

AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING RECORD

TIME AND DATE:

10:30 AM, October 20, 2010

LOCATION:

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

PURPOSE OF MEETING:

The FY11 First 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]

REPRESENTATIVES

Joseph L. Peters

Richard Eyster

Kevin Wagner

Chair, Member, TCEQ, Austin

Member, TDA, Austin

Member, TAR, College Station

AGENCY STAFF

Alan Cherepon

David Villarreal

Leslie Smith

TCEQ, Austin

TDA, Austin

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 members Mr. David Van Dresar (TAGD), Ms. Janie Hopkins (TWDB), and Ms. Donna Long (TSSWCB) were not in attendance. The TAES representative, Dr. Bruce Lesikar, also was not present since he has left his organization and

his replacement has not yet been named by TAES. 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 was absent; therefore Mr. Alan Cherepon (TCEQ) gave a short report. Mr. Cherepon commented that he proposed to continue with the Cooperative Monitoring program with the TWDB, as well as the on-going monitoring of Panhandle public water supply wells with known atrazine. New monitoring proposals include the Lower Rio Grande; Nueces and San Patricio Counties; pesticide manufacturing, bulk storage, mixing, loading, and retailing facilities; and cotton seed handling and bulk food processing and packaging facilities. Mr. Cherepon said he would be giving a presentation on TCEQ's pesticide monitoring in 2010 as the next agenda item, and would be providing the draft of TCEQ's pesticide monitoring plan for 2011.

Education Task Force: The Education Task Force Chair has been vacated by Dr. Bruce Lesikar (TAES) and his replacement has not yet been named. Mr. Cherepon mentioned that there are handouts on the back table summarizing scheduled pesticide pick-ups by TCEQ, with the next one set for the Corpus Christi area on October 28, 2010.

PMP Task Force: Mr. Cherepon (TCEQ), a co-chair of this Task Force, reported that he will provide assessments on the final 22 pesticides from the original list of 57 in the **Pesticides Of INTERest System (POINTS)** database by the end of December (the deadline for this activity). He is waiting on TDA to provide chemical characteristics on these pesticides, since there are few to none for which monitoring data exists, and he will have to assess them by chemical and physical characteristics and available use data. Dr. Villarreal, the other co-chair, added that TDA will provide this information shortly, and that because of the limited use of these pesticides information on them is somewhat harder to find.

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

III. 2010 Groundwater Pesticide Monitoring Summary

Mr. Cherepon provided a summary Power Point presentation on TCEQ's groundwater pesticide monitoring activities for 2010. Major areas addressed included:

- Panhandle cotton crop areas and on-going PWS monitoring
- Urban pesticide monitoring in the Dallas-Fort Worth area
- Cooperative monitoring
- Golf course monitoring
- Analytical issues, summary, and recommendations

Across the Panhandle, nine PWS wells, and in the cotton growing areas of the southern Panhandle, 13 other wells were sampled. The samples underwent 75 immunoassay (atrazine, acetochlor, and 2,4-D) analyses and eight laboratory analyses. Due to time constraints only nine wells were sampled in the on-going monitoring of PWS wells with previous atrazine detections. For this trip it included wells in Friona, Dimmitt, and an

alternate well in Plainview. There were no significant detects in the samples. The only sizable detect was in well number 2 in the south well field in Dimmitt, which had an immunoassay atrazine concentration of 1.22 ppb. Even this detect would likely have been below 1 ppb by laboratory analysis, but a sample was not sent to the laboratory. There were no detects of acetochlor or 2,4-D by immunoassay, and only one atrazine detect by the laboratory, below the quantitation limit of 0.1 ppb. Mr. Cherepon provided graphs showing atrazine concentration trends since about 1999 for five PWS systems. Almost all the wells show a drop in atrazine concentrations, probably due to education and outreach efforts leading to the correction of practices that may have been responsible for past contamination.

A question arose about well number 4 in the south well field of Dimmitt. It showed a zero atrazine concentration data point for one sampling event, while all its other sampling events showed significant detections of atrazine. Mr. Cherepon stated that he could not recall if that may have been a time when no sample was collected. Dr. Peters commented that the data point should be shown differently on the graph if that were the case. Someone else asked what the method variability was for immunoassays, but Mr. Cherepon could not recall, and added that immunoassay is only a screening method. Mr. Wagner (TAR) asked when Round-up Ready Corn came on the market, and Mr. Baker (Syngenta) added that weeds were already showing a resistance to the atrazine, with producers probably using more atrazine at present as a result. Mr. Cherepon replied that regardless, it should require considerable time for any atrazine to migrate down to the water table and manifest itself in the aquifer's wells. Mr. Baker commented that he would like to think that the education and outreach efforts in the area have also played a part in the decreasing concentrations.

