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Record Keeping

Many record-keeping systems for IPM observations have been developed. Some of them are listed here. IPM is notable for the diversity of approaches taken by practitioners, and it is likely that most IPM record-keeping systems will contain some unique features. The important thing is that the system is easy to use, captures all the necessary information, and is used consistently from one observation to the next.

Scouting forms

In the field, a form should be used. Forms help the observer remember all the details that need to be recorded and how to record them. Links to some sample forms can be found at the bottom of this page.

Types of record-keeping systems

A record-keeping system doesn't need to be complicated, although some systems are. Information should be organized by date or time, because every observation will have a time associated with it. While a computer-based spreadsheet or database is ideal, a paper-based record-keeping system can be just as useful.

IPM practitioners should try to keep track of the following information from observation to observation. This is not an exhaustive list, nor is it necessary to record all of these items for every observation. Generally, with more information available, better IPM decisions can be made.

Parameters that might be recorded include

- date
- time
- pest density
- pest growth stage
- qualitative description of other pests
- main crop
- minor crop or intercrop
- tillage practices

- previous interventions
- type of crops growing in adjacent fields
- cover crop or undersown crop
- past pest history of the field
- local pest problems noted from surrounding fields or areas.
- weather conditions
- fertilizer and manure application
- crop condition and stage
- temperature
- rainfall
- soil moisture
- humidity
- cloudiness/sunnyiness
- growth stage of 'indicator' wild plants.
- seasonal indicators, such as bird migrations.