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## **Inquiry Learning to IPM: A message from the Author**

Inquiry-based learning is related to the process of discovery. It includes a multiple of learning styles and focuses on presenting a student with a question about a concept and allowing them to learn and answer their own question. It is interactive and inventive.

Prior to writing *Discovering IPM: An Inquiry Approach to Learning Integrated Pest Management*, I was fortunate to participate in the National Science Foundation's GK-12 program through Clemson University. This program taught me about learning and teaching from the perspective of a teacher, and it introduced me to the concept of inquiry-based learning. The experience opened my eyes to the respectable profession of teaching and the challenges therein.

Throughout my fellowship year, I served as a science advisor in a middle school classroom, where I aided in teaching lessons, provided additional resources for teachers, designed and taught lessons, participated in school events and parent-teacher conferences, and attended national and state teaching conventions. While in the classroom, I observed students generally respond to lecture instruction with difficulty. Students are bored, and have difficulty formulating concepts mentally. Through a hands-on inquiry approach to math and science, students became more interested in concepts, and enjoyed learning. Inquiry lessons targeted individuals who needed to see or touch the concept being taught and allowed teacher freedom from explanation.

Through experiencing the inquiry-based concept and guided inquiry approaches to teaching, I discovered this is a milestone in education. Through inquiry, students became interested learning and remembered concepts more readily. As a result of this inquiry-based inspiration I decided to write an integrated pest management curriculum with an inquiry approach. Integrated pest management is a concept for people interested in learning and interested in solving problems. It in itself is inquiry. When faced with a pest problem one must discover, through a process, the solution to the problem. When students are faced with a new concept or question, they must engage themselves in a process of questions to find out more about the concept or to answer the question. Simply lecturing students on what IPM is, and why it is important to learn and use it, defeats the essence of the concept of IPM. It is important to discover what IPM is, why it is important, how to use it, and how to use it properly. This can be done through inquiry.