AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING RECORD

TIME AND DATE:
10:00 AM, July 25, 2002

LOCATION:
TNRCC, Park 35, Building B, Room 201A, Austin, Texas

PURPOSE OF MEETING:
The FY02 Fourth Quarter meeting of the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee.

ATTENDEES:

AGENCIES

Texas Department of Agriculture [TDA]
Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission [TNRCC]
Texas Water Development Board [TWDB]
Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts [TAGD]
Texas Structural Pest Control Board [TSPCB]

REPRESENTATIVES

Steve Musick	Chair, Member, TNRCC, Austin
Donnie Dippel	Member, TDA, Austin
Radu Boghici	Member, TWDB, Austin
Barry Miller	Member, TAGD, Gonzales
Murray Walton	Member, TSPCB, Austin

AGENCY STAFF

Jeanette O'Hare	TDA, Austin
Ambrose Charles	TDA, Austin
Debborah Danford	TDA, Austin
Joe Peters	TNRCC, Austin
Alan Cherepon	TNRCC, Austin
Abiy Berehe	TNRCC, Austin
Lynne Fahlquist	USGS, Austin
Mark Matocha	TCE, College Station

MEETING SUMMARY:

I. Opening Remarks

Steve Musick (TNRCC) called the meeting to order, welcomed every one to the meeting, and asked

if anyone had any changes to the meeting record from the previous meeting to please see him after the meeting. This was followed with mentioning those members who were absent. Members not in attendance included Dr. Bruce Lesikar, TCE, Dr. C. Allen Jones, TAES and Donna Long, TSSWCB. Mr. Musick provided a handout to subcommittee members consisting of correspondence between the USEPA and TNRCC related to FIFRA funding reduction, their potential effect on the Texas PMP program, and the possible use of 106 Ground Water grant funds to help make up some of this funding reduction. Mr. Musick proceeded to the Task Force Reports.

II Task Force Reports

Site Selection Task Force: The Task Force Chair, Mr. Radu Boghici acting for Ms. Janie Hopkins (TWDB), briefly summarized the TWDB cooperative monitoring in the Carrizo-Wilcox and Yegua-Jackson-Sparta aquifers. The TWDB will likely continue sampling into October 2002. The TWDB's sampling effort will most likely involve sampling that will help with the Groundwater Availability Modeling (GAM) studies, possibly in the Edwards Plateau and Pecos Alluvium aquifers. Mr. Boghici commented that the TWDB is attempting to sample as many wells during the summer months as possible, as more wells are typically pumping during that season. He also said he would keep the ACS updated on all future monitoring efforts by the TWDB. Mr. Alan Cherepon (TNRCC) said that he would provide a presentation on sampling TNRCC conducted in the Panhandle region later in the program (Item IVA below also falls under SSTF purview).

Education Task Force: The Task Force Chair Dr. Bruce Lesikar (TCE), was unable to attend the meeting, so no update report was available.

The BMP Task Force: The Task Force Chair, Dr. Joe Peters (TNRCC), said he will address the Panhandle regional BMPs and educational efforts as Item IV B on the agenda.

State Management Plan Task Force: The Task Force Chair, Dr. Ambrose Charles (TDA), had nothing new to report.

Data Evaluation and Interpretation Task Force (DEITF): Since at the present time there are no outstanding charges of work for the DEITF, and the Task Force Chair, Dr. Allan Jones (TAES) was absent, there was nothing new to report.

III. Update on Invasive Species Activities

Donnie Dippel of TDA provided an update on Invasive Species Activities in Texas. This presentation included handouts focusing on saltcedar eradication along 100 miles of the Pecos River. The Bureau of Land Management brought it into the Pecos River area in the Late 1800's to stop erosion. The plant was useful in preventing erosion, but uses much water, and leaves the water salty. It also kills out the other trees and vegetation due to the increased salt. Some of the highlights included:

