Pest Resolutions For The New Year

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Since this is my first column for the New Year, I thought I would put together one of those cheesy lists of resolutions that could and should be adopted in order to effectively practice integrated pest management.

I will not use a calendar to decide whether I need to apply a pesticide. Rather, I will only make pest management decisions based upon knowledge of a pest's presence, its population level and pesticide efficacy.

I will use tested sampling methods to determine whether a pest is in an outbreak situation.

I will not decide whether a pest is present based solely upon what my cohorts tell me at the coffee shop. Instead I will walk into my crop and actually sample for pest presence.

I will not make a "drive by" or "dashboard" inspection of my crop. Instead I will get out of my truck and make close-up examinations of the crop.

I will educate myself about the biology and control options for a pest before I make any management decision.

I will make rational decisions about management based upon economic, biological and other factors rather than making decisions based solely on what has always been done.

I will resist the urge to add a pesticide to the fungicide, fertilizer or herbicide mix that is being applied – unless I have scouted the crop and determined that control measures are indeed needed.

I will remember that one insect does not usually make an infestation. Rather, I will base my reactions to a pest presence upon scientifically valid economic thresholds.

I will spend time to learn about the latest information about the crops I plan to grow. This will enable me to have the best chance to grow my crop safely in addition to maximizing my income from that endeavor.

I will choose the pest control method that best controls the problem with the least impact on natural predators, parasitoids, the environment and my neighbors.

I will remember the 3 Rs of successful pest control. Roam through your fields; Research the proper control methods and, if you are unsure, Request help to understand all aspects of the control problem. Δ

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