

HOW WE USE TOMATO IPM AT FURMANO FOODS INC

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- Furmano Foods Inc is a tomato, snap bean (green and yellow) and dry bean processor in the central part of Pennsylvania. We process most of our products in both institutional-[food service] and retail cans along with a food service plastic pouch for tomato sauces and just started putting dry beans in a pouch for the food service business.
- We are the only whole peeled tomato processor on the east coast and one of only two left on the east coast. California processes 96.4 percent of the tomatoes in the US with the Midwest at about 3 percent. So you can see where we fall on the scale of processing tomatoes. Our production is split about half dry beans and half tomatoes with a small portion in snap beans.
- Since 2006 we have been required by one of our largest food service vendors, SYSCO, to write an IPM Sustainable program for the products that we sell to them, at that point tomatoes and snap beans. Along with writing the program there is also an audit to measure progress in the program which requires a minimum passing percentage to continue to partner with them. As with any audit there are portions that we struggle with, the portion that deals with social questions pertaining to how we and our growers treat our employee's for instance or how we address things like recycling and others.
- This included not only Furman Farms but all our contract growers also. As we worked at becoming IPM certified along with our growers we realized that we as growers had been practicing IPM and managing our crop with IPM principles, we just had not been documenting what we were doing.
- SYSCO built the IPM Sustainable audit with the input of the IPM Institute's Tom Green along with an advisory panel of growers and processors and academia people. They also looked at what other certifiers were out there and a good one for tomato was the University of Massachusetts IPM worksheet. Very up to date and really spot on when it came to cultural practices, pest and soil management and disease and insect management. I include that work sheet in my manual as a checklist and points ranking to see how we are doing. Also things like sprayer calibration, pesticide reporting and spray drift are in the audit along with GAP's concerning soil health. And having a good scouting program for monitoring for disease and pest. We have to document our nutritional additives N-P-K along with manure.
- Certification- do we receive a premium for this requirement? No and we also have to pay for the audit which can be fairly expensive.
- Some tools we have in our toolbox to achieve a good and robust IPM program. **TAKE A SOIL TEST** the very first thing to help you know what is in your soil and what to add for optimum growth in you crops. Keep looking for good information on current crop protection materials. Keep looking for "softer" materials that still do a good job. Making

sure we are scouting or hire a scout [share a scout] to identify and verify problems that might be out there.

- Update your sprayer. Maintain your sprayer, with calibration and replacing tips. Many times this exercise has turned into a savings when you find tips that are not functioning both too much and not enough of material.
- We use GPS on our planter and cultivation along with harvesting
- Drip irrigation along with moisture sensors to help us see where moisture levels are in the soil
- Build a high tunnel. Great way to reduce crop protection material and increase production. Limitations would be crop rotations and cost.
- Read and attend meetings that keep you abreast of new ideas and technologies. Find the GAP's that you need to do to keep your farm sustainable and viable for the next generation.
- Look around and see what other growers are doing even some who might not share your thoughts on cultural practices