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SPM Advisory Comm comments:

Thanks to whoever let me into the meeting when the link was locked, not sure if due to my outdated software. Missed some of the intros, but looks like a diverse and engaged group. I was impressed by the liveliness of the comments and questions. Such a contrast from the PREC meetings.

I appreciated that Sapna succinctly described SPM as pest management to protect the food supply and public health in light of climate change and the new science on pesticides. That expands the definition beyond IPM.

I also appreciated the emphasis on cross agency collaboration, would have liked to have seen a whole list plus acronym expansions. What about collaboration and communication among the various committees within DPR that work on related issues? I found it notable that EJAC was not mentioned; indeed, I don't recall hearing the term environmental justice in the meeting, altho the "public" was mentioned a few times, mostly in regard to committee members' belief we're not understanding what growers are doing with respect to IPM. I recognize that the EJAC is not under SPM's umbrella, but its work is certainly related, as is the PREC. And with Sapna's description of the purpose of the SPARC committee, it's unclear to me how that committee's work will differ from that of the PREC.

With the recognition that tools and alternatives are key to SPM implementation, I noted that, while DPR is working on new regulation for drone delivery of pesticides, it didn't appear that anyone with specific expertise in the area of tech solutions as alternatives was on the committee. Yet several committee members have close ties to the pesticide industry, either as purveyors of products or as PCAs who may receive commissions from pesticide sellers.

The role of PCAs in communicating and adopting changes needs more emphasis. As long as PCAs' incomes are dependent on kickbacks from the chemical industry, that's not going to happen. There will need to be some changes in their training and more accountability for their regulatory obligation to offer info on less toxic alternatives first.

The input from people who work in the urban sector was especially valuable. Great suggestion to have urban PURs, especially in light of the toxicity of some of the chemicals used in urban pest control. (E.g. sulfuryl fluoride, a potent greenhouse gas, used heavily in some California communities.) We need to address the risk of exposure for people in their home and indoor settings, from personal pesticide use, institutional use, and use by neighbors. The idea of organic certification for pest control in urban spaces is also a good one. I love the idea of the color-coded stoplight tiered pesticide system, based on the pest hazard as well as pesticide hazard. That could be especially useful in school settings and other public spaces.

I found the first formats of the SPM matrix much too text-based. There were only two versions that were highly visual, the sort-of-Venn diagram and the flow chart. I thought those had potential as models for effective communication, would need time to read the slides to see past my resistance to other presentation formats.

I agree that there needs to be more explanation of how SPM differs from IPM. That communication should go to concerned groups, both rural residents and growers, and discussion of the potential impacts of SPM should include all "stakeholders". Thus far, the main distinction I've heard is the focus on the economic viability of California's (large and diverse) agricultural system. Other elements worth emphasizing:

Developing collaborative regional- and crop-based solutions, with farmers sharing best practices for pest prevention and early intervention;

Positive response to public pressure both from ag communities and consumers, with their shared desire to reduce the toxicity of our food system;

Climate resilience, which necessarily includes reduced dependence on fossil fuels, from their use for fertilizers and ag chemicals to packaging and delivery of ag products to markets.

Yes, markets are key, and if SPM-engaged agencies plan to provide incentives, practices must be verifiable. Research, support, and training will be needed. Complicated issues will need to be rendered clear and accessible to action.

It was great to end (almost) with mention of an existing color-coded system for birds, ranking harms from pesticides. That's a model that could be adapted more broadly for pesticides, with columns for impacts on human health, soil, water, and wildlife, plus potential for climate harm: a useful task for some of your new, tech-savvy staff!

DPR has the capability to set targets for reduction of highly toxic pesticides, and to measure progress toward that goal. Several lists already exist; new science and community concerns should be taken into consideration. As someone schooled in Public Health, I recognized it's hard to measure the absence of a problem. But that's how healthy conditions are built: by removing harms and unnecessary barriers. 2050 is very likely to be beyond my lifetime. This committee has expertise and enthusiasm that can help DPR pick up the pace.