



MDA Pesticide Training Newsletter

January 2025

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Five Changes from MDA’s New Pesticide Certification and Training Plan

by Matt Deaton, Training and Development Supervisor

Maybe we should start with what is a pesticide certification and training plan? Pesticide certification and training plans are agreements between EPA and states, tribes or territories that outlines how they will train, certify and in some cases regulate pesticide applicators in accordance with FIFRA. MT first established a certification & training plan with EPA in the 1970’s. The plan was later modified in 1983 but remained relatively unchanged for the next 35 years. In 2017 EPA issued the [CPA final rule](#) requiring **ALL** states, territories, tribes and some federal agencies with existing EPA-approved certification plans to submit proposed modifications by March 4, 2020 to comply with new federal standards. The intent of the final rule was to bring outdated plans into compliance with changes to FIFRA, enhance applicator competencies, set age limits for certified applicators and create new or revised applicator classifications. Due to the complexity of many certification and training plans across the country and their interconnectedness with certifying authority’s policies, procedures and administrative rules, EPA later extended the expiration date for updating existing plans to November 4, 2023.

In July 2023, the Montana Department of Agriculture’s (MDA) pesticide certification and training plan was approved by EPA. MDA’s plan triggered significant modifications to our existing administrative rules, which were finalized in the fall of 2024. The updated administrative rules containing the modifications will be published in early 2025 and changes will begin to roll out over the next few years.

As an applicator or dealer, you may be wondering how the new certification & training plan and the subsequent administrative rule changes will affect you or your business. Below we’ll discuss 5 significant changes that may impact your license.

5 Major Changes for Pesticide Certification & Training Plan:

1. **National Core Manual (3rd edition)** - Will be released that includes new state and federal competencies like professionalism. MDA intends to adopt or modify the new manual and begin using it in 2026.
2. **Updated Categories** - We have updated categories for pesticide applicators. A new category for restricted use Non-soil Fumigants has been created for private and non-private applicators respectively. Private applicators will also have a new Aerial classification. The existing Seed Treatment category has been refined to focus only on seed treatment and will have a new manual. Lastly, the School IPM endorsement has been made a stand-alone category called School Pest Control.
3. **Restricted use Dealer Records** - Will be expanding to include three additional pieces of information:
 - a. any applicable 24c or section 18 registration numbers,
 - b. the purchasers license expiration date and the applicable category,
 - c. the name and address of the residence or place of business for the individual purchasing the pesticide.Updated RUP sales records and examples will be made available to existing dealers in 2025.
4. **Licensed Operators**— Training standards are updated. MT has always required that operators be either trained by a certified applicator or pass that national core exam with at least an 80% score. In addition to these two options the department will be adding a self-paced training option applicators can use to train or assist in training their operators.
5. **Nationwide Minimum age of 18 years old** - To use or become certified to use restricted use pesticides. There is an exception of 16 years old under the Worker Protection Standard for non-certified applicators on family-owned farms working under the supervision of a private applicator who is a member of their immediate family.

We recognize that these changes may pose challenges to some applicators and the department will be working closely with those licensees to provide the appropriate training and resources. Please monitor your email for notices and resources specific to your license type and categories held, as updates are implemented over the coming years. MDA is committed to ensuring the roll out of these changes has as little impact on your pesticide operation as possible.

Initial Core Applicator Trainings-Commercial, Non-Commercial or Governmental and Dealers

Overview: The Montana Department of Agriculture is sponsoring a three-day training designed for those interested in becoming a commercial, non-commercial, or governmental pesticide applicator and/or a pesticide dealer. The training is designed to prepare participants for the National Core Exam in Montana, provide hands-on-exercises, discuss licensing requirements, and learn about available resources. It is intended to provide training for initial certification only.*

The National Core Exam will be proctored on the 3rd day of the training. Testing is optional, but highly recommended. Reviewing the core manual and passing the subsequent exam with at least an 80% score will allow individuals to obtain their dealers license and is the first step to obtaining a commercial, non-commercial, government, or public utility applicators license. To obtain an applicators license individuals must also pass at least one category specific exam relating to the sites in which they will be working. If you are interested in taking a category specific exam at the conclusion of the Core training, please contact us ahead of time.**

Cost: \$75 which includes snacks and the core manual. Upon registration, the core manual and an agenda will be mailed to participants.

