

Piloting a Worker Safety System

Ontario Tomato Research Institute (OTRI)

4/20/2017

Ontario Processing Tomato Growers to pilot new App to keep workers safe

Last November, the original board members of the OPVG sat down with Tomecek Agronomy Services Inc. to discuss how a newly created Worker Safety App could

that newly imposed restrictions would have on tomato growers especially, the local processing tomato growers seemed like the perfect group to test this

“Growers were looking for a way to demonstrate the measures they take to protect their workers. This system allows them to enter the information once; informing their workers and their processor of the spray event, and eliminating any further record-keeping responsibilities associated with that spray event.” Phil Richards

benefit not only local farm workers, but also the agricultural industry as a whole. Via a mobile phone app, growers can record the details of their field’s spray events, then transmit this information in real-time to all workers on their operation. Because of the PMRA’s recent review of *chlorothalonil*, and the significant consequences

new technology. The first step was engaging the major Processors to gauge their interest in converting their existing record-keeping system to this new web-based system. This also meant that they would be agreeing to allow a third party trustee to hold all of their spray records, a whole

Looking forward...

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“All of this leads me to feel that, for the first time, the PMRA has something they can use to create new label conditions that may change their initial proposals on use restrictions and lengthy REIs. If personal protection for post application workers can be taken from labels, and implemented in the field in an auditable fashion, the PMRA can move forward. This is a huge step towards getting a different outcome than their initial proposals.”

Craig Hunter

Pesticides Advisor to OFVGA
January 19th 2017

new level of transparency for the industry. The Processors agreed that such a project could indeed have significant positive outcomes for the industry, and lent their support.

The OPVG and the Processors, agreed to work together on this pilot project through the Ontario Tomato Research Institute (OTRI), which is funded by both the growers

and processors. The project was submitted to the Agricultural Adaptation Council (AAC) for Growing Forward II funding. Last week, it was announced that the project was approved for the highest level of funding possible...75%, because of the innovativeness and potential significant widespread benefits that its success could have on Ontario's agricultural industry.

So far, the concept has been very well received amongst tomato growers. For the most part, they feel that this will save them time on record-keeping tasks, and help them ensure that all relevant people (i.e. their on-farm workers, their agronomist/crop scouts, their processor, etc.) are instantly made aware which fields are safe to work in.

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