- Approximately 2785 acres have been treated

- Saltcedars use from 4 to 13 acre-feet of water per year
- The Saltcedars have spread all the way to the Rio Grande, infests so thick that goats can't even penetrate it; saltcedar are present along all major rivers in Texas
- Pecos River doesn't even flow into the Rio Grande anymore
- Had to get a 24C variance to allow spraying along river in endangered species area
- Initially sprayed in September 1999, 27 miles of river, another 33 miles in 2000, and 51 miles in 2001 (can only spray in September by helicopter)
- The spraying initially appears successful, with no noticeable adverse side affects, based upon water samples
- Pecos River flow has increased, estimated 2785 acres treated at a savings of about 16,000 acre-feet of water
- Estimated cost is about $31.35/acre
- Water salinity has decreased
- No regrowth after the first 3 years, but don't know when they'll have to re-apply
- Can't treat areas that have had fires for three year period
- Pilot program on lake near Artesia successful, lake that was infested with saltcedar had dried up, after spraying and killing saltcedars, water rose back from 23 foot depth to surface
- New Mexico (upstream) has $2 ½ million for the Rio Grande and $½ million for the Pecos Rivers to eradicate saltcedars in these areas
- Imazapyr, the active ingredient in the pesticide used in this program, has a half life of about 3 days in surface water, and they need to keep it away from public water supply intakes
- They have indication of ties between the Pecos River and the Edwards aquifer-Pecos feeds into the backside of the Edwards, potential for adding salt to aquifer if not corrected
- Active ingredient is imazapyr, under the product name Arsenal, won't kill mesquite or legumes, can't sell produce for 30 days after spraying, but generally low toxicity
- Initially have a $1 million budget, have about $600K left, as first applications funded primarily by private interests
- One issue is what to do with dead trees on steep banks (burning is one possible solution)

Other items presented included the Colorado River/Lake Spence Saltcedar eradication program, the formation of both a state task force to deal with the saltcedar problem, and a federal investigative special advisory committee. There are 3 lakes along the Colorado River that are infested with saltcedar, and it appears to be migrating down the river. Goals of the task force include helping control water utilization, identify water development delivery systems with an invasive species problem, determine severity, develop a plan, and to identify funding. The state task force is meeting at the capital underground facility committee room on 8/20/02. The federal invasive species advisory committee organized four years ago and is coordinating similar efforts nationwide, will prepare and implement a national plan, and develop international cooperation and communication.

Some questions followed Mr. Dippel's talk, which resulted in the following additional comments; They use GPS for precise application of the pesticide, monitoring of groundwater has resulted in no impact so far, they can see water level fluctuations in day and evening levels, and a Texas A & M report of monitoring results will soon be completed.

IVA. Plainview and Hereford (Panhandle trip) Update Report

Mr. Cherepon (TNRCC) provided a summary of groundwater monitoring work, primarily in the Panhandle region, during the week of July 8th. Handouts were provided to the Subcommittee members, and an electronic slide show was used to present the data. The SSTF had approved and full Subcommittee had reviewed the sampling activities recommended by TNRCC at the previous meeting of the ACS. Additional data on PSOCs locations and wells are to be gathered during another trip that is to be made this summer, in order to complete investigation work; and charges will be prepared for the DEITF to evaluate the data and develop recommendations.

Following a brief overview and update on cooperative sampling in the Carrizo-Wilcox aquifer, activities and results of the recent Panhandle trip were presented. During the drive up to the Panhandle, 1 well in Haskell and 1 well in Knox Counties were re-sampled. These wells were initially sampled by TDA in 1988, indicating high atrazine concentrations at 19.6 ppb and 200.3 ppb respectively. The Haskell County well had 0.12 ppb atrazine, while the Knox County well did not detect any atrazine by immunoassay method. One interesting item at the Knox County well was the use of a herbicide for cotton (Caparol) that had s-triazine listed as an active ingredient. Atrazine is also a member of the triazine family.

The Public Water Supply systems of Plainview and Hereford (and to a lesser extent, Dumas) were the primary focus of this work. In Hereford, eight PWS wells were sampled, two of which had an increase in atrazine concentrations as compared to the previous immunoassay results. In Plainview, 2 PWS wells, 13 monitoring wells, 2 cemetery wells, and one Point-of-entry (POE) were sampled. One of the PWS wells indicated an increase in atrazine concentration, while 4 of the 13 monitoring wells at nearby Hale County Airport showed an increase. Metolachlor concentrations in the monitoring wells indicated no appreciable change. The low concentrations to non-detection of atrazine at the cemetery wells and the detection of atrazine in every airport monitoring well provides strong indication that the source of atrazine in the PWS wells is most likely from the airport.