Times: Training at each location will begin at 8AM daily and end at 5PM, the first 2 days, and 8AM to noon the 3rd day. Participants will be given an hour for lunch.

***Recertification credits will not be available for attendance at these trainings.**

**For a list of category classifications go to <https://agr.mt.gov/Topics/N-P/Pesticide-Pages/Pesticide-License-Pages/Commercial-Applicators> OR <https://agr.mt.gov/Topics/N-P/Pesticide-Pages/Pesticide-License-Pages/Governmental-Applicators>

For more information, please contact us at 406-444-3732.

Dates and Locations:

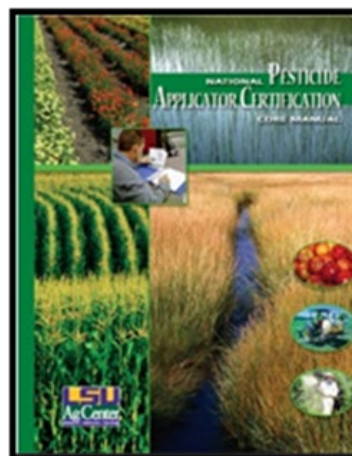
- ☼ **February 26 – 28, 2025 – Belgrade**
Holiday Inn Express
Address: 309 W Madison Ave, Belgrade, MT 59714
Phone: (406) 388-7100
- ☼ **March 12 – 14, 2025 – Missoula**
Double Tree by Hilton Hotel Missoula – Edgewater
Address: 100 Madison St, Missoula, MT 59802
Phone: (406) 728-3100
- ☼ **March 26 – 28, 2025 – Billings**
Hampton Inn Billings
Address: 5110 Southgate Dr, Billings, MT 59101
Phone: (406) 532-5300
- ☼ **April 9 – 11, 2025 – Great Falls**
Great Falls College MSU
Address: 2100 16th Ave S, Great Falls, MT 59405
Phone: (406) 771-4300

To Register for the In-Person Initial Core Training:

scan the QR code to the below

OR

go to: bit.ly/pestmt



Initial Core Applicator Trainings – Private

Montana State University Extension is coordinating three in person Initial Private Applicator Trainings this spring. Each course qualifies attendees for a Montana Private (Farm) Pesticide Applicator License. This license permits applicators to apply restricted use pesticides (RUP) on land that they own, rent, or lease. These courses are also open to other individuals desiring to learn more about pesticides. To learn more about the Montana Private Applicator license and to check for more initial trainings as the season progresses visit our website [<https://www.montana.edu/extension/pesticides/> [[montana.edu](https://www.montana.edu/)]].

☼ **January 29, 2025 – Broadwater County Initial Private Applicator Training**

- a. Location: Broadwater County Fairgrounds, 4-H Building, 189 Hwy 12 E, Townsend, MT
- b. Registration: Encouraged by January 17; walk ins welcome. To register contact Jessica Erickson at (406) 266-9242.
- c. Fee: \$35 for new applicators, \$15 for recertifying applicators or others

☼ **April 1, 2025 – Deer Lodge County Initial Private Applicator Training**

- a. Location: Fairmont Hot Springs Resort, 1500 Fairmont Rd, Anaconda, MT
- b. Registration: Required by March 25. Register online or contact Amy Bowser at (406) 994-5178 or amy.bowser@montana.edu.
- c. Fee: \$50 for new applicators, \$35 for recertifying applicators or others

☼ **April 2, 2025 – Lewis and Clark County Initial Private Applicator Training**

- a. Location: Holiday Inn Express, 3170 N Sanders St, Helena, MT 59602
- b. Registration: Required by March 25. Register online or contact Amy Bowser at (406) 994-5178 or amy.bowser@montana.edu.
- c. Fee: \$50 for new applicators, \$35 for recertifying applicators or others

MDA Pesticide Container Recycling



This is the truck with the grinder unit mounted on it to collect, shred, and super sack the collected plastic.

