

Abstract

For the period January 5th to 23rd 2010 an assessment of the knowledge and skills of agro-shop owners/operators in the South Region was carried out in the form of a survey. Some of the main areas covered were Siparia, Penal, Princes Town, Rio Claro and Mayaro. The survey was in the form of a questionnaire which contained forty four questions (44) and twenty five (25) agro-shops were interviewed. The questionnaire covered various topics such as level of education, training and experience in pest and disease identification, weed control, pesticide recommendation, environmental concerns and safety practices.

Garden shop owners/operators identified different levels of training in the enterprise and different needs for future training in pest identification, new chemicals, safety, management practices and plant agronomy. The Penal and Rio Claro areas showed the highest levels of training in the field of pesticides. Penal showed very good competence levels in pests, weeds and diseases identification and providing effective pesticide recommendations while in other areas showed good competence levels in pests, weeds and diseases identification and providing effective pesticide recommendations. It is evident that garden shop owners/operators are knowledgeable in the field of pesticides. However, they are also in need of training in certain areas in order to make effective recommendations to the farmers and the general public, therefore the Ministry of Health – Pesticide and Toxic Chemical Board, the Ministry of Agriculture Land and Marine Resources and the University of the West Indies should intervene and do training courses with the owners/operators in order to fulfil their purpose.