

# **AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING RECORD**

## **TIME AND DATE:**

10:30 AM, January 20, 2010

## **LOCATION:**

TCEQ, Park 35, Building F, Room 2210, Austin, Texas

## **PURPOSE OF MEETING:**

The FY10 Second Quarter Meeting of the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee

## **ATTENDEES:**

### **AGENCIES**

Texas AgriLife Extension Service [TAES]  
Texas AgriLife Research [TAR]  
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality [TCEQ]  
Texas Department of Agriculture [TDA]  
Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board [TSSWCB]  
Texas Water Development Board [TWDB]

### **REPRESENTATIVES**

Joseph L. Peters	Chair, Member, TCEQ, Austin
Richard Eyster	Member, TDA, Austin
Janie Hopkins	Member, TWDB, Austin
Bill Harris	Member, TAR, College Station
Donna Long	Member, TSSWCB, Temple
Bruce Lesikar	Member, TAES, College Station

### **AGENCY STAFF**

Alan Cherepon	TCEQ, Austin
David Villarreal	TDA, Austin

### **INTERESTED PARTIES**

Ed Baker	Syngenta, Mineola
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## **MEETING SUMMARY:**

### **I. Opening Remarks**

The Chairman of the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee, Dr. Joseph Peters (TCEQ), called the meeting to order. Subcommittee member David Van Dresar (TAGD) was not in attendance. Dr. Peters welcomed everyone to the meeting and had the Subcommittee members introduce themselves. The meeting proceeded to the Task Force Reports.

### **II Task Force Reports**

**Site Selection Task Force:** Ms. Hopkins, the Task Force Chair, reported that the TWDB will resume its sampling in March, which will include taking cooperative samples for TCEQ. Sampling will include an estimated 350 wells in the Carrizo-Wilcox and Queen City aquifers, and maybe another 100 wells in the Edwards-Trinity aquifer, as well as smaller number of wells in several other aquifers. Analyses will include the typical water quality suite. Alan Cherepon (TCEQ) presented the FY10 Proposed Pesticide Monitoring Plan later in the agenda.

**Education Task Force:** Dr. Bruce Lesikar (TAES), the Task Force Chair, reported that the Texas annual Plant Protection Conference was held in College Station in early December. He also reported that Dr. Dana Porter, in Lubbock, is scheduled to conduct Extension training at several venues in the High Plains this January, some of which have already taken place. The Beltwide Cotton Conference was held on 1/5/10. Several producer meetings also occurring this week, including the Western Plains Ag Conference in Leveland, the Terry County Drip Conference on 1/19/10, and the Llano Estacado Cotton Conference on 1/20/10 in Muleshoe. These conferences look at nonpoint source pollution and irrigation and water management.

**PMP Task Force:** Mr. Cherepon (TCEQ) reported that he will be presenting a summary of the pesticides assessed in 2009 later in the meeting.

None of the other task forces were active.

### **III. (No presentation was scheduled for this meeting)**

### **IV. Business Items**

#### **Proposed FY10 Pesticide Monitoring Plan**

Mr. Cherepon (TCEQ) provided handouts and gave a summary of the Proposed FY10 Pesticide Monitoring Plan. The draft was sent out to members of the SSTF prior to Christmas for comments, which produced some feedback. The primary tasks continue to include cooperative monitoring, urban monitoring, ongoing monitoring, and monitoring in the Panhandle region. The extent to which these tasks will be carried out will depend upon how much funding is

available for the year. The urban monitoring will include sampling in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area. Dr. Harris asked if we expected to find much glyphosate in the water, as this pesticide tends to adhere to soils strongly and has a short half-life (degrades quickly). Mr. Cherepon replied that monitoring has yet to detect any substantial concentrations; but, since the immunoassay kits exist, TCEQ will at least attempt this year to monitor for it in one more metropolitan areas. The Dallas/Ft. Worth area has a different hydrogeology from areas that were monitored for glyphosate in the past, and thus monitoring there should be worth while, since glyphosate is one of the more frequently applied pesticides (trade names include Roundup and Rodeo). Mr. Cherepon also thought that the immunoassay analysis includes a certain percentage of degradates due to cross-reactivity.