The Montana Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Container Recycling Program was created to keep pesticide container plastic out of Montana's Landfills. Containers must be rinsed of product and the lids, foil, label booklets, rubber gaskets and metal handles must be removed for recycling. Thirty- and fifty-five-gallon drums must be properly cut.

The collection days are posted online by clicking this link or scanning the QR code:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d252cf8e896f4ec49a46dc695eb2bc58>

More information on this program can be found:

<https://agr.mt.gov/Topics/N-P/Pesticide-Pages/Pesticide-Disposal-Pages/Container-Recycling-Program/Pesticide-Container-Recycling-Program>



MDA Pesticide Waste Disposal Program

The Montana Department of Agriculture's Waste Pesticide Disposal Program was designed to protect human health and the environment by offering a program to properly dispose of unwanted or unusable pesticides. The first 200 lbs. are free and it's \$1.00 per lb. after 200 lbs. Participants must pre-register.

2025 Tentative Locations:

Tuesday April 1 - Kalispell
Wednesday April 2 - Plains
Thursday April 3 - Drummond

Mondy June 30 - Whitefish
Tuesday July 1 - Hamilton
Wednesday July 2 - Butte

Tuesday Sept. 23 - Plentywood
Wednesday Sept. 24 - Glasgow
Thursday Sept. 25 - Glendive
Friday Sept. 26 - Hardin

Below is the schedule:

Western District - April & July 2025
Eastern District – September 2025
Western District – September 2026
Western District - April & July 2027
Eastern District – September 2027

Please check the website for most current information and to pre-register.

<https://agr.mt.gov/Pesticide-Waste-Disposal-Program>



Myths of Vertebrate Pest Control

3 Common Myths Regarding How to Control Vertebrate Pests

by Stephen M. Vantassel, ACE, Vertebrate Pest Specialist, Montana Department of Agriculture

Though people like to think we are living in a “scientific” age, the reality is a bit more complicated. What follows is a list of three commonly recommended pest control myths that PCOs should beware of as you will hear them touted by constituents.

1. Myth. Cats can resolve/prevent my mouse problems.

Response: While cats kill mice, they do not manage them. Mice adapt to predation pressure and their reproduction can compensate for predation. Cats also kill animals that predate on mice, such as weasels and jays.

Bottomline: If mouse control is your goal, ditch the cat in favor of traps, sanitation, and exclusion.



Image courtesy, Stephen Vantassel

2. Myth. Application of mothballs can resolve problems with vertebrate pests.

Response: While most mammals avoid the smell of mothballs, anecdotal reports of “success” with mothballs often fail to account for other reasons for the disappearance of the animal, such as being hit by a car, moving to a better location, or being trapped and removed by a neighbor. The amount of mothballs needed to “drive” unwanted animals away is typically so high that it is likely to drive the owner of the home away first. Leaving aside the problem of the off-label use of a pesticide, exposure to naphthalene or paradichlorobenzene (the two chemicals used to manufacture mothballs) has been connected to health issues.

Bottomline: Use mothballs for control of moths, not vertebrate pests.

3. Myth. Ultrasound will drive vertebrate pests away from my property.

Response: Though a few mammals (e.g. bats and mice) can hear in the ultrasonic range (20 kHz or higher), there is no conclusive evidence that ultrasound by itself will convince animals (assuming the species can even hear in the ultrasonic range) to leave a structure. Even if the species can hear in the ultrasonic range and finds the sound annoying, the animal(s) may simply move to another quieter part of the structure and/or an area where its/their presence is even more unwanted.

Bottomline: Ignore the ultrasonic devices and spend the money on more traditional control methods.

Montana Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Program (MT PSPP)

By Kima Traynham, MDA Agriculture Services Bureau Chief

October 2024 saw several MDA staff visiting the Flathead Lake Biological station for the annual meeting of the Montana Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Program. The event marked the end of the first year of the five-year program, which is funded thru an EPA grant. The MT PSPP is a collaborative network, striving to reduce pesticide pollution, improve water quality, and promote engagement and education among pesticide users and the public.

The MT PSPP aims to document baseline pesticide levels and implement actions to reduce pesticides in surface and groundwater in the Upper Columbia River Basin (CRB) in Montana. The long-term goal of this program is to establish a robust network of organizations, stakeholder groups, and individuals that can engage and work together to make the strongest impact in protecting our state waters. Additional partners include MSU Extension, MT DEQ, MT DNRC, the Western Montana Conservation Commission, Flathead County Weed District, Missoula County, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and many others.

