



Tribal Pesticide Program Council

Summer 2024

**The Ak-Chin Indian Community Pesticide Program
and
TPPC Member Spotlight: Theodore (Ted) Puetz, Pesticide Control Specialist**

Development and Updates

Agriculture is central to the Ak-Chin Indian Community. The Community Pesticide Program established its first ordinance in 1998, facilitated by Roman Orona, the current program manager. The ordinance was updated in 2010 and is currently in the process of being updated again. The goal is to meet the needs of the community by addressing new technology such as drones and to improve reporting processes, enforcement, and permitting. Tribal Pesticide Program Council (TPPC) member and Ak-Chin Indian Community Pesticide Control Officer, Theodore Puetz, is working on these updates. Updates are in the preliminary phases where employees such as



Theodore document needs for improvements as they complete inspections. After this phase they will work with their legal team and consult with stakeholders. Interviewing stakeholders to understand their feedback and ideas will be key in this process.

The Community currently has 37 stakeholders which include Ak-Chin Farms, Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino, Santa Cruz Commerce Center, Ak-Chin Regional Airport, Southern Dunes, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, a poultry and greenhouse operation to name a few. Government enterprises

such as the Him-Dak Museum, Library and preschool are part of this contact list. They interface with two unique scenarios with some vendors being community members while others are not, but all parties are held to the same Environmental standards or the Ak-Chin Indian Community

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OR VISIT US ON THE WEB AT: tppcwebsite.org

Ak-Chin Indian Community Pesticide Program (continued)

Pesticide Code, potential changes will go to their council for final approval. Environmental Programs hopes to finalize updates of the Ak-Chin Indian Community Pesticide Control Ordinance within the next 12-24 months. The pesticide program currently consists of six employees and is set to expand in the coming year as they hope to hire one or two new team members.

Program Specifics

The pesticide program works with prenotification, permitting, training and certification verification, routine inspections, and enforcement. To obtain a permit, vendors must submit prenotification, proof of insurance, and their training certificates. Upon completing this step, they will receive permit documents to be completed and submitted. They are provided a letter informing them of the rules and regulations to avoid claims of ignorance. Prenotification allows an exchange of information between vendors and the pesticide program to reduce misunderstandings, verify products are allowed to be used, and to ultimately create a system that prioritizes safety while accomplishing a valuable service to farmers and residents via pest control. This process has been streamlined to be completed within a matter of days. Employers and vendors receive training through the state of Arizona. Training includes information on Safety Data Sheet (SDS) posting and label regulations. Farm workers, including harvest crews, must have proof of Worker Protection Standard (WPS) training prior to beginning work tasks on the Farm's operation. These trainings recently evolved due to the Covid 19 pandemic and are now held more frequently to ensure annual training is available.



Enforcement Through Compliance Assistance

Theodore takes the perspective that compliance assistance is more effective than retroactive enforcement. An overarching goal of the program is to increase visibility and awareness of Environmental Programs within the community. This helps businesses and stakeholders understand what the requirements are and who they can contact for assistance. To accomplish this, Theodore has participated in health fairs, Earth Day celebrations, rabies clinics, and educational sessions at locations such as preschools. Pesticide officials are there to answer questions and provide items such as fly swatters to encourage interaction. Their priority is to help community members understand that they play an important role in the safety of their homes and outdoor spaces. This helps them build relationships within the community and create an atmosphere of safety and collaboration. Violations occur infrequently, but when they are discovered in the pre-permitting and inspection process corrective measures are taken immediately. It is important to the program that inspections are routine and equitable following the Routine Inspection Scheme. Environmental Programs is building a website where they will share information, resources, and newsletters. They hope to expand the information on the website to better inform vendors, businesses and community members. Puetz contributes to The Runner, a local newspaper, on a quarterly basis to share program highlights with the community.

Ak-Chin Indian Community Pesticide Program (continued)

Collaboration and EPA Cooperative Agreement

Ak-Chin Indian Community has a FIFRA cooperative agreement with EPA in addition to their own pesticide code. This agreement acts as an underlying mechanism to bring on additional resources that promote Environmental Programs' ability to implement federal law. The agreement also mandates reporting requirements. As Puetz completes the agricultural reporting documents, he finds value in these reports. Through these reports he is able to see the nature of the pesticides that are being applied and location. This information serves as a safety mechanism promoting the best possible responses in potential emergency scenarios. First responders are able to understand restricted entry intervals (REI) and necessary personal protective equipment (PPE). Over all, these regulations benefit the pesticide users as well as the community. The tribe also collaborates with Gila River Indian Community, who assisted them with establishing the EPA cooperative agreement and Pesticide Control Ordinance. They also collaborated with Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community on pesticide code development. Additionally, they have a working relationship with the state of Arizona and the Maricopa Agriculture Center.



