



**ORGANIC  
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*Organic farming research project report submitted to the Organic Farming Research Foundation:*

**Project Title:**

***Biointensive and Organically Acceptable Pest Management Literacy Training***

FINAL PROJECT REPORT

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With funding support from OFRF, NCAT implemented a Biointensive and Organically Acceptable Pest Management Literacy Training for Hispanic organic growers and Hispanic organic growers-in-training. The objectives of this training were:

- Increase grower knowledge and ability to differentiate between pest and beneficial organisms.
- Provide the growers with information about organic pest management options, both proactive and reactive.
- Introduce growers to sources of culturally accessible technical information.

The problem addressed by this work is that there was little information available on Biointensive IPM strategies in Spanish, and what information exists is not easily accessible to Latino farmers or farmworkers.

This is an important topic for two major reasons:

- 1) Latinos are the only segment of the farming population that is growing in size. Between 1978 and 1997 (the last year data is available), farms operated by Latinos increased 58 percent while total farms operated decreased 15 percent (1). At the same time, Latino farmers are three times as likely to raise high-value fruit, nut and vegetable crops than the average farmer in this country (2). It is reasonable to assume that the numbers of these high value operations that are organic or interested in transitioning to organic are also increasing (as is the case in the central coast of California). However, the pest management information designed for Latinos is relatively technical, text heavy, and focused on pesticide use and safety (as opposed to biointensive approaches).
- 2) Most farmworkers are Spanish speakers, and many of whom are not fluent in English, so are not likely to access any sources of organic pest management information. Both organic and conventional farmers would benefit from having farmworkers better trained in the basics of Biointensive/Organic IPM.

There were two outcomes of the training, which addressed both the objectives and the problem identified above: a series of 4 trainings, and production of a graphic heavy, text-light document, in Spanish, about organic IPM. The series of 4, 2-3 hour workshops that took place at the ALBA facility in Salinas in 2003 on:

**July 2003:** Pest and Beneficial Insects

**August 2003:** Plant Diseases

**September 2003:** Weeds

**October 2003:** Vertebrate Pests

These workshops were incorporated as part of the ALBA's regularly scheduled monthly grower meetings, which worked very well for us. Roughly 20 growers attended each session, although that number would increase as people filtered in during the session. Each session was implemented using a combination of powerpoint presentations in Spanish and bringing the participants out to the field OR bringing samples of pests from the field into the classroom for examination. For example, for the Pest and Beneficial Insects session, a break during the powerpoint allowed the participants to examine pests and beneficials through hand lenses. These



Ann Baier helps farmers identify pest and beneficial insects during the first of four Organic IPM trainings.

insects were collected prior to class and frozen for a short time so that they could be easily observed.

For the Weeds session, NCAT staff and participants had previously put in place small plots using single, double and no plastic layers to examine the effect of soil solarization on weed control. Although this option works well in warmer areas, it was clear that it was not effective at ALBA's Salinas location due to insufficient sun and warmth. However, the double plastic layer was more effective in suppressing weeds than the single plastic layer.

From the powerpoint presentations, NCAT developed a 22 page (11 pages both sides) Spanish language document, *El Manejo Integrado Organico de Plagas*, or *Organic IPM*. Laminated versions of this document were handed out to the farmers after the four sessions were completed. A unique aspect of this document is that it was intentionally designed to be text-light and graphic heavy. This document can also be downloaded off NCAT's ATTRA website at:  
<http://www.attra.org/espanol/manejo.html>

This document is also available on CD, free of charge, upon request to NCAT's toll-free line in English (1-800-346-9140) or NCAT's Spanish toll-free line (1-800-411-3222).

We feel this project was very worthwhile in that it provided the seed funds for developing a very useful document that is now available to Latino farmers and others, nationwide, free of charge. It also provided ALBA-based farmers with some face-to-face training about organic pest

management. We are now developing an English language version of this same document which will be made available on NCAT's ATTRA website.



Solarization for weed control demonstration. Single layer plastic, no plastic and double layer plastic. Solarization is not practical in Salinas

### References:

- 1) USDA Census of Agriculture. 2000. Quick Facts. Characteristics of Hispanic Farm Operators.
- 2) Buland, D. and F. Hunt. 2000. Twelve Trends of Hispanic Operated Farms. USDA/NRCS.