

Chapter 15.92 RCW
CENTER FOR SUSTAINING AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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RCW 15.92.005 Finding. The legislature finds that public concerns are increasing about the need for significant efforts to develop sustainable systems in agriculture. The sustainable systems would address many anxieties, including the erosion of agricultural lands, the protection and wise utilization of natural resources, and the safety of food production. Consumers have demonstrated their apprehension in the marketplace by refusing to purchase products whose safety is suspect and consumer confidence is essential for a viable agriculture in Washington. Examples of surface and ground water contamination by pesticides and chemical fertilizers raise concerns about deterioration of environmental quality. Reducing soil erosion would maintain water quality and protect the long-term viability of the soil for agricultural productivity. Both farmers and farm labor are apprehensive about the effects of pesticides on their health and personal safety. Development of sustainable farming systems would strengthen the economic viability of Washington's agricultural production industry.

Public anxieties over the use of chemicals in agriculture have resulted in congress amending the federal insecticide, fungicide and rodenticide act which requires all pesticides and their uses registered before November 1984 to be reregistered, complying with present standards, by the end of 1997. The legislature finds that the pesticide reregistration process and approval requirements could reduce the availability of chemical pesticides for use on minor crops in Washington and may jeopardize the farmers' ability to grow these crops in Washington.

The legislature recognizes that Washington State University supports research and extension programs that can lead to reductions in pesticide use where viable alternatives are both environmentally and economically sound. Yet, the legislature finds that a focused and

coordinated program is needed to develop possible alternatives, increase public confidence in the safety of the food system, and educate farmers and natural resource managers on land stewardship.

The legislature further finds that growers, processors, and agribusiness depend upon pesticide laboratories associated with manufacturers, regional universities, state departments of agriculture, and the United States department of agriculture to provide residue data for registering essential pesticides. The registration of uses for minor crops, which include vegetables, fruits, nuts, berries, nursery and greenhouse crops, and reregistration of needed chemicals, are activities of particular concern to ensure crop production. Furthermore, public demands for improved information and education on pesticides and risk assessment efforts justify these efforts.

The legislature further finds that multiple alternatives are needed for pest control, including programs for integrated pest management, genetic resistance to pests, biological control, cultural practices, and the use of appropriate approved chemicals. [1991 c 341 s 1.]

RCW 15.92.010 Definitions. Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Agricultural commodity" means any distinctive type of agricultural, horticultural, viticultural, floricultural, vegetable, or animal product, including but not limited to, products qualifying as organic products under chapter 15.86 RCW, private sector cultured aquatic products as defined in RCW 15.85.020, bees and honey, and Christmas trees but not including timber or timber products.

(2) "Center" means the center for sustaining agriculture and natural resources established at Washington State University.

(3) "Integrated pest management" is a strategy that uses various combinations of pest control methods, biological, cultural, and chemical, in a compatible manner to achieve satisfactory control and ensure favorable economic and environmental consequences.

(4) "IR-4 program" means interregional research project number four, clearances of chemicals and biologics for minor or special uses, established in 1963 by the cooperative state research service of the United States department of agriculture, the coordinated national program involving land-grant universities and the United States department of agriculture to provide data required for the registration of pesticides needed for the production of minor crops.

(5) "Laboratory" means the food and environmental quality laboratory established at Washington State University at Tri-Cities.

(6) "Minor crop" means an agricultural crop considered to be minor in the national context of registering pesticides.

(7) "Minor use" means a pesticide use considered to be minor in the national context of registering pesticides including, but not limited to, a use for a special local need.

(8) "Natural resources" means soil, water, air, forests, wetlands, wildlands, and wildlife.

(9) "Pesticide" means chemical or biologic used to control pests such as insect, rodent, nematode, snail, slug, weed, virus, or any organism the director of agriculture may declare to be a pest.

(10) "Registration" means use of a pesticide approved by the state department of agriculture.

(11) "Sustainable agriculture" means a systems approach to farming, ranching, and natural resource production that builds on and supports the physical, biological, and ecological resource base upon which agriculture depends. The goals of sustainable agriculture are to provide human food and fiber needs in an economically viable manner for the agriculture industry and in a manner which protects the environment and contributes to the overall safety and quality of life. [2011 c 103 s 32; 1995 c 390 s 4; 1991 c 341 s 2.]