Monitoring in the Panhandle, in addition to ongoing monitoring, will include well sampling in the cotton growing area surrounding Lubbock for cotton pesticides. The ongoing monitoring will be carried out on several of the PWS wells in the southern portion of the Panhandle (Plainview, Friona, Tulia, and possibly more). Dr. Harris asked if the use of arsenical pesticides was still widespread for cotton. Mr. Cherepon replied that he knew they were used in high quantities in the past but was not sure if they might still be used to some extent. Since studies continue to show arsenic in groundwater, analyzing for it might be worth pursuing. However, we are not even sure if the method of analysis is practical, considering the limited budget. Also, the list of the more common cotton pesticides is presented in the monitoring plan so we can see which ones are on the SFIREG List of 57 needing to be assessed. Many of these we likely will not be able to get analyzed, since the contract lab can only maintain standards and certifications for the more commonly requested analytes.

TCEQ will include analyses for as many of the pesticides as funding will allow. The expanded suite of Method 525.2 pesticides will be the only set of analytes that will definitely be done, since it gives us the greatest number of pesticide analyses for the money. As many other pesticide analyses will be performed as possible under the funding restraints (a list of several possible methods is given in the monitoring plan).

Several questions were raised. Donna Long (TSSWCB) asked about why no methods of analysis were available for many of the remaining pesticides. Mr. Cherepon said that the list was sent to the contract lab, and they replied that these were not commonly analyzed by them, and they were not certified and prepared for conducting these. The USGS lab can do most of these, but it would be cost prohibitive for us to have them analyzed at their lab.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed, by voice vote, to approve the monitoring plan. Following plan approval, several questions were asked. Dr. Harris asked whether TCEQ targets specific types of wells or areas based on point source or nonpoint source. Mr. Cherepon replied that he typically does not have the time to do an overly refined search for specific wells, but his team tries to find the shallowest wells in an area, since these would be most likely to be impacted by downward migration of pesticides. However, the wells in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area will be monitored for urban pesticides, while wells in the southern Panhandle area will be monitored for cotton pesticides. Maps are available that show the areas of cotton cropland in the state. There is also information of estimated amounts of pesticides used in specific counties which can help identify cotton cropland. Some pesticides, such as arsenic, may not be widely used any more,

and analytical methods may not be available or affordable, so monitoring may be limited by a number of factors. The cooperative monitoring will target at least atrazine, and possibly two or three other pesticides which can be analyzed by available in immunoassay kits.

## **V. Information Exchange**

### **Summary of the Pesticides of Interest and Concern Assessments for FY2009**

Mr. Cherepon (TCEQ) provided handouts and gave a summary of the pesticides of interest (POI) and pesticides of concern (POC) assessments for FY2009. (The pesticide assessments are required by EPA on 57 pesticides identified by SFIREG as potential POIs and POCs, and is conducted in the Online Pesticides Of Interest Tracking System, or POINTS database). Mr. Cherepon began with a brief history of the number of pesticides assessed each year and how many remain to be assessed. 16 pesticides were assessed in 2008, 19 in 2009, and 22 remain to be assessed in 2010. The handouts included the names of the pesticides assessed in 2009, the ones remaining to be done in 2010, and a printed POINTS report for 2009. The printed report identifies which year they were assessed, and which have yet to be assessed. A spreadsheet was also included, detailing pesticide characteristics, monitoring data for each pesticide, and use of each pesticide assessed. Mr. Cherepon mentioned that the EPA liaison, Dr. Jerry Collins, commented to him that Texas is way ahead of the other Region 6 states, and Dr. David Villarreal (TDA) then suggested that Texas is probably way ahead of most states in the nation in this work.

Mr. Cherepon confessed that the scoring system applied is somewhat subjective. The scoring method assigns 0 points if the pesticide is unlikely to migrate into groundwater, a 1 if there is a low probability of migration, a 2 if there is a moderate probability of migration, and a 3 if there is a high probability of migration. The method also incorporated a multiplier based on the number of past detections and the concentrations of those detections. The older the monitoring data the less weight it was given in determining the multiplier. The purpose of the scoring was to give some indication of how likely these pesticides would be to cause problems with Texas groundwater.

