

AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING RECORD

TIME AND DATE:

10:30 AM, October 10, 2012

LOCATION:

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

PURPOSE OF MEETING:

The FY13 First Quarter Meeting of the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee of the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee

ATTENDEES:

AGENCIES

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

REPRESENTATIVES

Joseph L. Peters	Chair, Member, TCEQ, Austin
Michael Hare	Member, TDA, Austin
Mark Matocha	Member, TAES, College Station
Janie Hopkins	Member, TWDB, Austin
Richard Egg	Member, TSSWCB, Temple

AGENCY STAFF

Alan Cherepon	TCEQ, Austin
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INTERESTED PARTIES

None in attendance for this meeting

MEETING SUMMARY:

I. Opening Remarks

The Chairman of the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee, Dr. Joseph Peters (TCEQ), called the meeting to order. Subcommittee members Dr. Kevin Wagner (TAR) and David Van Dresar (TAGD) were 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, provided a summary on the TWDB's completed and planned sampling activities. Most samples were collected from the Ogallala and Dockum Aquifers in 2012. The groundwater sample total for 2012 was 313. The TWDB has a goal of collecting 370 samples in 2013 but because of resource limitations will likely collect closer to 320. The 2013 sampling will include the Gulf Coast, Sparta, Yegua, and Hickory aquifers.

Mr. Cherepon indicated that he had drafted the 2013 monitoring plan, but it was not completed early enough to include in the agenda, so it will be reviewed and voted on at the next meeting. He indicated that he would be reporting on the results of TCEQ's 2012 groundwater pesticide monitoring during the presentation portion of the meeting.

Education Task Force: Dr. Matocha (TAES), the co-chair for the task force reported the TAES has been providing guidance to various entities on the Texas Pollution Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) permitting process. Mr. Cherepon (TCEQ), the other co-chair, reported that the Public Outreach and Education Subcommittee did not address any pesticide related issues at their recent meeting, but that Michael Hare (TDA) and he will be working on revising the pesticide FAQs prior to their next meeting.

PMP Task Force: Mr. Cherepon (TCEQ), a co-chair of this Task Force, reported that he completed assessments on all 57 pesticides from the State FIFRA (Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act) Issues Research and Evaluation Group (SFIREG) list as required by the EPA for the grant. No additional assessments are anticipated for the year unless a pesticide not currently on the list is detected by monitoring.

III. 2012 Groundwater Monitoring for Pesticides Report

Mr. Cherepon (TCEQ) provided highlights of TCEQ's 2012 ongoing monitoring season for pesticides in groundwater. The primary monitoring targets were Public Water Supply (PWS) wells with known previous high atrazine detects in the Panhandle. A total of 22 samples were collected and analyzed by immunoassay (IA) method for atrazine and 2,4-D, and 20 samples were analyzed by four methods by the laboratory. The data indicate that detects continued to drop or stay about the same at low concentrations for atrazine (nearly all below 1 ppb), and lab results indicate only trace amounts of atrazine, propazine, and only one detect each of metolachlor and bromacil. Since the detections continue to be low, Mr. Cherepon said that TCEQ would likely opt to sample these wells only every 2nd or 3rd year from now on.

Mr. Cherepon continued by presenting the 2012 Cooperative monitoring which involved the TWDB, and to a lesser extent, TCEQ's Superfund program. Both entities sampled in

the Panhandle, with the TWDB providing 222 samples and the Superfund program another 21 samples. Analyses were as follows;

- 243 atrazine IA analyses (only a few detects with the highest at 0.87 ppb)
- 54 triazine metabolite IA analyses (no detects)
- 52 2,4-D IA analyses (only trace amounts in several samples)
- 32 chlorpyrifos IA analyses (only a very few trace detects)

The Superfund program site was in NE Lubbock. In 2009 the TCEQ PDW program drew a sample in the area which tested positive for atrazine at 0.18 ppb. This small detection triggered some interest in the Superfund program which then sampled several wells in the area in 2011. They took samples at each well site for both laboratory and IA analysis. The IA samples were sent to Mr. Cherepon for analysis. The laboratory analysis detected only a few very low concentrations of atrazine. However, the IA analysis indicated high concentrations of atrazine in all the wells. [It was later determined that there was a technical problem with the IA sampling or storage process and all the results were discarded.]

