

# California Leafy Greens Research Board

Subject: Suggestions for Improving DPR's Strategic Plan

I want to express my gratitude for the opportunity to provide input on the DPR's Strategic Plan. As DPR forges ahead with its strategic objectives and the promotion of Sustainable Pest Management (SPM), I would like to highlight the significance of emerging technology in agriculture and the critical role it plays in enhancing pest management practices.

One noteworthy advancement in this regard is the "see and spray" technology. This innovation enables more precise and targeted application of crop protection chemicals, particularly during the early stages of crop growth when it makes the most sense. Furthermore, the evolving capabilities of drone spray technology hold immense potential for increasing the efficiency of spot spraying in fields. These technological advancements not only reduce chemical usage per acre but also contribute to more environmentally sustainable pest management practices.

As we focus on reducing the use of chemicals of concern, it is imperative to address the concern of pest resistance. Growers indeed need access to a diverse array of crop protection chemicals to facilitate effective rotation. The practice of chemical rotation is essential in both preventing and mitigating issues related to pest resistance. When growers are limited in their options, especially when it comes to insect control, pests can develop resistance to the available chemicals more rapidly and with greater ease.

In the context of Sustainable Pest Management, it is essential to acknowledge the ever-expanding array of biologicals entering the market. While biological solutions represent an exciting frontier, the sheer diversity of products available can be overwhelming for growers. Many of these products have yet to substantiate their claims regarding pest control, and some even come with specific storage requirements, such as refrigeration, which many growers may not be equipped to handle. In this regard, I suggest that the IR-4 Program be leveraged as a valuable resource to evaluate and recommend pest management strategies and technologies, helping growers effectively incorporate these innovations into their SPM plans.

Additionally, the growing interest among conventional farmers in beneficial insect habitat is a positive trend. However, it can be challenging to sustain such habitats in short cropping systems, particularly in the case of coastal vegetable crops with planting periods ranging from 30 to 120 days, depending on the crop and season. This creates unique challenges for maintaining these habitats on certain ranches.

In conclusion, I appreciate DPR's commitment to developing a Strategic Plan that aligns with the principles of Sustainable Pest Management. I hope these suggestions can help shape the plan's focus on harnessing technology, evaluating biologicals, and addressing the unique challenges faced by growers, especially those dealing with short cropping cycles.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Clarke