Reviser's note: The definitions in this section have been alphabetized pursuant to RCW 1.08.015(2)(k).

Purpose—2011 c 103: See note following RCW 15.26.120.

RCW 15.92.020 Center established. A center for sustaining agriculture and natural resources is established at Washington State University. The center shall provide statewide leadership in research, extension, and resident instruction programs to sustain agriculture and natural resources. [1991 c 341 s 3.]

RCW 15.92.030 Primary activities—Cooperative with University of Washington. The center is to work cooperatively with the University of Washington to maximize the use of financial resources in addressing forestry issues. The center's primary activities include but are not limited to:

- (1) Research programs which focus on developing possible alternative production and marketing systems through:
 - (a) Integrated pest management;
 - (b) Biological pest control;
 - (c) Plant and animal breeding;
 - (d) Conservation strategies; and
 - (e) Understanding the ecological basis of nutrient management;
- (2) Extension programs which focus on:
 - (a) On-farm demonstrations and evaluation of alternative production practices;
 - (b) Information dissemination, and education concerning sustainable agriculture and natural resource systems; and
 - (c) Communication and training on sustainable agriculture strategies for consumers, producers, and farm and conservation-related organizations;
- (3) On-farm testing and research to calculate and demonstrate costs and benefits, including economic and environmental benefits and trade-offs, inherent in farming systems and technologies;
- (4) Crop rotation and other natural resource processes such as pest-predator interaction to mitigate weed, disease, and insect problems, thereby reducing soil erosion and environmental impacts;
- (5) Management systems to improve nutrient uptake, health, and resistance to diseases and pests by incorporating the genetic and biological potential of plants and animals into production practices;
- (6) Soil management, including conservation tillage and other practices to minimize soil loss and maintain soil productivity; and
- (7) Animal production systems emphasizing preventive disease practices and mitigation of environmental pollution. [1991 c 341 s 4.]

RCW 15.92.040 Administrator. The center is managed by an administrator. The administrator shall hold a joint appointment as an assistant director in the Washington State University agricultural research center and cooperative extension.

(1) A committee shall advise the administrator. The dean of the Washington State University college of agriculture and home economics shall make appointments to the advisory committee so the committee is representative of affected groups, such as the Washington department of social and health services, the Washington department of ecology, the Washington department of agriculture, the chemical and fertilizer industry, food processors, marketing groups, consumer groups, environmental groups, farm labor, and natural resource and agricultural organizations.

(2) Each appointed member shall serve a term of three years, and one-third are appointed every year. The entire committee is appointed the first year: One-third for a term of one year, one-third for a term of two years, and one-third for a term of three years. A member shall continue to serve until a successor is appointed. Vacancies are filled by appointment for the unexpired term. The members of the advisory committee shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred while engaged in the business of the committee as provided in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

(3) It is the responsibility of the administrator, in consultation with the advisory committee, to:

(a) Recommend research and extension priorities for the center;

(b) Conduct a competitive grants process to solicit, review, and prioritize research and extension proposals; and

(c) Advise Washington State University on the progress of the development and implementation of research, teaching, and extension programs that sustain agriculture and natural resources of Washington. [1991 c 341 s 5.]

RCW 15.92.050 Food and environmental quality laboratory. A food and environmental quality laboratory operated by Washington State University is established in the Tri-Cities area to conduct pesticide residue studies concerning fresh and processed foods, in the environment, and for human and animal safety. The laboratory shall cooperate with public and private laboratories in Washington, Idaho, and Oregon. [1991 c 341 s 6.]

RCW 15.92.060 Laboratory responsibilities. The responsibilities of the laboratory shall include:

(1) Evaluating regional requirements for minor crop registration through the federal IR-4 program;

(2) Providing a program for tracking the availability of effective pesticides for minor crops, minor uses, and emergency uses in this state;

(3) Conducting studies on the fate of pesticides on crops and in the environment, including soil, air, and water;

(4) Improving pesticide information and education programs;

(5) Assisting federal and state agencies with questions regarding registration of pesticides which are deemed critical to crop production, consistent with priorities established in RCW 15.92.070; and

(6) Assisting in the registration of biopesticides, pheromones, and other alternative chemical and biological methods. [1995 c 390 s 5; 1991 c 341 s 7.]

