***Native American Small Farm Working Group: Promoting IPM in Indian Country***

Members of numerous organizations, institutions and tribes have formed a Native American Small Farm Working Group to establish a network to assist both current and beginning Native American small farm operators implement IPM practices by delivering the educational information through culturally sensitive trainings. This working group will strengthen existing tribal relationships and also nurture new relationships to create novel partnerships between groups and individuals who previously have not collaborated. A grower survey document has been prepared and distributed to several Native American growers to assess programming areas of importance to these individuals. A small group met during the AIHEC Annual Conference in Bismarck, North Dakota on Saturday, April 16th to discuss IPM and sustainable agriculture partnerships to enhance tribal agriculture programs. Mike Daniels has been serving as a consultant to this project to continue to raise awareness of the need for IPM and sustainable practices for Native American Small Farms.

Individuals met in conjunction with the 7th International IPM Symposium to discuss future needs to assist with Native American small farm activities. It was suggested two workshops would assist in meeting these needs. A Food Sovereignty Workshop was held in conjunction with the Oneida Tsyunhehkwa program in Green Bay, WI July 30 – August 2, 2012. Twenty-five individuals participated in the workshop and evaluations ranked the workshop as highly useful. Many indicated it was the best workshop they had attended, especially the hands-on aspects of food production. A second workshop was held in conjunction with Ft. Berthold Tribal College. Fifteen individuals attended the two-day workshop and indicated they would implement many of the concepts presented during the workshop. The second workshop’s participation was impacted by the current oil boom in the area as many beginning farmers and ranchers have abandoned agriculture to become employed by the oil industry. These short term economical gains may not be sustainable and many in the community are concerned about the future of the Tribal community and their agricultural heritage.