A total of 10 wells and one spring were sampled in the Dallas-Fort Worth area for a total of 11 primary samples. An additional three QA samples were obtained. These 14 samples were analyzed for up to five pesticides (atrazine, 2,4-D, Acetochlor, diazinon, and chlorpyrifos), resulting in a total of 56 immunoassay analyses. Additionally, samples from eight of the wells were sent for laboratory analysis by four methods (515.1, 525.2, 531, and 622). There were no significant detects. Only 2,4-D was detected in one sample by immunoassay, at 5.71 ppb, but since 2,4-D has an MCL of 70 ppb, there is little concern at present. There were no detects by laboratory analysis. After reanalyzing the budget it was determined that there were enough funds remaining to collect an additional sample. A spring in Austin was selected. This spring (Bull Creek Spring) was previously never sampled. The spring sample plus one duplicate and one blank were analyzed by both immunoassay and laboratory. The results were all negative except for the blank analyzed by immunoassay. It analyzed positive for atrazine, at 0.05 ppb, which is the detection limit for atrazine by immunoassay. The result was ruled a false positive, since it was in the blank sample, and immunoassay has a history of false positives.

Under Cooperative monitoring the TWDB collected 218 well samples. These samples underwent 801 immunoassay analyses, for up to five pesticides. There were very few detections and no atrazine detections above 0.17 ppb. The few other detections were at very low concentrations, well below the MCL or HAL.

Another program at TCEQ had significant laboratory funds leftover near the end of the fiscal year and it was determined that some of it could be spent for doing laboratory analysis for any additional monitoring that the TCEQ FIFRA program could do. The TCEQ's FIFRA

program decided to sample several golf courses in Travis County, and one each in Milam, Burleson, and Lee Counties. The wells in these counties are mostly completed in the Carrizo-Wilcox aquifer. Ten well samples were collected. The samples underwent immunoassay analyses for atrazine, diazinon, and chlorpyrifos. Parallel samples were also collected for laboratory analysis by three pesticide methods (515.1, 525.2, and 622). No pesticides were detected.

There were several analytical issues, nothing major. An acceptable glyphosate run could not be completed, since once the glyphosate analysis was begun it became apparent the one kit on hand had too little reagent to complete the analysis. The budget did not allow for the purchasing of additional kits. A complicating factor is that immunoassay glyphosate analyses are more complicated than the other analyses used in this project. Another issue was that a couple of the field blanks from the cooperative monitoring samples were not labeled correctly. After looking at the analytical results and analyzing the field notes it was determined that at this sampling site the well sample and the field blank were cross labeled. Another minor issue was that several laboratory samples had indications of minor matrix interference. But, since there were no detections, it was determined that these issues were not pertinent to the analyses. Similar issues have been identified in past years by the laboratory, and have also been determined to be of limited concern. No results were discredited or found to be unacceptable.

In FY2010 for the FIFRA/106GW grants groundwater pesticide monitoring program, a total of 983 immunoassay analyses for up to five pesticides were performed on samples (including QA/QC samples) from 260 wells and two springs. In addition, a subset of 31 of the sample sites had parallel samples sent to the laboratory. There were only a few detections and these were at low levels, well below the MCL or HAL. The types of pesticides for which analyses were made included those used on cotton pesticides, golf courses, and urban areas. A combined map of all the monitoring sites was shown as the summary slide, indicating considerable groundwater pesticide monitoring for 2010. The monitoring provided a substantial increase in pesticide groundwater data. TCEQ is scheduled to complete the **POINTS** pesticide analyses on the remaining 22 pesticides from the SFIREG list of 57 by the end of December.

Recommendations for the next monitoring season include those identified in the draft monitoring plan for 2011:

- Cooperative monitoring with TWDB
- On-going monitoring in the Panhandle
- Monitoring in the Lower Rio Grande Valley and the Corpus Christi area
- Monitoring sites associated with pesticide manufacturing; bulk storage and transfer facilities; retail facilities; cotton gins; and food processing facilities
- Endeavor to analyze for those pesticides yet to be analyzed from the SFIREG list

Dr. Villarreal mentioned that some of the environmental groups and states like California have argued that Texas is not looking for the right chemicals, and should include in its monitoring personal care products (PCPs), degradates, etc. Mr. Cherepon replied that the grant presently only allows for pesticides to be included in monitoring, and that affordable and available laboratory methods cannot be provided at present for most to all of these other chemicals, which is why Texas has yet to include any significant number of these. Dr. Villarreal added that he has voiced these limitations to EPA repeatedly in annual reports,

but nothing has been yet done to rectify the situation, so he does not see any change in the near future on this issue. A few minor questions were also addressed, but nothing requiring follow up at present.

IV. Business Items

None scheduled for this meeting.

V. Information Exchange – Status Updates

Nothing significant was reported.

VI. Announcements

Several announcements were made by Mr. Cherepon, including the following:

- There will be a pick-up of old and waste pesticides in San Patricio County on October 28th by TCEQ.
- Aldicarb will be voluntarily removed from registration, and will no longer be produced or sold after a certain date. Mr. Cherepon asked if there has been an inordinate number of pesticides undergoing the same action in recent years, or if this seems to be happening at a fairly uniform rate? The answer was that Diazinon, propazine, organo-phosphates, carbofuran, and a few others have been removed in recent years, but nobody could say more of this was occurring presently than in the past. The cost of re-registration has risen significantly, so perhaps we are seeing some fiscal discretion.
- A group of senators and congressmen are presently trying to put together a unified bill to do away with the NPDES pesticide permit ruling by the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals.
- The Texas Plant Protection Conference is coming up, the first week in December.
- The next SFIREG meeting should also be coming up, but the date is not certain. There will not be a ruling on the atrazine re-evaluation for some time.

VII. Public Comments

No public comments were made.

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 FY11 second quarter meeting would take place on 01/19/11 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