RISE History & Milestones

As RISE celebrates its silver anniversary as the national trade association representing manufacturers, formulators, distributors and other industry leaders involved with specialty pesticide and fertilizer products, we look at the history and milestones that made the 25-year-old organization what it is today.

In January 1991, the steering committee, along with NACA's Jay Vroom (now CropLife America’s president & CEO), interviews job candidates who will serve as the specialty pesticide association’s first executive director.

Exploratory meetings and general information sessions are held at industry trade shows and conferences to discuss the possibility of establishing a new national trade association representing manufacturers, formulators and distributors involved with pesticide products used in turf, ornamental, pest control, aquatic and terrestrial vegetation management and other non-food/fiber applications. A steering committee is formed and in the fall of 1990 reached an agreement with the National Agricultural Chemicals Association (NACA) to affiliate under the auspices of this long-standing pesticide association.

Tri-June, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously rules that local jurisdictions may impose stricter pesticide regulations (notification or permits) than those under FIFRA regulations, as long as they are not prohibited by state law. RISE engages in its first Preemption efforts. In a Sept. 16, 1991, Washington Post newspaper article, Allen James is quoted as saying, “We believe Congress intended to preempt local authorities from regulating pesticides, so we will be acting to secure federal legislation to accomplish that. We are supporting coalition efforts at the state level to prevent undesirable local regulation.”

Two weeks after he was hired, Allen James attends the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America conference and trade show along with RISE founding member representatives Bill Liles and Bill Culpepper to recruit new members. By the fall, RISE has 50 member companies.

Allen James is hired and begins his job on February 1, the official birth date of RISE. Twelve founding members were there to welcome Executive Director Allen James to the new association established to address the critical needs of the specialty pesticide industry.

RISE engages in its first local grassroots campaign in the city of Missoula, Montana, where a ballot referendum is being considered to require pesticide applicators to notify residents about applications. RISE members fund the association’s first grassroots initiative to help defeat the measure. RISE organizes a local workshop for supporters and purchases newspaper ads. The city-wide referendum goes to vote and the proposal is defeated 57 percent to 43 percent. The ballot victory in Montana was a defining event in the early history of RISE, demonstrating the association was prepared to go anywhere in the country and to work at any level of government to defend the use and benefits of industry products. More companies began to join RISE as they learned of this victory and the role RISE played.

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The name RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) and its logo are created by the RISE Communications Committee, led by founding committee chair Allen Haws, Mobay Chemical Company, and Kansas City advertising agency Valentine Radford.

Members convene for the first RISE annual meeting in the Washington, D.C., area. A multi-year RISE Strategic Plan is unveiled, laying the pathway for future development of the association. The first industry applicator associations to join RISE were the National Pest Control Association (now National Pest Management Association) and the Professional Lawn Care Association (National Association of Landscape Professionals and formerly the Professional Landscape Network).

RISE membership grows to more than 100 members.

Editors and publishers of Arbor Age, Grounds Maintenance, Landscape & Irrigation, Landscape Management, Lawn & Landscape Maintenance, Pest Control, Pest Control Technology, SportsTurf, Tree Care Industry and the National Roadside Vegetation Management Association come together for the first time in history to publish an insert titled Pesticides in Your Environment from RISE. The 16-page piece defines the benefits of specialty pesticides, puts the risks in proper perspective and is distributed industry-wide.
RISE takes part in the Garden Writers Association of America annual meeting and trade show held in Crystal City, Va., and becomes an associate member of the group.

The February 1999 issue of American School & University magazine publishes the RISE article, “A Bug’s Life – Through integrated pest management, schools can help provide a safer and healthier environment for students and staff.”

RISE sponsors the first week-long Horticulture & Turfgrass Study Tour for urban Cooperative Extension agents from across the United States who are members of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA). The tour is established because many of the agents who provide advice to urban pesticide users were trained in agriculture and had little experience with urban pest issues. Tours are held in various U.S. metro areas every year through 2003.

RISE supports the first Read the Label First, a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Consumer Labeling Initiative launched as a government-industry-public partnership. It was designed to improve product labels so that they are easier for consumers to understand; help consumers become more aware of product labels and the information they contain; give consumers better tools for understanding label information; and encourage consumers to consistently and thoroughly read consumer product labels before purchase, use, storage and disposal.

RISE adds to its grassroots capabilities, creating a Local Issues Plan of Action to strategically address pesticide bans and restrictions on the local level. Applicators are encouraged to alert RISE of pesticide issues taking place in their communities. The RISE Governing Board identifies top issues as Children’s Health and Water Quality, Top cities where activities threaten the use of pesticides are Seattle, Wash.; Eugene, Ore.; Portland, Ore.; Orange County/Los Angeles, Calif.; San Francisco, Calif.; Suffolk County, N.Y.; Buffalo, N.Y.; Madison, Wis.; Albany, N.Y.; and Carrboro, N.C.

