

# An International Educational Opportunity: Professional Development in IPM

Connie I. Reimers-Hild, John E. Foster and E.A. "Short" Heinrichs

## Abstract:

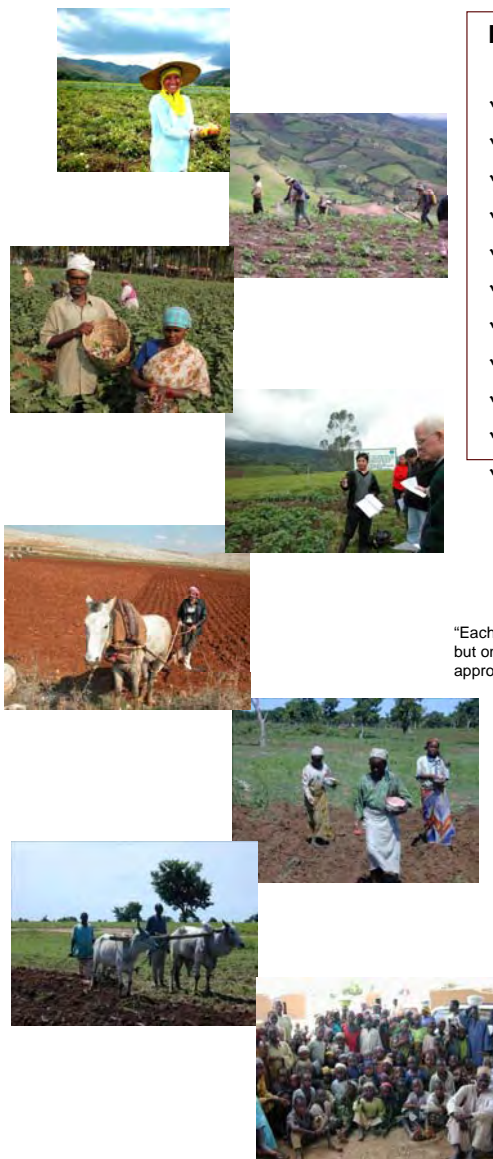
Continuing education is a key success factor for IPM professionals and organizations. The continuous changes and challenges in the world of IPM create a need for professional development and lifelong learning that must be available anytime, anywhere. IPM centers and organizations now have the option to create distance-delivered professional development opportunities designed to meet the needs of their employees and clientele. *International Plant Protection* is a distance-delivered course available for undergraduate and graduate credit at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The course focuses on the principles of pest management, key pests in major crops of global importance, food and fiber production and concerns associated with agriculture and the environment. Now, the concepts of this unique and successful class are being redesigned and expanded upon to support the professional development needs of IPM professionals. The instructors of *International Plant Protection* are offering customized, distance-delivered professional development opportunities designed to meet the specific educational needs of students in developing countries, national agricultural research and technology transfer programs, international IPM projects and IPM centers and organizations. Interested centers, organizations and institutions work with faculty from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to identify, create and customize professional development opportunities for their organizations. Topics of interest may include, but are not limited to general IPM, rice IPM, host plant resistance, genetically modified organisms, women in agriculture, communication and interpersonal skills development, leadership, IPM networking and Participatory IPM. Knowledge is the key to success for IPM professionals and organizations. By participating in customized education and training, IPM centers and organizations will empower their employees and enhance their ability to serve the world.

"The foundation of an organization is not money or capital or technology—it's knowledge and education (human capital). By 2005, knowledge workers will be the single largest group in the labor force."

-Peter F. Drucker, 2000, p.11

## The Importance of Professional Development:

IPM professionals must have access to educational programs that provide them with information in the areas of research, teaching and extension. Educational programs must also provide IPM professionals with essential leadership skills that have the potential to help them successfully implement, monitor and expand IPM programs. However, the specific needs of IPM professionals vary. Therefore, it is important to provide IPM professionals with specialized educational opportunities, which are designed to meet their specific needs. Faculty at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) are expanding their global classroom by working to fulfill this need. Experienced UNL faculty are offering individuals and organizations the opportunity to participate in customized professional development activities. These customized activities bring international audiences together while meeting the precise needs of IPM professionals and organizations.



## Potential Topics for Your Organization:

- ✓ International Plant Protection
- ✓ General IPM
- ✓ Rice IPM
- ✓ Host Plant Resistance
- ✓ Genetically Modified Organisms
- ✓ Women in Agriculture
- ✓ Training & Education Methods
- ✓ Communication & Interpersonal Skills
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ IPM Networking
- ✓ Participatory IPM

## Professional Development Opportunities:

- ✓ Online Courses & Programs
- ✓ DVDs or CDs
- ✓ Webinars
- ✓ Online Workshops
- ✓ Certificate Programs

"Each region has its specific obstacles to overcome to successfully implement FFSs (Farmers Field Schools), but one that appears to be common to all is the difficulty of reorienting facilitators from a top-down teaching approach to a participatory mode of operation that enables discovery-based learning."

- Luther, Harris, Sherwood, Gallagher, Mangan & Gamby, 2005, p. 186

## How the Process Works:

IPM Centers and Organizations that are interested in investing in their employees, organizations and programs have the opportunity to identify, create and customize professional development opportunities for their organizations using the Power of the Internet. Individuals and organizations will work directly with faculty at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to develop customized educational opportunities through the use of web-based surveys, interviews and coaching sessions. After the necessary data is collected, a customized training and education plan will be developed for your organization. If your organization is interested in taking advantage of this incredible opportunity, please contact Dr. Connie Reimers-Hild via e-mail (creimers2@unl.edu) or phone (1-402-624-8006).

## References Cited:

- Luther, G.C., Harris, C., Sherwood, S, Gallagher, K, Mangan, J. & Gamby, K.T. (2005). Developments and innovations in Farmer Field Schools and the training of trainers. In G.W. Norton, E.A. Heinrichs, G.C. Luther & M.E. Irwin (Eds.), *Globalizing integrated pest management: A participatory research process* (pp. 159-190). Ames, IA: Blackwell.
- Drucker, P.F. (2000). Knowledge work. *Executive Excellence*, 17(4), 11-12.