Member Spotlight: Theodore (Ted) Puetz, Pesticide Control Specialist

Ted is the Pesticide Control Specialist serving the Ak-Chin Indian Community. He entered this role in 2019 after a career working in the pesticide industry. He previously worked in product management and on various environmental initiatives throughout his career. Projects included introducing reduced till and no till farming and biotechnology projects to reduce atrazine use within watersheds. He grew up in rural Missouri on a farm where they had row crops and

cattle; including Holsteins for daily milking. He learned about animal care and health as a child through the 4-H program and through veterinarian visits to their farm. He gained firsthand experience by applying pesticides himself, before PPE regulations, certification and training were required. Weed and Insect control on crops and grain storage were his responsibility. His upbringing gave him a strong work ethic as he recalls the chores milking and harvesting wood for building while living with limited electricity. Experiencing running water in their home for the first time at age 10 was a life changer. Ted was the first in his family to earn his bachelor's degree and worked hard at the family farm during the summer to pay his college tuition. With a passion for science, he holds a degree in Animal Science from the University of Missouri. While in school, he participated in long distance running and other athletic activities. Ted is part of a diverse family with members from many different places and cultures including the Blackfoot and Cherokee tribes. He feels serving as a pesticide control specialist has taken his journey full circle. His background and upbringing inspire him to appreciate and understand the lifestyles and values of those he serves at Ak-Chin Indian Community.

Links:

[The Ak-Chin Indian Community Website](#)

[The Ak-Chin O'odham Runner \(Newsletter\)](#)

Vacant Executive Committee Representative Positions

The Executive Committee consists of TPPC Members elected by their peers to represent their regions on the Council. When fully staffed the Executive Committee includes the Chair and Vice-Chair, representatives from each of the ten EPA regions as well as one from Alaska, and four At-Large positions. Executive Committee members are responsible for ensuring that their region's tribes are represented at TPPC meetings in order to determine and raise issues of importance to these tribes, and relay information back to them. Executive Committee members are encouraged to communicate with their Regional Tribal Operations Committee (RTOCs) and EPA Regional Offices prior to TPPC meetings in order to identify pesticide program needs and issues.

The TPPC is currently seeking regional representatives to fill several vacancies on the Executive Committee and represent their Tribes' and/or Tribal Organizations interests' related to pesticides and environmental concerns. Representatives must be nominated by a TPPC member from their region or may nominate themselves, and the representative must have an authorization letter on file. If you are interested in representing your region or have questions about participating in the Executive Committee, please contact TPPC Coordinator Mark Daniels at mark.daniels@nau.edu or (928) 523-8897. Current vacancies include: **Region 1, Region 3, Region 4, Region 7, and Alaska.**

Updates and Announcements

Partnership Group Update: The Sustainable Food Lab

Kelly Rincon from the Sustainable Food Lab (SFL) presented at the Spring 2023 TPPC meeting to introduce the SFL and how they work to create a sustainable food system by helping organizations turn ideas into action. Below she shares an update on SFL's work:

In the past year, SFL has continued to expand the North Dakota Trusted Advisor Partnership (ND TAP) in collaboration with their program partners. There have now been two cohorts of Certified Crop Advisors (CCAs) who have received training on soil-health building practices, with a total of 26 trained CCAs consulting across most of the counties in North Dakota. In March 2024, we rolled out the TAP financial incentive program to farmers and CCAs involved in TAP, which combines funding from a federal RCPP grant with funding from four food and beverage companies (PepsiCo, General Mills, Hershey's, King Arthur Baking). The financial incentive program will provide cost

share to growers who minimize their tillage, reduce their Nitrogen use, and plant cover crops.

The TAP program has also made progress in reaching out to tribal communities. SFL has embarked on a pilot project with the Department of Agriculture at one of the tribes in North Dakota. In partnership with Project Mosaic, an indigenous consulting group, SFL will design and facilitate listening circles with tribal producers and community leaders to gather feedback on the biggest challenges they currently face. From there, SFL hopes to kick off a co-design process to prioritize producer and community needs and start to design potential solutions.

Contact [Kelly Rincon](#) if you would like to get involved with SFL.

[Sustainable Food Lab Website](#)

[Sustainable Food Lab TPPC Spring Meeting 2023 presentation](#)

Conferences and Meetings:

ASPCRO Annual Conference

The Association of Structural Pest Control (ASPCRO) will hold its annual meeting **August 19-23** in Lexington, Kentucky. For more information, see <https://aspcro.org/meetings/>

TPPC Fall Meeting

The Tribal Pesticide Program Council Fall 2024 meeting will be held **October 8-10** at Stewarts Point Rancheria in California hosted by the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians. More details will be provided as additional plans are confirmed.

