



At a Glance

Why We Did This Review

We conducted this review to determine whether the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) negotiations, review and approval of state work plans for compliance inspections—which are required as part of Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) cooperative agreements—support the achievement of agency goals and requirements.

Under FIFRA, the EPA has the authority to regulate how pesticides are registered, distributed and sold, and whether they are used appropriately. Through cooperative agreements, the EPA's pesticides compliance monitoring program awards states approximately \$19 million annually. As part of the cooperative agreements, grantees must submit annual work plans that commit to performing a certain number of inspections.

This report addresses the following:

- *Ensuring the safety of chemicals.*

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EPA Can Better Manage State Pesticide Cooperative Agreements to More Effectively Use Funds and Reduce Risk of Pesticide Misuse

What We Found

The EPA cannot ensure that its FIFRA cooperative agreement funding achieves agency goals and reduces risks to human health and the environment from pesticide misuse. We identified weaknesses in the processes that underlie the development and monitoring of FIFRA compliance inspection work plans. Specifically:

Improvements in developing and monitoring FIFRA compliance inspection work plans support effective and efficient use of enforcement funding and risk management.

- EPA FIFRA Project Officers did not consistently assess whether the funding requested by states for compliance inspections was reasonable. We found that EPA funding per planned inspection can vary significantly among state cooperative agreements. Moreover, EPA guidance for assessing whether the funding requested is reasonable was not well defined.
- The EPA did not use the performance of completed state pesticide enforcement work plans to improve successive work plans or to demonstrate whether compliance inspections achieved agency goals and requirements.

Improving how pesticide program cooperative agreements are administered can provide the EPA with the information it needs to assess the value and benefits of state compliance inspections and make informed decisions about how many compliance inspections states can reasonably perform each year. Improvements will also enable the EPA to determine whether compliance inspection funding reduces the risks pesticide misuse poses to human health and the environment, as well as how to better target compliance inspection funding.

Recommendations and Planned Agency Corrective Actions

We recommend that the Assistant Administrator for Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (1) develop and implement additional FIFRA guidance to assist Project Officers in evaluating whether funding is reasonable given projected work plan tasks, and (2) conduct a national review of state work plans and performance to verify the consistent application of agency guidance and the achievement of agency goals and requirements. The EPA agreed with our recommendations and provided acceptable corrective actions.