The School Environment Protection Act bill is first introduced in Congress requiring schools to implement IPM programs that use only the “least toxic” pesticides and use conventional pesticides only when least toxic methods fail. The definition of IPM in the bill is contrary to the definition in the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996. RISE opposes the bill and issues a statement on the serious health threats that children face in schools and the importance of having pesticides available as a tool in an effective IPM program. The bill never becomes law, despite being introduced every Congressional session since 1999.

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RISE develops an online media resource center WestNileVirusFacts.org for West Nile virus when the mosquito-borne disease first arrives in the U.S. Over the next few years, RISE becomes a leading resource for responsible information about WNV, with Allen James providing numerous interviews, articles and appearances on the topic.

A series of syndicated news releases (MAT releases) are written and distributed to mid-to-small sized newspapers across the country.

1993

Allen James and member company representatives participate in the association’s first presidential inaugural ball activities, which are for President Bill Clinton, the 42nd President of the United States.

RISE hires consultants to assist with federal advocacy and public relations. David Crew, founder of D.C. Legislative & Regulatory Services, and Angela Bendorf Jamison, with Valentine Radford, who later opens the firm Communications Marketing Services, Inc.

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RISE exhibits at the National School Board Association Conference attended by state school board associations and more than 30,000 local school board members.

The Children's Health Act of 2000 reaffirms the FQPA definition of IPM. The law states that “integrated pest management” means an approach to the management of pests in public facilities that combines biological, cultural, physical, and chemical tools in a way that minimizes economic, health and environmental risks.”

Grounds Maintenance magazine publishes Questions and Answers about Pesticides, a supplement that includes questions most commonly asked of RISE and its members.

On March 12, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision on Headwaters Inc. et al. v Talent Irrigation District creates uncertainty as irrigation districts, water agencies and vector control programs stopped using aquatic pesticides and mosquito control products because the ruling may require that users secure permits under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System program. Repercussions were immediately felt by those who rely on aquatic pesticides to maintain water efficiency or protect resources and public health.

A RISE staff position is added to focus on fertilizers and plant health issues as formulator members who produce combination products for the consumer market are impacted by regulations and restrictions on fertilizer use.

On June 8, EPA Administrator Carol Browner, under the Clinton-Gore Administration, announces the elimination of home and garden uses of Dursban (chlorpyrifos) insecticide.

A Pests are the Problem media campaign is launched with reasons why pesticides must remain viable tools for control of insects, weeds and vermin. Media kits were sent to magazines and newspapers as well as meteorologists to share with viewers during weather forecasts.

In 1999, the association begins its long relationship with Dr. Jerome Goddard, who speaks about the “Impact of Pests on Human Health” during a Termite Media Tour in New Orleans.

In 1998, RISE convenes its children’s health task force to create Pest Threats: A Resource for Decision Makers. The Pest Threat educational materials are distributed nationally with the support of the Annapolis Center to all school superintendents, public health officials and their associations, school nurses and their associations, allergy and asthma associations, and all members of Congress.

A federally funded study by the National Cancer Institute on possible links between pollution and high rates of breast cancer on Long Island failed to show any connection between the disease and pesticides that were once used on the island.

1998

1998

2001

2002

2002
The Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA) of 2003 improves the predictability and speed of the pesticide registration process by requiring applicants to pay specific service fees to the EPA for processing registration requests.

RISE undertakes a campaign to pass state fertilizer preemption. Six states adopt fertilizer preemption as a result of these advocacy efforts.

Counterpart regulations to streamline the assessment and process that the National Marine Fisheries Services — in consultation with the EPA — use to identify potential pesticide effects on endangered species become effective.

The Southwest Technical Resource Center (SWTRC) for Integrated Pest Management (IPM) receives a grant for $5,000 from RISE to continue its School IPM Pride Award program for the third consecutive year. SWTRC was established through a grant from the EPA to promote awareness of pest management techniques and provide technical support to schools and childcare facilities in Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. The IPM Pride Award, given annually by the center, recognizes public school districts for outstanding pest management efforts in their attention to student and faculty safety, health and proper methods of pest control. The grant from RISE enables first, second, and third place cash awards to be given to schools practicing exemplary IPM techniques.

The California West Nile Virus Grassroots Mobilization plan is implemented by RISE, its California members, state alliance groups, and other interested stakeholders who want to protect public health and minimize the threat of WNV through the safe and responsible use of mosquito control products. The group creates a plan of action and the necessary tools to address the responsible use of mosquito control products, monitor local government activities and stay ready to mobilize a grassroots network when necessary. A fact sheet is created and a website resource specifically for the team. The team is mobilized in August when the town of Fairfield, Calif., discussed lifting a 3-year-old pesticide ban to allow mosquito control applications by the mosquito control district.