RCW 15.92.070 Board to advise laboratory. The laboratory is advised by a board appointed by the dean of the Washington State University college of agriculture and home economics. The dean shall cooperate with appropriate officials in Washington, Idaho, and Oregon in selecting board members.

(1) The board shall consist of one representative from each of the following interests: A human toxicologist or a health professional knowledgeable in worker exposure to pesticides, the Washington State University vice provost for research or research administrator, representatives from the state department of agriculture, the department of ecology, the department of health, the department of labor and industries, privately owned Washington pesticide analytical laboratories, federal regional pesticide laboratories, an Idaho and Oregon laboratory, whether state, university, or private, a chemical and fertilizer industry representative, farm organizations, food processors, marketers, farm labor, environmental organizations, and consumers. Each board member shall serve a three-year term. The members of the board shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred while engaged in the business of the board as provided in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

(2) The board is in liaison with the pesticide incident reporting and tracking panel and shall review the chemicals investigated by the laboratory according to the following criteria:

(a) Chemical uses for which a database exists on environmental fate and acute toxicology, and that appear safer environmentally than pesticides available on the market;

(b) Chemical uses not currently under evaluation by public laboratories in Idaho or Oregon for use on Washington crops;

(c) Chemicals that have lost or may lose their registration and that no reasonably viable alternatives for Washington crops are known; and

(d) Other chemicals vital to Washington agriculture.

(3) The laboratory shall conduct research activities using approved good laboratory practices, namely procedures and recordkeeping required of the national IR-4 minor use pesticide registration program.

(4) The laboratory shall coordinate activities with the national IR-4 program. [2010 1st sp.s. c 7 s 133; 1991 c 341 s 8.]

Effective date—2010 1st sp.s. c 26; 2010 1st sp.s. c 7: See note following RCW 43.03.027.

RCW 15.92.080 Annual report—Acceptable risk of human and environmental exposure. The center for sustaining agriculture and natural resources at Washington State University shall prepare and present an annual report to the appropriate legislative committees. The report shall include the center's priorities to find alternatives to the use of agricultural chemicals that pose human and environmental risks. The first report, due no later than November 1, 1992, shall use federal criteria of acceptable risk of human and environmental

exposure for establishing such priorities and for conducting responsive research and education programs. For each subsequent year, the report shall detail the center's progress toward meeting the goals identified in the center's plan. [1991 c 341 s 9.]

RCW 15.92.090 Commission on integrated pest management—Established—Composition—Duration of membership—Compensation. (1) A commission on integrated pest management is established. The commission shall be composed of 12 voting members appointed by the director as follows:

(a) Eight members from the following segments of the state's agricultural industry as nominated by a statewide private agricultural association or agricultural commodity commission formed under this title: (i) The tree fruit industry; (ii) hop growers; (iii) potato growers; (iv) wheat growers; (v) vegetable and seed growers; (vi) berry growers; (vii) wine grape growers; and (viii) the nursery and landscape industry. Although members are appointed from various segments of the agriculture industry, they are appointed to represent and advance the interests of the industry as a whole.

(b) One member from each of the following: (i) Forest protection industry; (ii) food processors; (iii) agricultural chemical industry; and (iv) professional pesticide applicators. One member shall be appointed for each such segment of the industry and shall be nominated by a statewide, private association of that segment of the industry. The representative of the agricultural chemical industry shall be involved in the manufacture of agricultural crop protection products.

The following shall be ex officio, nonvoting members of the commission: The coordinator of the interregional project number four at Washington State University; the director of the department of ecology or the director's designee; the director of the department of agriculture or the director's designee; the director of the department of labor and industries or the director's designee; the secretary of the department of health or the secretary's designee; and a representative of the United States environmental protection agency, region 10, who has working knowledge of federal pesticide policy issues.

(2) Each voting member of the commission shall serve a term of three years. A vacancy shall be filled by appointment for the unexpired term in the same manner provided for an appointment to the full term. No member of the commission may be removed by the director during his or her term of office unless for cause of incapacity, incompetence, neglect of duty, or malfeasance in office. Each member of the commission shall receive travel expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060 for attending meetings of the commission and for performing special duties, in the way of official commission business, specifically assigned to the person by the commission. The voting members of the commission serve without compensation from the state other than such travel expenses.

