AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING RECORD

TIME AND DATE:
10:30 AM, July 20, 2011

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

PURPOSE OF MEETING:
The FY11 Fourth Quarter Meeting of the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee

ATTENDEES:

AGENCIES

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]
Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts [TAGD]
Texas AgriLife Extension Service [TAES]

REPRESENTATIVES

Joseph L. Peters	Chair, Member, TCEQ, Austin
Richard Eyster	Member, TDA, Austin
Kevin Wagner	Member, TAR, College Station
Richard Egg	Member, TSSWCB, Temple
Janie Hopkins	Member, TWDB, Austin
Mark Matocha	Member, TAES, College Station

AGENCY STAFF

Alan Cherepon	TCEQ, Austin
Abiy Berehe	TCEQ, Austin
David Villarreal	TDA, Austin
Ambrose Charles	TDA, Austin

INTERESTED PARTIES

Ed Baker	Syngenta, Mineola

MEETING SUMMARY:

I. Opening Remarks

The Chairman of the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee, Dr. Joseph Peters (TCEQ), called the meeting to order. Subcommittee member Mr. 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 (TWDB), the Task Force Chair, said the TWDB is dealing with some loss of staff due to recent budget cuts. Aside from that, they are continuing with monitoring. Thus far 360 total samples have been obtained.

- 175 in the Trinity
- 90 in the Edwards-Trinity (Plateau)
- 21 in the Pecos Valley
- 20 in the Marathon
- Smaller numbers in several other aquifers

Additionally, the sampling included isotope analysis in the Marathon and Ogallala Aquifers. Ms. Hopkins also expressed concern that there will be less money for laboratory analyses in 2012 due to reduction of the drinking water portion of the state revolving funds. TWDB will not have to go out for laboratory bids this year, because their contract with the LCRA Environmental Laboratory Services Laboratory continues, and the LCRA has been delivering good service.

Alan Cherepon (TCEQ) added that he will be doing a presentation on TCEQ pesticide monitoring in 2011, later in the agenda.

PMP Task Force: Mr. Cherepon (TCEQ), a co-chair of this Task Force, reported that in 2011, the Task Force will assess the five remaining pesticides from the original list of 57, using EPA's **P**esticides **O**f **INT**erest **S**ystem (**POINTS**) application and database. Ambrose Charles (TDA) asked what the remaining five pesticides were. Mr. Cherepon said they included two or three groups of chemicals, such as the arsenicals and copper pesticides, but could not recall the others. Since the laboratory does not analyze for these, the assessment will be based on chemical characteristics, use, and toxicity. Co-Chair David Villarreal (TDA) commented that he did not believe Texas had received any feedback from EPA on the previous assessments and the whole process may be just a waste of time, which may be what most of the other Region 6 states believe, since most of them haven't done much with these assessments. He added that Mr. Cherepon did most of the work on these assessments, receiving some help from TDA with details on

pesticide characteristics and human toxicity. Mr. Cherepon agreed, adding that Texas nevertheless is doing a good job.

The other task forces were inactive and had nothing to report.

III. 2011 Groundwater Pesticide Monitoring Preliminary Summary

Alan Cherepon, TCEQ, provided a Power Point presentation on the TCEQ groundwater pesticide monitoring activities in 2011. The major areas addressed included:

- Monitoring in South Texas
- On-going Monitoring in the Panhandle
- Cooperative Monitoring with the TWDB and TCEQ's Superfund program
- Analytical Issues
- Results Summary and Recommendations

TCEQ staff made two monitoring trips in 2011. The South Texas trip was ambitious, required three staff members and six days due to the distance that needed to be traveled and because two monitoring areas were to be covered. The Lower Rio Grande Valley (LRGV) had not been sampled by TCEQ since 1998, and the Corpus Christi (CC) area had never been sampled by the TCEQ team. A good amount of planning went into making this a successful trip. Potential sources of pesticides were identified, which included cropland and pesticide use maps, aerial applicator sites, golf courses, Superfund sites, sites identified by local TCEQ regional offices, wells with previous detects from the Cooperative monitoring program with the TWDB, and shallow wells in the region listed in the TWDB website groundwater database. Also, the team was accompanied by Ruben Quintanilla, a local staff person from the TCEQ Harlingen office while in the LRGV. The previous trip to the LRGV resulted in only 5 samples, while this trip saw 11 samples from the same area, and 18 samples total collected in one week. Mr. Cherepon declared it to be a successful trip.

