

AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING RECORD

TIME AND DATE:

10:30 AM, April 15, 2004

LOCATION:

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

PURPOSE OF MEETING:

The FY04 Third Quarter Meeting of the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee.

ATTENDEES:

AGENCIES

Texas Department of Agriculture [TDA]
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality [TCEQ]
Texas Water Development Board [TWDB]
Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board [TSSWCB]
Texas Cooperative Extension [TCE]
Texas Agricultural Experiment Station [TAES]
Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts [TAGD]
Texas Structural Pest Control Board [TSPCB]

REPRESENTATIVES

Steve Musick	Chair, Member, TCEQ, Austin
Ambrose Charles	Member, TDA, Austin
Janie Hopkins	Member, TWDB, Austin
Bruce Lesikar	Member, TCE, College Station
Kevin Wagner	Member, TSSWCB, Temple
Allan Jones	Member, TAES, College Station
Barry Miller	Member, TAGD, Gonzales
Jeff Isler	Member, TSPCB, Austin

AGENCY STAFF

Joe Peters	TCEQ, Austin
Alan Cherepon	TCEQ, Austin
Lynne Fahlquist	USGS, Austin
Abiy Berehe	TCEQ, Austin
Michael Hare	TDA, Austin
Richard Eyster	TDA, Austin
Jeff Cunningham	TAMU/TAES, College Station

Murray Walton

TSPCB, Austin

INTERESTED PARTIES

Ed Baker

Syngenta Crop Protection, Mineola

Donna Long

DLS Technologies, Inc.

Denise Gentsch

Syngenta Crop Protection, Austin

MEETING SUMMARY:

I. Opening Remarks

The Chairman of the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee, Mr. Steve Musick (TCEQ), called the meeting to order. He welcomed everyone to the meeting, and especially welcomed Jeff Isler, who is replacing Murray Walton as the ACS representative for the TSPCB, and thanked Mr. Walton for his years of service to the subcommittee. After these preliminaries, Mr. Musick proceeded to the Task Force Reports.

II Task Force Reports

Site Selection Task Force: The Task Force Chair was represented by Janie Hopkins (TWDB), who provided a brief summary of work the TWDB and cooperating entities have performed this fiscal year. The TWDB has sold their drill rig, but the drill crew has been incorporated into the groundwater sampling team. The TWDB continues with the cooperative monitoring program, primarily in the High Plains aquifer. The TWDB expects approximately 700 samples. The High Plains Underground Water Conservation District #1, The North Plains Groundwater Conservation District, and the Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District will continue cooperating in the TWDB monitoring program through sample collection in their districts in the Panhandle region.

Alan Cherepon (TCEQ) said the TCEQ has already analyzed 94 samples collected by TWDB, for atrazine and metolachlor, by immunoassay method. Approximately 64% of these were re-samples of wells sampled for atrazine during the first year of the Cooperative Monitoring program, and 100% were first time samples for metolachlor analysis. Additional monitoring wells have been installed at the Hale County Airport site, which TCEQ staff plan to sample next week. They will also train the Groundwater Conservation Districts' staff for pesticide sample collection.

Education Task Force: The Task Force Chair Dr. Bruce Lesikar (TCE), reported that Dr. Dana Porter (TCE, Lubbock) and Dr. Monty Dozier (TCE, College Station) have been preparing materials and presented Another seminar to county agricultural agents in the Lubbock area on 4/7/04. Another seminar will be presented this summer, on 5/18/04, at the TCE District 1 county agents' meeting. These educational seminars include information on the national level of the pesticide water quality findings of the USGS, and related state activities of the Subcommittee. Dr. Lesikar also mentioned they will have a summer intern to help develop curriculum and outreach materials, as well as implementation of the regional BMP plan.

No other Task Forces had anything new to present.

III. Business Items for Discussion and Possible Action

A. Discussion and Approval of Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee Charge

Steve Musick commented that the TGPC approved the Groundwater Protection Strategy about a year ago, and asked the subcommittee to review the revised charge to ensure it is in line with the strategy. The revised charge was sent out for subcommittee review about two weeks earlier, and another opportunity was given for comments. No comments were received. The Chair summarized the subcommittee purposed and outlined the tasks:

- Identify areas of past and present pollution;
- Coordinate input of the member agencies;
- Identify BMPs;
- Identify new pesticide issues as they arise; and
- Support education and outreach.

There were no comments or suggestions for change. A motion was made and seconded. The vote was unanimous to approve the charge for submittal to the TGPC.

B. Research Proposals to the Groundwater Research Subcommittee

The revised research proposals were sent out for comments to the subcommittee about two weeks prior to the meeting. Two members provided comments; Janie Hopkins provided some minor grammatical changes, and Barry Miller (TAGD) suggested inclusion of the study of well contamination. The Chair said the proposals addressed issues that surfaced from the PWS atrazine investigations conducted over the past few years in the Panhandle region. This includes migration/percolation of pesticides through soils and the subsurface units, and into the aquifer, as well as accelerated transport through wells and preferential pathways. Funding sources could be better defined.