Dr. Peters asked if the EPA software was used to score the pesticides, and Mr. Cherepon replied he did not use it for the spreadsheet. However, the information from the spreadsheet was used in completing the Online scoring and assessment to determine whether any of the pesticides were of concern. Dr. Harris asked if half-life is included on the spreadsheet. Mr. Cherepon replied that there are several half-life values provided, each based on a different environment of the pesticide residue. Also on the spreadsheet is a column indicating whether the pesticide is an endocrine disruptor. This may be a growing issue in coming years, with EPA reassessing these pesticides in the near future. Dr. Harris also asked about what caused the glyphosate detection and where it was. Mr. Cherepon replied that it was only from an immunoassay analysis, that there was no laboratory verification analysis, so at present, and thus we do not know whether this will prove to be an actual detection. Mr. Cherepon thought the detection was probably from one of the Austin area wells. He will confirm this after the meeting and follow up with an email.

## Update on Crazy Ants in Texas

Richard Eyster (TDA) provided a brief update on the Crazy Ant situation in Texas. The state is presently testing different pesticides for effectiveness in treating for these ants. They have also worked at updating maps showing the infested areas. The Section 18 exemption for using Fipronil (trade name Termidor) on the ants has been extended for 3 years. The main areas of infestation are mainly around Houston-Galveston. More recently they have also been reported in the San Antonio area. Mr. Cherepon reported on a conversation that he had with the Section 18 manager for TDA about the cold weather impact on the ants. The Section 18 manager informed Mr. Cherepon that the cold only caused the ants to move into homes. Dr. Harris asked what they looked like. Mr. Eyster replied they are similar to fire ants, red, maybe a bit smaller, and while they can bite, they do not sting like a fire ant. Also, when observing them, one gets the impression that each ant is moving randomly about independent of all the other ants. They do not build mounds. Videos showing their distinctive methods of moving about can be found on the web. No quarantine has been set, as they spread too rapidly, and are difficult to get under control. Dr. Villarreal (TDA) added that the immediate problem is not that these ants are impacting water, but rather damaging electrical wiring by eating off the insulation, in some cases causing millions of dollars in damage (at chemical plant, at NASA, and at municipal structures). They can also affect bees, insects, birds, and possibly other animals, especially the young. They can actually eat the young. It is believed that the ants originated in the Caribbean. The actual name is the Raspberry Crazy Ant, named for the applicator which identified them in the Houston-Galveston area.

## **VI. Announcements**

One additional item was shared with the Subcommittee by Mr. Cherepon. A draft of the general NPDES permit, that will be required for pesticide applications in or near water bodies, is moving forward. EPA had a teleconference/webcast the previous week reviewing the draft permit. This was followed by an distribution of the draft general permit to select individuals for an initial review. The Region 6 EPA hosted a meeting on the draft permit held on January 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, in Dallas. Dr. Ambrose Charles and Mr. Jimmy Bush of TDA and the TCEQ NPDES Team management attended the meeting. Mr. Cherepon began reviewing the permit, and there appear to be a lot of exemptions, limiting impact on agriculture. Whether this draft will make it through a review by the court which gave the initial ruling, remains to be seen. The TCEQ NPDES Team has yet to ask for input from the FIFRA grant people, and they will hopefully provide the Subcommittee with a more thorough update on how the development of this draft is progressing at the next meeting. There are some groups appealing the ruling, hoping to take it to the Supreme Court if necessary. Dr. Villarreal added that this is primarily a surface water issue at present, but could become all encompassing, since it seems that the Department of Justice is trying to connect every application of a pesticide to the potential contamination of water, both surface water and groundwater. The Agricultural industry is trying to limit the implications. Additionally, about 90% of the permit will be under TCEQ's jurisdiction, but if adverse effects occur, TDA will need to be notified and involved. It is still not known who will be responsible for monitoring impacts, or how large an area of treatment will require a permit. The immediate effort is to develop a general permit that would cover all pesticide applications, rather than

requiring each individual pesticide application to be permitted. The permits need to be in affect by April 2011.

## **VII. Public Comment**

No public comments were made.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

With no further announcements or public comment, the meeting was adjourned.

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Recorded and transcribed by Alan Cherepon.

In their afternoon meeting, the decision was made by the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee that its FY10 third quarter meeting would take place on 04/07/10 at 1:00 P.M., in TCEQ Building F, Conference Room 2210. The Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee meeting will take place on the same date and in the same room at 10:30 A.M.

## **Attachments**

Proposed FY10 Pesticide Monitoring Plan  
Summary of the Pesticides of Interest and Concern Assessments for FY09  
POINTS 2009 Report for Texas  
Pesticide characteristics spreadsheet for assessing pesticides in 2009