Trainings and Courses:

Pesticide Labels PREP Course

The Pesticide Regulatory Education Program (PREP) Network will provide a training on Pesticide Labels from Registration to Enforcement on **August 5-8** in Fort Collins, CO. For more information see <https://agsci.colostate.edu/agbio/prep/pesticide-labels-course/>

Training for Private Applicators Under the EPA Plan

EPA will be holding their quarterly training for private applicators in Indian Country under the EPA plan for restricted use pesticides (RUPs) **August 7-8** online. To learn more visit <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-applicator-certificationindian-country/training-private-applicators-under-epa-plan>

ITCA Pesticide Inspector Training

The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona (ITCA) is holding a Pesticide Inspector Training for pesticide inspectors and program managers who work under a FIFRA Cooperative Agreement on **September 10-13** in Chandler, AZ. For more information see <https://tppcwebsite.org/event/tribal-pesticide->

Updates and Announcements (*continued*)

[inspector-training/](#)

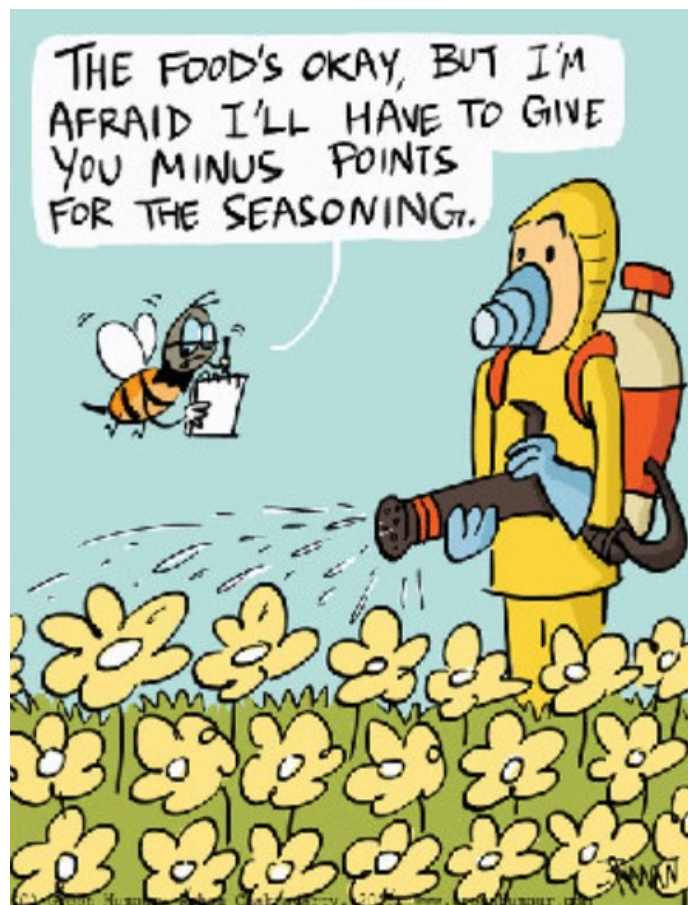
Laboratory Issues PREP Course

The Pesticide Regulatory Education Program (PREP) Network will provide a training on Laboratory Issues on **September 23-26** in Denver, CO. For more information see <https://agsci.colostate.edu/agbio/prep/laboratory-issues-course/>

Tribal Consultation and Public Comment Opportunities:

Proposed Establishment of the NTC Under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (**ends August 9**)

EPA is proposing to reform the National Tribal Caucus (NTC) under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, and has opened the proposal for consultation. For information contact Daniel Vaught at vaught.daniel@epa.gov



TPPC Executive Committee Members

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(Vacant)
At-Large Representative

The TPPC is a member-based organization with more than 100 members from 62 Tribes and tribal organizations as of January 2024, whose activities are funded by a cooperative agreement with the EPA. The Council serves as a tribal technical resource, and provides a forum for dialogue between Tribes and the EPA on program and policy development relating to pesticides issues and concerns. Assistance provided to Tribes includes support in building tribal pesticide programs and conducting pesticide education and training, and the preparation of resources for Tribes interested in specialized issues such as Integrated Pest Management and pollinators. Through its interaction with the EPA, the TPPC keeps Tribes informed of developments in the regulation of pesticides and pesticide use, and provides feedback to the EPA on such matters from a tribal perspective (though it is important to note that communication between the EPA and the TPPC does not substitute for direct government-to-government consultation).

For information about how to join the TPPC, contact Mark Daniels at mark.daniels@nau.edu or (928) 523-8897.

