

Virtual pesticide applicator training reaches statewide

AT A GLANCE

University of Idaho Extension's Virtual Pesticide Applicator Training reached 190 applicators across 27 Idaho counties, providing 570 recertification credits and promoting safer pesticide stewardship.

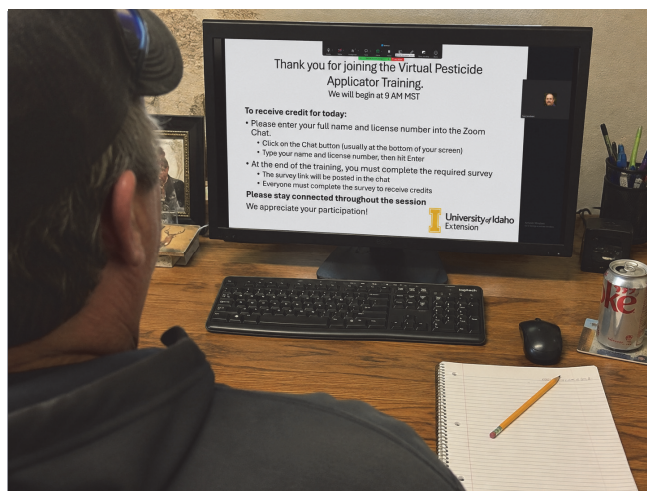
The Situation

Idaho pesticide applicators must earn recertification credits to maintain their licenses and legally apply pesticides. However, Idaho's large geographic area, rural population and dangerous winter roads create significant barriers to accessing required training. Many applicators, particularly those in remote communities, must travel considerable distances to attend in-person recertification programs, resulting in additional time, travel and financial costs.

Limited access to convenient recertification opportunities can make it more difficult for applicators to maintain their licenses and stay current on pesticide safety, regulations, and application practices. These barriers can affect both individual applicators and agricultural businesses and may ultimately limit the adoption of safe, effective and environmentally responsible pesticide practices across Idaho.

Our Response

Extension educators in Idaho's eastern district responded by providing research-based, practical pesticide education through a statewide virtual format. Training was led by Extension educators and offered twice annually, providing applicators with convenient



A producer participates in the Virtual Pesticide Applicator Training from his home office.

opportunities to complete required continuing education without traveling to an in-person program.

Each virtual session provided three Idaho Pesticide Applicator Recertification Credits and combined required regulatory content with timely stewardship topics relevant to pesticide applicators. Topics include label compliance, herbicide mode-of-action rotation, spray drift management, integrated pest management, drone technology, soil health and pesticide interactions, and biopesticides.

By offering consistent, research-based education virtually, Extension educators reduced geographic and travel barriers and provided applicators across Idaho with current information and practical strategies they can apply directly to their operations.

Program Outcomes

Across the December 2025 and March 2026 sessions, University of Idaho Extension trained 190 licensed pesticide applicators from 27 Idaho counties and awarded 570 recertification credits. Participants reported high satisfaction, averaging 12.30-12.39 out of 13, and demonstrated intentions to improve stewardship practices, including equipment calibration, herbicide mode-of-action rotation, label compliance and PPE use.

Approximately 38-50% of participants identified specific, actionable behavior changes they planned to implement. The strong relationship between satisfaction and behavior-change intentions indicates that the program effectively translates education into practical stewardship practices.

The virtual format also provided economic value by eliminating travel to in-person training. Using a conservative 50-mile round-trip estimate, the program avoided approximately \$6,750 in mileage costs and \$4,750 in participant travel time, totaling \$11,500 in avoided travel costs. Combined with approximately \$5,700 in equivalent recertification training value, the program provided an estimated \$17,200 in total economic value.

- 190 licensed pesticide applicators educated, with 570 recertification credits awarded across two sessions.

- Program reached 27 Idaho counties, including expansion into Canyon, Ada, Twin Falls, Nez Perce and other western Idaho communities.
- Average satisfaction of 12.30-12.39 out of 13, strongly associated with behavior-change intentions.
- Approximately 38-50% identified specific, actionable pesticide practice changes.
- Women's participation increased from 11.1% to 18.8%, reflecting increased access.
- Virtual training generated an estimated \$11,500 in avoided travel costs.
- Including \$5,700 in training value, the program provided approximately \$17,200 in total economic value.

The Future

The program will continue twice-yearly virtual training while expanding statewide participation through targeted outreach, including to Spanish-speaking applicators. Participant feedback will guide improvements in content and measurable behavior change, with follow-up education focused on integrated pest management and biopesticides. The virtual format will remain central, with hybrid options added when appropriate.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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