The EPA's Endangered Species Protection Program for pesticides is finalized; however, Counterpart Regulations are not fully implemented due to lawsuits alleging that EPA's methodology for assessing risks to endangered species is inadequate.

RISE partner National Organization of African Americans in Housing (NOAAH) and its Executive Director Kevin Marchman release Report on Environmental Health Hazards in the Nation’s Low Income Housing Stock as part of the organization’s 2003 Healthy Homes Initiative that shows the important role pesticides play in creating healthy and safe homes and communities.

A national media campaign about West Nile virus is launched with a consumer survey of America's perceptions of WNV. A video news release titled “West Nile Virus: Is Your Family at Risk?” is created featuring Dr. Kimberly Thompson, a risk analysis specialist with the Harvard School of Public Health and distributed to broadcast media.

The discussion to use pesticides for mosquito control takes center stage on CNN when Allen James appears with Jay Feldman of Beyond Pesticides on the cable news segment. B-roll from the RISE video about West Nile virus is also shown.

An electronic newsletter distributed to Extension agents who have pest control and/or horticulture responsibilities and need information about consumer use and professional application of pesticides and fertilizers is launched under the name PestFacts News.

Canadian activists begin using the term “cosmetic use,” defining it as using pesticides for “non-essential or cosmetic purposes,” calling for bans on lawn and garden products.

The RISE Consumer Work Group is created to address the challenges specific to the consumer retail pesticide and fertilizer markets as big box hardware and retail stores are being asked to stop the sale of weed and feed and other pesticide products due to “hazards and environmental pollution.”

The Western District Court of Washington grants interim injunctive relief to the Washington Toxics Coalition et al that filed a 2001 suit against the EPA alleging the agency had failed to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service on whether certain pesticides posed jeopardy to 26 federally listed endangered and threatened Pacific salmon and steelhead. No-use buffer zones around Salmon Supporting Waters in Washington, Oregon and California were imposed for pesticides containing seven named active ingredients. The Court also orders EPA to develop point of sale notification with specified text and a prominent graphic. Pesticide manufacturers, distributors and pesticide users were ordered to distribute point-of-sale notification to retail outlets in Washington, Oregon and California.

Specialty pesticide use regulations are proposed by non-government organizations in U.S. communities as well as at the state level, emboldened by such bans in Canada. RISE promotes the benefits of maintaining healthy turf, flowers and trees and people’s personal rights to do so.

A grassroots communications plan is developed for Connecticut when lawn and turf pesticide use regulations are proposed at the state level. This was one of the first pilot projects to keep regulations and bans from occurring on the local/county/state level and marked the start of a 10-year investment in supporting grassroots in Connecticut.

Karen Reardon joins RISE as director of communication, arriving from its sister organization CropLife America.
A Silver Anniversary Tribute
Show your support of RISE in a special editorial supplement reaching 140,000+ industry professionals.

We are commemorating this important achievement with a special anniversary supplement that will be distributed at the RISE Annual Conference in September, and included in the October issues of the following publications, providing blanket coverage of the specialty chemical market.

2006
RISE creates the group Friends of Dane County Lakes in Wisconsin and succeeds in convincing the county to allow aquatic herbicide spraying to save its lakes as part of a large-scale demonstration project.

Increasing its investment in grassroots activities, RISE hires a grassroots manager to grow the national grassroots network and expand its program.

2007
RISE creates its first 30-second television ad and 60-second radio spot that air on garden shows in the greater Washington, D.C., and Baltimore areas reaching an audience of more than 35 million people. Titled “Just Two Minutes,” the ads explain it only takes two minutes to read the directions on products you use to control weeds and pests.

The association convenes a panel of veterinarians and veterinary toxicologists to develop a brochure Veterinarians Talk Frankly About: Pests, Pesticide Safety and Pets to address the growing discussion around lawn care products and pets.

2008
The 318-page book “Water Quality and Quantity Issues for Turfgrasses in Urban Landscapes” is published. Evolving from a three-day workshop of paper presentations and active discussions by turfgrass researchers, environmental specialists and water industry managers, the publication is funded by RISE members and others.

The association partners with The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) Animal Poison Control Center to create the educational brochure A Beautiful Green Lawn Should be a Haven for Pets.

The Pesticide Registration Improvement Renewal Act (PRIA II) is enacted. It reauthorizes and revises fee provisions set in PRIA I, set to expire in 2008.

As a way to remind consumers to select the right products and use them properly, RISE implements the Choose Right—Use Right Consumer Campaign using educational signage at point-of-selection. RISE created a set of English and Spanish educational pieces for consumers and worked for two years with large format retailers, independent hardware stores and nurseries to place the pieces.