(3) The commission shall elect a chair from among its voting members each calendar year. After its original organizational meeting, the commission shall meet at the call of the chair. A majority of the voting members of the commission constitutes a quorum and an official action of the commission may be taken by a majority vote of the quorum. [2023 c 37 s 1; 2011 1st sp.s. c 21 s 24; 1999 c 247 s 1; 1995 c 390 s 1.]

Effective date—2011 1st sp.s. c 21: See note following RCW 72.23.025.

RCW 15.92.095 Commission on integrated pest management—State appropriations—Restrictions on use of state money—Commission approval required. (1) This subsection applies to the use of state appropriations made to or legislatively intended for the commission on integrated pest management and to any other moneys appropriated by the state and received by the commission on integrated pest management:

(a) The moneys may not be expended without the express approval of the commission on integrated pest management;

(b) The moneys may be used for: (i) Evaluations, studies, or investigations approved by the commission on integrated pest management regarding the registration or reregistration of pesticides for minor crops or minor uses or regarding the availability of pesticides for emergency uses. These evaluations, studies, or investigations may be conducted by the food and environmental quality laboratory or may be secured by the commission from other qualified laboratories, researchers, or contractors by contract, which contracts may include, but are not limited to, those purchasing the use of proprietary information; (ii) evaluations, studies, or investigations approved by the commission regarding research, implementation, and demonstration of any aspect of integrated pest management and pesticide resistance management programs; (iii) the tracking system described in RCW 15.92.060; and (iv) the support of the commission on integrated pest management and its activities; and

(c) Not less than 25 percent of such moneys shall be dedicated to studies or investigations concerning the registration or use of pesticides for crops that are not among the top 20 agricultural commodities in production value produced in the state, as determined annually by the Washington agricultural statistics service.

(2) The commission on integrated pest management shall establish priorities to guide it in approving the use of moneys for evaluations, studies, and investigations under this section. Each biennium, the commission shall prepare a contingency plan for providing funding for laboratory studies or investigations that are necessary to pesticide registrations or related processes that will address emergency conditions for agricultural crops that are not generally predicted at the beginning of the biennium. [2023 c 37 s 2; 1999 c 247 s 2; 1995 c 390 s 2.]

RCW 15.92.100 Commission on integrated pest management—Duties. The commission on integrated pest management shall:

(1) Provide guidance to the food and environmental quality laboratory established in RCW 15.92.050 regarding the laboratory's studies, investigations, and evaluations concerning the registration of pesticides for use in this state for minor crops and minor uses and concerning the availability of pesticides for emergency uses;

(2) Encourage agricultural organizations to assist in providing funding, in-kind services, or materials for laboratory studies and investigations concerning the registration of pesticides and research, implementation, and demonstration of any aspect of integrated pest management and pesticide resistance management programs for minor crops and minor uses that would benefit the organizations;

(3) Provide guidance to the laboratory regarding a program for: Tracking the availability of effective pesticides for minor crops, minor uses, and emergency uses; providing this information to organizations of agricultural producers; and maintaining close contact between the laboratory, the department of agriculture, and organizations of agricultural producers regarding the need for research to support the registration of pesticides for minor crops and minor uses and the availability of pesticides for emergency uses;

(4) Ensure that the activities of the commission and the laboratory are coordinated with the activities of other laboratories in the Pacific Northwest, the United States department of agriculture, and the United States environmental protection agency to maximize the effectiveness of regional efforts to assist in the registration of pesticides for minor crops and minor uses and in providing for the availability of pesticides for emergency uses for the region and the state; and

(5) Ensure that prior to approving any residue study that there is written confirmation of registrant support and willingness or ability to add the given minor crop to its label including any restrictions or guidelines the registrant intends to impose. [2023 c 37 s 3; 1999 c 247 s 3; 1995 c 390 s 3.]

RCW 15.92.110 Commission on integrated pest management—Receipt of gifts, grants, and endowments. The commission on integrated pest management, and Washington State University on behalf of the commission, may receive such gifts, grants, and endowments from public or private sources as may be used from time to time, in trust or otherwise, for the use and benefit of the commission and expend the same or any income therefrom according to the terms of the gifts, grants, or endowments. [2023 c 37 s 5; 1995 c 390 s 7.]