MDARD temporarily offers modified program for registering pesticide applicators

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LANSING – Due to the suspension of in-person certification exams as part of the state's COVID-19 response, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) is implementing a temporary program to streamline the process to become a registered pesticide applicator. This new temporary program approves certified applicators interested in becoming an MDARD-approved trainer of registered applicators. It also allows approved trainers to administer exams to applicators looking to become registered for the first time.

MDARD's Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division (PPPMD) typically certifies 2,500 new commercial pesticide applicators each year through an exam process. Due to COVID-19, which caused PPPM to suspend examinations, many applicators are unable to take the exams necessary to become certified applicators.

"MDARD wants to ensure applicants can get properly registered without having to take an in-person exam. This temporary program provides a safe alternative through online training and oral exams for trainers done over the phone," said Brian Verhougstraete, MDARD's Pesticide Section Manager. "Protecting the health of our applicants and staff are priority one while supporting the needs of the state's regulated industries."

Registered applicator credentials issued through the temporary program will be valid through December 31, 2022. Registered applicators can only apply general use pesticides in the categories which they received training in; and must work under the supervision of a certified applicator.

"During these challenging times, MDARD continues to enforce pesticide law and protect Michigan residents," Verhougstraete added. "By offering this modified program, the departments can help businesses get the staff they need to operate, and protect public health by facilitating applications against mosquitos, ticks, and other pests."

The temporary program went into effect on May 26, 2020 and will expire upon the lifting of the state of emergency. For additional information, visit Michigan.gov/MDARDPest.

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