A Phosphorous, Urban Runoff and Aquatic Weeds brochure is created to discuss the benefits of turf and importance of phosphorous in healthy turf management. It was distributed to assist local and state government officials in making informed decisions as they consider options for turf management and water quality.

During its 17th annual meeting in New Orleans, RISE members take time to help restore Longue Vue House and Gardens damaged by Hurricane Katrina. Working under head gardener Amy Graham during an afternoon of weeding and replanting, RISE volunteers help bring the historic home built in 1955 back to its original beauty.

EPA begins the systematic re-evaluation of all pesticides as required by amendments to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) of 1996 and 2007. It must complete a 15-year cycle of pesticide registration review by 2022 to ensure that registered products meet current regulatory requirements.

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The Governing Board begins discussion and investment to transform how the association manages issues and communicates with policy makers and consumers. They vote unanimously to fund a research-based and targeted outreach program.

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A Sixth Circuit U.S. Federal Court panel’s decision vacated the EPA’s National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Final Rule for aquatically applied pesticides. This Final Rule says that an NPDES permit is not required for pesticide applications when applied directly to water to control pests and when pesticides are applied to control pests that are present over or near water where a portion of the pesticide will unavoidably be deposited in the water in order to target pests. As a result of this decision, NPDES permits have been required for applications of pesticides to, over and near water, primarily for aquatic, mosquito and forest canopy uses since October 31, 2011. The Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act, advocated by RISE, first passed the House of Representatives on March 31, 2011. It would have specified that NPDES permits are not needed for any applications of EPA registered pesticides. The bill passed through the House of Representatives every Congress for the past several years, but never through the Senate. RISE continues to push for this legislation to be signed into law.
The United States Department of Agriculture and EPA release a comprehensive Report on the National Stakeholders Conference on Honey Bee Health. It summarizes findings from a conference held in 2012 that brought together beekeepers, scientists, representatives of conservation groups, beekeeping supply manufacturers, commodity groups, pesticide manufacturers and government representatives to discuss potential solutions for improving honey bee health. The report identifies the Varroa mite as the “single most detrimental pest of honey bees.”

The Pesticide Registration Improvement Extension Act (PRIA 3) of 2012 becomes law, reauthorizing PRIA, creating a pesticide registration tracking system, additional resources for other registration, information technology improvements and other process changes intended to reduce due date renegotiations.

The first Industry Issues breakfasts are held for members and their customers at NPMA PestWorld and the OFA Short Course, which will become Cultivate.

The RISE Governing Board and Strategic Oversight Council create a new mission and vision for the association along with a five-year 2020 strategic plan.

RISE participates for the first time in New England Grows, a leading commercial horticulture and green industry trade show and conference.

RISE expands its presence in the social media world by establishing a new handle on Twitter and Instagram @pestfacts to better communicate with RISE members and member company employees. During the RISE annual meeting, the hashtag #RISElife is established along with a selfie contest using the hashtag #RISElife.

RISE continues to push for state fertilizer preemption and oppose local fertilizer ordinances. To help its members better understand existing laws, RISE conducts an analysis of state fertilizer laws and county fertilizer ordinances in Florida. The RISE Fertilizer Work Group engages in meetings of the American Association of Plant Food Control Officials and its new phosphorus work group.
RISE Governing Board Chairpersons 1990-2015

1990-1991 Bill Liles, CIBA-GEIGY
1991-1992 Bill Culpepper, DowElanco
1993-1994 Scott Johnson, Rhone-Poulenc Ag Company
1994-1996 Jan Novak, Monsanto Company/The Solaris Group
1996-1997 Dick Holzschu, Dow Elanco
1997-1999 Jim Champion, Riverdale Chemical Company
1999-2001 Keelan Pulliam, Zeneca, Inc./Syngenta
2001-2003 Laurie Treu, Crompton Corporation/Uniroyal Chemical Company
2003-2004 Elin Miller, Dow AgroSciences, LLC
2004-2005 Dan Untiedt, MGK
2005-2007 Steve Briggs, BASF Corporation
2007 Chris Donaghy, Residex Corporation
2007-2009 Josh Weeks, Bayer Environmental Science
2009-2010 Dan Rosenbaum, FMC Corporation
2010-2012 Dave Morris, Dow AgroSciences, LLC
2012-2014 Steve Gullickson, MGK
2014-Today Dan Stahl, OHP, Inc.

RISE Award Recipients

E. Allen James Leadership Award
2009 Allen James, RISE
2010 William Culpepper, SePRO
2011 Jim Armbruster, PBI/Gordon Corporation
2012 Bill Liles, CIBA-Geigy

Grassroots Excellence Award 2012
Connecticut Environmental Council
2013 Chris Heath, John Deere Landscapes and Paul Sevigny, Mainely Grass
2014 Mark Schlossberg, Pro-Lawn-Plus, Inc.