Since the discrepancy between the IA and laboratory analysis could not be explained, for 2012, the Superfund again captured samples from this area. Again samples were taken for both laboratory and IA analysis, forwarding the 21 samples meant for IA analysis to TCEQ. These were the 21 Cooperative monitoring samples mentioned above. The results this time indicated good agreement between the immunoassays and laboratory, both giving low concentrations, with a high of 0.42 ppb. There were sufficient samples to allow Mr. Cherepon to draw contour maps of atrazine concentrations for both immunoassay and lab results. They both indicate two small areas of higher concentrations, but not high enough to warrant an investigation. Still, the wells may be resampled in 2013 to further confirm these results.

The final item addressed was the update of the Interagency Pesticide Database (IPD) by Dr. Joe Peters. A short background and use summary was provided. The database had considerable data added to it since last year, but is still not ready for a detailed report on the new data, which should be available in 2013. Still, the IPD continues to serve the program by indicating what pesticides have been detected in groundwater and where areas of interest might be for monitoring and investigation.

Following the presentation, Dr. Hare asked about the other pesticides detected (excluding atrazine). Mr. Cherepon commented that only atrazine comes up repeatedly in numerous wells, while other pesticides, except for propazine, typically only show up only as isolated instances indicating a relatively rare point source contamination event. Many of the propazine detections seem to be associated with atrazine detections. One reason for this may be, as attested to some years ago in a published paper, that propazine is one of the chemicals present in atrazine as an impurity introduced during the manufacturing process. It is common for pesticides to contain small amounts of related pesticides. The highest propazine detect was actually greater than the atrazine amount, so perhaps in this case some of the propazine was related to the actual use of the pesticide rather than being part of the formulation of atrazine.

IV. Business Items – Meeting Frequency Discussion and Decision

The issue of how often the subcommittee needs to meet was put forth at the previous meeting and was put on the agenda for discussion and decision at this meeting. Rather than meet quarterly some have suggested that perhaps the subcommittee could meet less often, since we are not finding any serious pesticide impacts to groundwater. The Chair, Dr. Joe Peters, brought up the question and mentioned that the subcommittee charge, provided in the handouts, addressed the question of meeting frequency. The 2nd page, next to last paragraph says that the subcommittee “should” meet quarterly, but the language does not indicate that it is required to meet quarterly, leaving sufficient flexibility for the subcommittee to meet less often if a majority of the members vote to do so. Minimal discussion included comment that much more was happening 21 years ago when the draft State Management Plan was being developed and the Final Rule was still a possibility; however, the subcommittee generally has less business at present. A motion was made and seconded that the Subcommittee meet every six months coinciding with the Groundwater Research Subcommittee meetings, since many members attend both meetings. The motion passed. It was stipulated that if important issues come up there is always the possibility of having additional meetings.

V. Information Exchange – Status Updates

Mr. Michael Hare brought three copies of an annual U.S. Department of Agriculture report on the Pesticide Data Program that included national analytical data related to the Food Quality Protection Act. Some information on the program background was provided, including needing to know how much pesticide is being ingested by people in different areas of the U.S. The data includes groundwater monitoring data from public water supply wells, since drinking water is part of the act.

Mr. Cherepon had several items to share with the subcommittee;

- An email from the TCEQ Public Drinking Water program indicated that they have been seeing numerous low detects of the pesticide dalapon, but it may be tied to disinfection by-products (Dr. Matocha commented that the chemical was formerly used on bare ground weed control, but is no longer used for this purpose.)
- There was an EPA Notice of phasing out the use of azinphos methyl (AZM). (Some discussion mentioned that most of the older pesticides that are being phased out, like organophosphates, are being replaced by pyrethroids; but there is some indication that insects are developing resistance to the pyrethroids and as a result may prove to be less effective.)
- The TCEQ Pesticide General Permit team has a notice about emergency applications and exemptions and where to find out more information on the permits.

VI. Announcements

There were no announcements made at this meeting.

VII. Public Comments

VIII. Adjournment

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

Recorded and transcribed by Alan Cherepon.

In their afternoon meeting, the decision was made by the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee that its FY13 second quarter meeting would take place on 1/16/13 at 1:00 P.M., in TCEQ Building F, Conference Room 2210. Due to the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee voting to only hold their meetings twice a year and to try and coincide with meetings of the Research Subcommittee, the next meeting will, therefore, take place on the same date and in the same room at 10:30 A.M. as the third quarter meeting of the full committee, whenever they determine that date at the next quarterly meeting in January (TBD).