Common Sense Risk Management

Case Study: Recommendation Via Phone and/or E-mail

CASE STUDY NOTICE

The following case study is designed to be instructive of the issues that should generally be addressed in the situation described; they are not an exhaustive list of actions for every similar situation faced by Extension employees. The particular facts of the situation will always dictate the appropriate response. Specific questions related to a particular fact pattern should be discussed with the proper Extension administrator(s).

SITUATION:

A caller to the County Extension Office explains that he has a tree with signs of yellowing. The County Extension Agent recommends a practice to use on the trees without seeing the trees or at least viewing specimens taken from the tree. Later, it is learned a neighbor had used a soil sterilant along the fence line, which was the cause of the trees yellowing.

Instructions: Using the above situation, consider and discuss the following questions:
1. When confronted with the information presented in the scenario, how might you respond?
2. How would you suggest handling this situation in the future?

Immediate response:
1. Once you have the new knowledge of the soil sterilant application, determine if your initial recommendation would still apply.
2. If recommendation would not apply, call the resident and give new recommendation based on new information (sterilant application).
3. Document phone discussion and recommendation in the event that the homeowner calls in a complaint to regulatory agency, such as Texas Department of Agriculture, on the use of soil sterilant by the neighbor.
4. Contact Texas Department of Agriculture if necessary after an assessment has been conducted.
5. Visit the site and explain that all facts were not known.

Future solutions to situation:
- Conduct farm/home visit and/or request specimen(s) from the tree for proper diagnosis.