

Pesticide Safety Training Targets Hispanic Workers

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Pennsylvania's mushroom growers lead the nation in production, accounting for 47 percent of the country's agaricus or "white button" mushrooms and capturing 37 percent of the nation's fresh

market sales and 69 percent of the processing sales.

Many mushroom house workers are Hispanic, which can make it difficult for employers to communicate job-related safety information. But new educational tools

developed by Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences will help the state's mushroom growers protect Hispanic employees from pesticide exposure on the job.

"HAZfacts: Pesticide Safety for Mushroom Workers" provides Spanish-speaking workers with "right-to-know" information about poison signs and symptoms, personal protection equipment, safety signs, emergency treatment and personal hygiene. The package includes a videotape in Spanish with English subtitles and a flip chart with both Spanish and English text and clear illustrations.

"HAZfacts supports the mushroom industry's efforts to provide a safe workplace," said Dr. Ted Alter, regional director for the southeast region of Penn State Cooperative Extension. "Growers will be required to train workers starting a year from now, but they have begun the process well in advance, HAZfacts will make the training more effective."

Sam Steel, former project associate in agricultural and biological engineering, developed the content of the HAZfacts program before taking a position with the National Safety Council. He drew on his experience as an extension agent in Chester County, teaching Hispanic workers about pesticides.

"I wanted to help mushroom

growers comply with the Environmental Protection Agency's new Worker Protection Standard," he said. "Starting in April 1994, it requires mushroom workers to be instructed within six days of being hired about pesticide safety in a language they understand. Over 1,500 mushroom workers in the state are Hispanic, so language differences can be an obstacle to effective training. The workers also have varying levels of literacy, which complicates teaching them about pesticide safety."

To overcome language and literacy barriers, Steel and communication specialists in the college consulted closely with mushroom workers to make sure the training materials could reach all employees. The actors in the video are mushroom workers who were taped at their workplace, and Steel said their involvement makes the package more realistic.

"If we were shooting a scene and an actor didn't understand what we were trying to explain, he'd tell us," said Steel. "We

would explain the idea to him, and then he would help us put it in words the workers would use. This process tailored the HAZfacts package to the needs of the audience."

The project was sponsored by the Mushroom Ombudsman Program, a group of more than 20 mushroom growers in southeastern Pennsylvania. "HAZfacts makes pesticide safety easily understandable," said James Angelucci, the program's chairman. "It will help our employees know how to minimize the risk of pesticide exposure and what to do in an emergency." Rafael Ramos, a consultant to producers and farm workers for the program, translated the video script and flip-chart text into Spanish.

For more information about "HAZfacts: Pesticide Safety for Mushroom Workers," contact Ag Information Services, The Pennsylvania State University, 119 Agricultural Administration Building, University Park, PA 16802, (814) 865-6309.

Anderson Tractor Opens Store



SHREWSBURY (York Co.) — Anderson Tractor Sales, Inc. recently opened up a store here, featuring a variety of equipment, including Belarus and Zetor tractors and Ingersoll lawn and garden tractors.

The new 3,000 square foot store is located at 536B South Main St., Shrewsbury, PA 17361, (717) 235-0213. Sales manager at the store is Albert Stong.

Pictured at the new location above, front, from left, are Albert Stong, sales; "D.J." Anderson, sales; and Mark Sheldon, sales and service. In back is Doug Anderson, owner. For more information, contact Doug Anderson, (410) 592-7422.



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