In the LRGV eleven samples were collected, primary samples from nine wells plus one blank and one duplicate; and in the CC area, primary samples were collected from seven wells. All samples were analyzed for atrazine by immunoassay analysis, and all 18 samples were also analyzed at the laboratory by three pesticide methods for 44 pesticides. Out of the 18 samples, only one showed the presence of the pesticide propazine. The sample came from a well located across from the Sinton Airport, north-northwest of CC. Analysis for atrazine by immunoassay, used as a screening method, tested positive in the same well. Because of cross sensitivity between the triazines and their degradates, the propazine was analyzed as atrazine in the atrazine immunoassay. The concentration was considerably lower than the Health Advisory Limit (HAL) of 100 ppb.

The routine trip to the Panhandle was for re-sampling PWS wells with previous high atrazine detects. A total of 25 samples were collected; 22 primary well samples, plus one from a surface water site, one blank, and one duplicate. The surface water sample and

non Public Water Supply well samples were only analyzed for atrazine by immunoassay. Ten of the samples were analyzed by both immunoassay and laboratory. Three pesticide methods were used which gave results for a total of 44 pesticides. There were six atrazine and six propazine detects by laboratory analysis, as well as one metolachlor and one bromacil detect in separate samples. All concentrations were well below action levels. Plots of immunoassay atrazine concentration data since 2000 indicate that most wells indicate decreasing atrazine concentrations. It is suggested that these wells may require ongoing sampling only every two to five years.

This year's TWDB collection of samples for Cooperative screening for atrazine is ongoing, but a map of locations of wells sampled and analyzed thus far was presented. A total of 151 atrazine analyses have been completed. There have been a few low detects considerably below the Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 3.0 ppb. Most wells sampled were completed in the Edwards-Trinity or the Pecos Alluvium aquifers.

There were fewer analytical issues this year, and no data losses so far. The analytical issues were minor ones, caused by matrix interference, that are identified each year. Only non-targeted pesticides were affected. In summary, no significant pesticide detects were identified in the South Texas region, and the atrazine concentrations detected in the Panhandle region continue to decrease. The few propazine detects were at low concentrations, and may be indicative of increased propazine use in recent years, but this is not confirmed. One additional announcement was that TCEQ's State Superfund program would be conducting some field work for us on atrazine detect sites outside of Lubbock. They will be cooperating with us by providing samples for us to analyze by immunoassay in the next month. Aside from this, the few recommendations included:

- Continue with Cooperative monitoring
- Change Ongoing monitoring in the Panhandle to every 2-5 years
- Keep checking with the LCRA laboratory to see if it develops the ability to analyze for pesticides of interest for which they previously could not analyze, especially arsenical pesticides, degradates, and copper pesticides
- Consider having the LCRA ELS laboratory or another contractor to collect samples, should budgets be reduced to prevent us from collecting samples ourselves

Dr. Charles (TDA) commented on the diminishing importance of monitoring for arsenical pesticides, since they are being removed from the market. Ms. Hopkins (TWDB) added that the arsenic study conducted by the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology for TCEQ indicated the arsenic in the Panhandle area is naturally occurring. She added that it was important to analyze for the correct species of arsenic to determine whether it is natural or anthropogenic. Mr. Cherepon said that he would believe the cotton growing had no link to the arsenic if the arsenic levels were just as high outside the cotton growing areas, and that a recent study by Texas Tech has found high arsenic in wells near Lubbock. He indicated that he needs to check to see what analytical methods they were using, whether these methods are the same methods being used by the TCEQ Public Drinking Water Program, or if they would be available for TCEQ to use.

IV. Business Items

Assessment of Subcommittee Task Forces

Dr. Peters, the Subcommittee Chair, provided a handout to assist the group to review the various functions of the task forces of the ACS, to determine whether any of them were no longer needed, or if other possible changes might be needed. The five Task Forces include:

- Site Selection (SSTF)
- Data Interpretation and Evaluation (DEITF)
- State, or Pesticide Management Plan (PMPTF)
- Best Management Practices (BMPTF)
- Education (ETF)