In Tulia, 2 PWS wells, 3 private wells, and 1 POE were sampled. Two of the three re-sample wells indicate a slight increase in atrazine concentrations, by immunoassay method. Another private well was sampled further to the southeast than was previously sampled. The sample had no detectable atrazine, establishing the extent of the plume in that direction. In Dimmitt, 5 PWS wells, 2 surface water, and 1 Point-of-entry were sampled. Only one PWS well had an increase in atrazine concentration. In Dumas, the one PWS well re-sampled indicated a slight increase in atrazine.

IVB. Panhandle Regional BMPs and Educational Efforts

The BMPTF Chair, Dr. Peters (TNRCC), provided a brief summary about feedback from the BMPTF members. The plan includes education/training document development, an outline, advertising brochure, curriculum guidance manual, and the actual training. Mr. Musick said a proposal for funding in the 2003 fiscal year has already been submitted to EPA. Mr. Musick also mentioned speaking with Dr. Lesikar (TCE), who in turn has spoken with his people in the

Panhandle region. They feel this is a workable outline, from a contract perspective. The current plan is to fold the outline into the contract requirements, and for the TCE to work with the BMPTF to translate the BMP outline document into educational materials. Anyone desiring additional information on this should contact Dr. Bruce Lesikar (TCE). The only comments made by Subcommittee members was by Murray Walton (TSPCB), who feels it should be made part of the applicator training requirements, with CEUs, as this will get better applicator attendance.

IVC. Legislative Recommendations for TGPC Report to 78th Legislature

Mr. Musick addressed this agenda item. He mentioned he would be providing a status report to the TGPC this afternoon, and would like to have input from the ACS on specific issues/changes from the previous report. The Legislature will be convening in January, and the TGPC would like to have the report completed by November. Since EPA hasn't made the PMP final rule a high priority and we don't expect the Final Rule anytime soon, there is no apparent need to include the recommendation for state funding for pesticide-specific PMPs for this Legislative session. Mr. Dippel (TDA) added that EPA is making some major changes to the PMP program, probably adding surface water and the naming of chemicals specific to each state rather than assume every state has the same pesticides of concern. There were probably a few other issues being addressed, and therefore suggested not recommending additional funding for the pesticide-specific PMPs in this legislative report. Mr. Murray Walton (TSPCB) commented we should possibly look for opportunities within the Homeland Security area. Mr. Musick asked if there were any other comments. Since there were none, he recommended the ACS table the pesticide-specific PMP recommendation as it appeared in the previous report, until the 79th Legislative Session. The Subcommittee was in agreement.

XXII. Public Comments

There were no public comments made at this meeting.

XXIII. Announcements

Mr. Cherepon brought up a recent EPA notice for Tolerance Reassessment Revocation in the 7/17/02 Federal Register, which includes atrazine. Mr. Musick asked if TDA was familiar with this, and whether anyone would volunteer to review these notices for atrazine, and whether they could report how they relate to the PMP. These notices are somewhat confusing. The TDA was familiar with this notice, but nobody volunteered to do this task.

The decision was made by the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee during their 8/16/02 meeting that the FY03 first quarter meeting of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee meeting will be on October 28, 2002, at 1PM, in Conference Room 2210. The Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee will take place on the same day at 10AM, in the same location and room.

The Texas Water Monitoring Conference will be held at the Pickle Research Center from 9/9/02 until 9/11/02.
The Texas Watershed Protection Committee will have their quarterly meeting at the Blacklands Research facility in Temple on 8/1/02.

Donnie Dippel (TDA) had several announcements for TDA.

- Two meetings will be held in El Paso in late July; The International Boundary Water Commission will meet on 7/30, and the Basin Advisory Commission (Clean Rivers program) will meet on 7/31.
- The Texas Invasive Species Task Force will meet the week of 8/20/02 at the Capitol Complex underground facility.
- AAPCO will meet in Kansas on 8/5/02.

VIII Adjournment

Recorded and transcribed by Alan Cherepon.

Attachments

FIFRA budget cut communications

Invasive Species presentation by TDA

Panhandle monitoring trip summary from week of 7/8/02 by TNRCC

BMPTF summary for regional educational efforts

Draft 78th Legislative Report

ATTACHMENTS