrative international markets

• Food Processors & Food Retailers
  — Consistent supply of food

• Economy
  — IR-4 contributes $9.4 billion to annual US GDP/supports > 95,200 jobs

• Public
  — Plentiful supply of fruits & vegetables that contribute to a healthy diet & plants/flowers that enhance the environment

* The IR-4 Commodity Liaison Committee serves as an important stakeholder group to provide guidance and advice on ways in which The IR-4 Project can best serve the needs of specialty crop growers.
What is The IR-4 Project?

The USDA sponsored IR-4 Project was established by Congress to help the specialty crop industry gain EPA approval of safe and effective biological and chemical pesticides needed to grow their crops. Specialty crops include most vegetables, fruits, nuts, herbs, and ornamental crops. Over time, IR-4’s mission has expanded to include pest management products for organic agriculture.

Why We Need Your Support

• There is a drastic need for new pest management tools to fight the ever-increasing number of invasive pests that attack specialty crops, as well as an urgent need to provide alternatives to manage the increased problem of resistance to pesticides. IR-4’s network of researchers has the ability to respond to emergency needs that arise from these invasive pests.

• Opportunities for exports of US produced specialty crops are expected to double by 2025. Enhanced activities by IR-4 help remove pesticides as trade barriers.

• Consolidation within the crop protection sector (e.g. Dow/DuPont, Bayer/Monsanto, etc.) will reduce company investment in specialty crops. Companies are expected to focus on major crops resulting in less interest in specialty crops/minor uses. IR-4 continues to provide the research needed when the crop protection industry will not.

• The need for IR-4 is increasing while government resources are endangered. Ten USDA Agricultural Research Service projects, which make up about 20% of IR-4 research capacity, were eliminated in the FY 2018/2019 Executive Budget.

• IR-4 is a critical component of our nation’s food security research infrastructure. IR-4 helps the agriculture sector meet the demands for high-quality food now and into the future. IR-4 remains a sound public investment that produces significant, tangible results.

For more information contact Mike Bledsoe, IR-4 Commodity Liaison Committee Chair at mebledsoc@villagefarms.com or 407-936-1193