After Dr. Peters described the five task forces, giving their purpose and focus and indicating whether the task force has actually met in recent years, the Subcommittee members joined in the discussion. The Chair explained that all of the task forces were created for implementing the various aspects of the PMP. Several comments were made, the first by Dr. Villarreal (TDA), asking whether the Subcommittee could expand its activities to include fertilizers and pharmaceuticals, not just pesticides, since the name of the subcommittee is the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee. The chair replied that this would have to come from the full Texas Groundwater Protection Committee. Dr. Charles (TDA) added that at the time the TGPC and ACS were formed, pesticides were the main focus, which is why it has only addressed pesticides. However, after 20 years, the focus may need to be expanded, since very few pesticide problems have been found in Texas groundwater. Ms. Hopkins (TWDB) thought that the USGS or any other agency monitoring for these other agricultural chemicals would be needed as a member of the ACS if this expansion in focus were to be agreed upon, but that finding funding to address this change may be difficult or impossible at present. Mr. Cherepon (TCEQ) added that there were at least a couple of issues: the availability and costs of laboratory methods, and the availability of financial resources, since much of the present work is supported by a FIFRA grant, which is specific to pesticides. Should anyone desire to re-focus the ACS to include non-pesticides, their agency would have to be the one providing supporting information and input at the meetings. The Chair also mentioned this issue would have to be addressed in a future meeting.

The following decision on the task forces was reached and voted upon: The ACS would discontinue having the BMPTF and DEITF as a regular quarterly agenda items, and the two task forces would be reconstituted again and added to the agenda on an as-needed basis; and that the ETF, would consist of Mr. Alan Cherepon and Dr. Mark Matocha (TAES) as members, with Mr. Cherepon reporting on activities of the Public and Outreach and Education Subcommittee (POE) relative to the PMP and of interest to the ACS, and Dr. Matocha doing the same with activities of Texas AgriLife Extension Service

(TAES). The motion was made by Mr. Kevin Wagner (TAR), seconded by Mr. Richard Egg (TSSWCB) and unanimously passed by the subcommittee.

V. Information Exchange – Status Updates

Kevin Wagner (TAR) announced that Dr. Bill Harris, Director of the Texas Water Resources Institute would be retiring at the end of August, and would be replaced by Dr. Neal Wilkins, who plans on being present at the afternoon TGPC meeting. Richard Eyster (TDA) noted that Dr. Ambrose Charles would be retiring from TDA at the end of August. Janie Hopkins (TWDB) mentioned again about the layoffs at her agency.

Alan Cherepon mentioned that the TCEQ pesticide waste and container collection program had ended due to budget reductions. He also provided a summary of important issues addressed at the recent Water Quality Workgroup meeting held by TCEQ. There was a brief mention of pesticides and fertilizers related to general storm water permits, but no details were given. Alan Cherepon also announced that the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System's (NPDES) general Pesticide Permit program, originally scheduled to be operational on 4/9/11, was granted a six-month extension until 10/31/11. EPA has yet to finalize the permit they were developing for states that may choose to not develop a permit of their own, and they now have to address a 190 page comment by the U.S. Marine and Fisheries Service relative to protecting endangered species. TCEQ has decided not to implement the Texas general Pesticide Permit Program until EPA can get their general pesticide permit in place, which may require another extension from the court. Also, the U.S. Congress has passed a bill that would counter the court decision and not require the permits; however, the bill has yet to pass through the Senate and the President. Nevertheless, TCEQ has to have the Texas program ready to be initiated and has already been communicating with its regional offices to see what type of questions and issues exist with the Texas draft permit. TCEQ will also have to see that considerable outreach and education is done for this permit. A stakeholder meeting will be held prior to the October deadline, for which details will be posted on the TCEQ website. Charles Maguire, Division Director for the Water Quality Division at TCEQ, is the contact person for further information on these items.

VI. Announcements

No announcements were made.

VII. Public Comments

Dr. Charles (TDA) thanked the Subcommittee for their many years of work since he had been involved with it, and, though he will no longer be an official agency member after August, encouraged the Subcommittee to contact him on any issues on which he could be of assistance, and mentioned that he may be attending some meetings to keep up to date on happenings in Texas related to Agricultural Chemicals.

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 FY12 first quarter meeting would take place on 10/12/11 at 1:00 P.M., in TCEQ Building F, Conference Room 2210. The Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee meeting will, therefore, take place on the same date and in the same room at 10:30 A.M.

Attachments

2011 Groundwater Pesticide Monitoring Preliminary Summary presentation handouts
Assessment of Subcommittee Task Forces handouts