Subcommittee members had additional comments and questions. Mr. Miller said that a water well study would be expensive, and asked if there was any chance of it being funded. Probably not, was the Chair's response. He added that perhaps the Groundwater Research Subcommittee could shed more light on prioritization and other items discussed by that subcommittee earlier in their morning meeting. Dr. Jones (TAES) commented that the subcommittee primarily discussed the matching of research issues to funding, and came up with a research project list for specific aquifers and contaminants (such as nitrates), which will be matched to appropriate funding sources. By developing this priority portfolio of research needs, they could better manage and market these needs to the Legislature, agencies, university research programs and such. They will develop this by the end of the month. The Chair finished by saying that the comments provided will be incorporated into the proposal, and it would be sent on to the Groundwater Research Subcommittee.

IV Information Exchange

A. LCRA Contract and QAPP for FY04

Mr. Musick summarized several items that required addressing under the information exchange. The new laboratory service contract between TCEQ and LCRA was finalized and in place on 3/31/04. The umbrella contract included several agency programs, including the FIFRA and 106 GW grants, which provide the budget for pesticide analysis of groundwater samples under the Pesticide Management Plan program. The Chair added that metabolite analysis could not be included, as there is no standard EPA method in place, and few labs have the capability for these analyses. Propazine will be included as part of the 525.2 Method, with an option to add prometon, diuron, and 2,4-D for an additional cost.

The program QAPP, which details the quality assurance mechanisms and standard operating procedures for groundwater monitoring for pesticides, is at EPA Region 6, awaiting authorization signatures. Since it is only a renewal, with no major changes, it should be signed very soon. This item, along with the LCRA contract, will enable TCEQ staff to continue with groundwater monitoring tasks this fiscal year.

B. Brief Update on the Atrazine iRED

Ed Baker, a consultant for Syngenta, provided a brief update on the status of the atrazine iRED. Recent developments include;

- All but 1 pesticide manufacturer have signed off on the agreement to participate,
- a provision was made that the companies will comply and participate, provided atrazine registration is not cancelled,
- potential lists of health effects includes potential for workers to develop prostate cancer, and the need to conduct further amphibian studies to determine sexual trait effects from atrazine,
- minor schedule changes,
- the volunteer monitoring of 8 reservoirs in Texas, excluding one in Limestone County,
- request for a label change to a distance of 200' from natural or impounded lakes, where mixing, loading, and equipment washing can be conducted, and
- all parties should be signed off by the end of the month.

C. NRCS Letter

Two items were added to the agenda; a letter to the NRCS, and the revised FY04 Monitoring Plan. Mr. Musick provided a copy of a letter of notification to the State Conservationist at the NRCS. The letter notified him of atrazine issues in Texas, BMP recommendations, and a request to recognize these issues, related to potential funding sources within their, or related programs. Mr. Musick added that he felt it was important to get recognition from the State Conservationist, and asked if it would be appropriate to send copies to local conservationists. Dr. Jones and Mr. Wagner agreed, and added this should be sent to regional representatives and managers in the High Plains, to include the NRCS, TSSWCB, TCE, and GCDs. Mr. Musick thought it might add a higher level of authority

to notify the cities and the agricultural communities in the Panhandle, that the State Conservationist is aware of the issues, and is in agreement with our approach. A draft letter will be made and passed to the TSSWCB for review prior to sending it to these people. The aim will be to get greater dissemination. Dr. Jones added that various producer groups, such as the corn and sorghum producers, and other stakeholders should also receive this. Mr. Baker suggested notifying the West Texas Agricultural Chemicals Association also. The Chair thanked the members for their input, that these groups would be included in the notification.

D. FY04 Proposed Monitoring Plan

Mr. Musick summarized that the FY04 Proposed Monitoring Plan was approved at the previous meeting, with certain additions to be made. These included a prioritization of sampling areas in Item I, under the cooperative monitoring task, and a similar prioritization for Item V, related to additional analytes. Mr. Cherepon identified these additions on the handout beneath the original items, in bold type. The only other change was under Item II, where additional information was provided for two of the systems, and two others were deleted from the list due to low concentrations or not being confirmed. Also included were tables of the top pesticides detected by the USGS, those listed as the top 10 in the 1991 draft PMP, and the top 10 in the IPD. These were used to indicate what overlap and priority to give those not yet being analyzed for, but are program options by Method 525.2. Prometon and 2,4-D were the top two pesticides gleaned out of these tables. Also, a map of high propazine use areas, which indicates the Panhandle region as a prime use area. The more recently registered pesticides cannot be analyzed or considered this fiscal year, as there are no standard methods at present, and are not widely used at present.

V. Public Comments

None provided.

VI. Announcements

The presentation scheduled for this meeting cancelled out, and will likely be rescheduled for the full committee meeting.

The decision was made by the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee that the FY04 fourth quarter meeting of the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee will take place on 08/19/04 at 10:30 a.m., in TCEQ Building F, Conference Room 2210.

VII. Adjournment

Recorded and transcribed by Alan Cherepon.

Attachments

Daft Texas Groundwater Protection Committee Charge to the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee

Draft Research Proposals for the Groundwater Research Subcommittee

NRCS Letter

FY04 Proposed Pesticide Monitoring Plan