MDA is using this grant to fund new pesticide container recycling options in the Columbia River Basin. Building Is already underway for a stationary grinding station at the Lake County Weed District location, which will be staffed by the county and is expected to be open for container drop-off one day each week, March through October. This will expand options for growers and other pesticide users in the area beyond the once a month schedule of MDA's mobile recycling program. Applicators in the CRB can look forward to using this new option in 2025.

As a pilot program, the Lake County stationary grinder will help MDA evaluate the effectiveness of this model; if successful this may be replicated in other parts of the state. As always, containers must be triple, or power rinsed and have lids, foil, and label booklets removed to be recycled.

MT Department of Agriculture is also providing matching funds for the grant, thru our training and certification programs held within the Columbia River Basin.

You can learn more about the MT PSPP at

<https://flbs.umt.edu/newflbs/monitoring/mt-pspp/montana-pesticide-stewardship-partnership-program/> or by scanning this QR code:



EDRR Roundup - Dyer's Woad, a Continuing Montana Success Story

By Josh Wagoner, Early Detection, Rapid Response Coordinator

Last newsletter, from August 2024, an “aimed for” Montana success story, with rush skeletonweed (*Chondrilla juncea*), was discussed. It can be found here (all you, Beth). This issue, an already arrived success story will be covered. Barring disaster, success with this species should continue, but help from across Montana is needed to avoid a still possible reversal. The species is dyer's woad (*Isatis tinctoria*), a Montana Priority 1A Noxious Weed, the class containing the least abundant noxious weeds in the state.

Dyer's woad hasn't always been classed with the least plentiful weeds in Montana. Two times it has moved in a positive direction up the Noxious Weed List, from common in some areas of the state to limited presence to now very limited. At one time there were thousands of plants across Montana. During summer 2024, only 140 plants were found in the entire state, and every one of these plants was treated and removed. This success can be attributed especially to Amber Burch, Beaverhead County Weed Coordinator and longtime head of the Montana Dyer's Woad Cooperative Project, and Working Dogs for Conservation, detection dogs based in Missoula trained to find dyer's woad. Their work is financially supported by grants from Montana Department of Agriculture's Noxious Weed Trust Fund program.



Images above show “Working Dogs Conservation” searching for Dyer's Woad

Montanans can help sustain success with dyer's woad by knowing what it looks like and reporting suspected sightings. It's in the mustard family, so its flowers have four petals. The flowers are bright, almost neon, yellow. Seed pods are pear or tear-shaped and turn dark purple to black upon maturity. Other key diagnostic features of dyer's woad are bluish-green leaves with a cream-colored midvein. The upper leaves clasp the stem and have a rubbery, cabbage-like feel. Sometimes the stems have a purplish tint. Dyer's woad is typically a biennial, although it can be an annual or a short-lived perennial, and it has a deep taproot.

EDRR Roundup - Dyer's Woad, a Continuing Montana Success Story cont.



Flowers and seeds



Mature plant



Rosette

There is a \$50 bounty for plants found more than a half mile from known populations. To report possible dyer's woad, contact Montana Department of Agriculture's EDRR program at MTEDRR@mt.gov and/or Amber Burch at aburch@beaverheadcountymt.gov. Also, take several good pictures and get an accurate GPS location or make a report at <https://www.eddmaps.org/>. For additional resources and contact information, visit the Early Detection, Rapid Response webpage at <https://agr.mt.gov/Topics/N-P/Noxious-Weeds-Pages/Task-Force-Pages/Dyers-Woad>.

MDA Pesticide Training Staff Contacts

Matt Deaton, Program Director
Mathew.Deaton@montana.gov
406-444-3673

Lori Leaf, Education and Outreach Specialist
Lori.Leaf@mt.gov
406-444-5512

Beth Thomas, Training and Development Specialist
Beth.Thomas@mt.gov
406-444-3732

Stephen Vantassel, Vertebrate Pest Specialist
SVantassel@mt.gov
406-538-3004