

## AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING RECORD

### TIME AND DATE:

10:30 AM, August 11, 2005

### LOCATION:

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

### PURPOSE OF MEETING:

The FY05 Fourth 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 Cooperative Extension [TCE]  
Texas Agricultural Experiment Station [TAES]  
Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board [TSSWCB]  
Texas Structural Pest Control Board [TSPCB]  
Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts [TAGD]

#### 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, TAES, College Station
Richard Egg	Member, TSSWCB, Temple

#### AGENCY STAFF

Alan Cherepon	TCEQ, Austin
Joseph L. Peters	TCEQ, Austin
Lynne Fahlquist	USGS, Austin
Richard Eyster	TDA, Austin
Auburn Mitchell	Governor's Office, Austin

## INTERESTED PARTIES

Ed Baker  
George Caldwell

Syngenta Crop Protection, Mineola  
Texas Farm Bureau

### 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. Two Subcommittee members were absent: Jeff Isler (TSPCB) and Barry Miller (TAGD). Also, Richard Egg is the new representative for TSSWCB. Kevin Wagner stood in for Allan Jones (TAES). Mr. Musick proceeded immediately to the Task Force Reports.

#### II Task Force Reports

**Site Selection Task Force:** Janie Hopkins (TWDB), the Task Force Chair, provided a brief summary of work the TWDB is performing through the end of the fiscal year. The TWDB is presently conducting water well sampling in the Gulf Coast and Yegua aquifers, primarily in the southern portion. The High Plains Underground Water Conservation District #1, and the Panhandle Groundwater Conservation District have also volunteered to continue collecting well samples, in the Panhandle region. The TWDB will continue with the cooperative monitoring program in the Gulf Coast and Yegua aquifers into late summer or fall, where priorities will include counties with previous detects of atrazine or metolachlor, and where few or no previous samples have been collected. The TWDB is collecting fewer samples than previously anticipated (<500), since they have been working the last five months with fewer samplers than the previous year. Ms. Hopkins added that the TWDB will sample the Carrizo-Wilcox aquifer and several minor aquifers next year, but will continue through September, and maybe into October, with the Gulf Coast and Yegua aquifers. Alan Cherepon (TCEQ) presented a summary of groundwater monitoring activities by the TCEQ team as a presentation, following the task force reports.

**Education Task Force:** The Task Force Chair Dr. Bruce Lesikar (TCE), reported that the task force did not meet this past quarter. However, the TCE was involved with completing some educational materials, specifically a nitrates fact sheet. They also conducted training for County Agricultural Agents in San Angelo, which included the guidance document material on drinking water quality issues in Texas.

No other Task Forces had anything new to present.

### III. Panhandle Monitoring and Analysis Update

Item IVa on the Agenda was moved to the Presentation agenda item. Alan Cherepon provided summary handouts and presented a preliminary oral report on pesticide monitoring activities for FY05. Two monitoring trips included screening the Amarillo Public Water Supply (PWS) system wells, and on-going monitoring of PWS systems with previous atrazine detects. Cooperative monitoring for atrazine and metolachlor, and Interagency Pesticide Database (IPD) data input were the other tasks accomplished during this fiscal year.

438 wells and 32 QA/QC samples were analyzed for atrazine and metolachlor for the cooperative monitoring program, with only 1 or 2 samples having atrazine detections >0.3 ppb. An additional 100 samples are estimated to be analyzed by the end of the fiscal year.

The second monitoring trip of the year took place during the week of 7/11/05. Annual on-going monitoring of specific wells for previously investigated PWS systems was conducted, with a total of 25 wells sampled. Samples were collected for both immunoassay and laboratory analysis. While sampling in Plainview, a new monitoring well was identified just to the west of the hangers and alongside the entry road from the street. Only 2 of the monitoring wells were sampled due to the limited amount of time. In addition, an irrigation well identified at least ½ mile to the southwest of the airport was found to be operating, allowing for a sample to be taken there. A low concentration of atrazine was detected in the sample from this irrigation well by immunoassay analysis, but not by laboratory analysis. Should a re-sampling verify the atrazine detect, this could be an indication of the extent of the plume, and potentially the direction of its movement.

The ongoing monitoring of PWS systems with atrazine detects included the 5 systems already investigated, and 4 other systems in the Panhandle region. Slides of atrazine concentrations by immunoassay analysis since 1999 were presented for Friona, Tulia, Plainview, Hereford, and Dimmitt. Most of these demonstrated a decrease of atrazine concentrations since 2003, with the exception of Dimmitt.

Screening of the City of Amarillo PWS wells for atrazine and metolachlor was conducted during the first monitoring trip of the year during the week of 5/16/05. Seventy one wells were sampled and analyzed for atrazine and metolachlor by immunoassay analysis. Only two wells (336 and 356) had a detection above 0.3 ppb. Both atrazine (0.82 ppb) and metolachlor (0.45 ppb) were detected in 336, the only well sampled repeatedly over the past three years. None of the Amarillo samples from this trip were analyzed by laboratory method.

Several questions were fielded by Mr. Cherepon. Kevin Wagner (representing TAES) asked why the concentrations had decreased in the Tulia wells. Mr. Cherepon responded that the city was not pumping as much from these wells, and/or the “plume” may be passing through. Mr. Musick commented on how different the graph of atrazine concentrations over time looked for Plainview. Mr. Cherepon responded that the atrazine concentrations in the monitoring wells

were much higher than in any of the other areas sampled, resulting in the need to use a different vertical scale. The highest concentrations in the monitoring wells can be represented, but at the same time, minimizes the concentrations in the PWS wells. This makes it difficult to see what is going on in comparison to other systems. Ed Baker asked what the total depths were for the monitoring wells at the airport. Mr. Cherepon indicated they were around 170 feet below surface, and the water table was near 150 feet. Mr. Musick asked what the land use was near the Amarillo PWS wells. Mr. Cherepon said they were primarily fallow pastureland, but there were also croplands in the past or present, including winter wheat, cotton, sorghum, and possibly others. The well fields north of the Pantex facility were primarily fallow/pastureland. Lynne Fahlquist (USGS) asked how good the data was, and if any trends could be determined. Mr. Cherepon said that the duplicate samples were very near to each other, no detects were found in the blanks, and that data compared well with that from the previous year. The most notable trend is that atrazine concentrations appear to have dropped off for the past 2 years, except for some of the Dimmitt wells and the monitoring wells in Plainview, which are more erratic.

#### **IV. Business Items for Discussion and Possible Action**

##### **a. QAPP Updates**

Joe Peters (TCEQ) provided a handout and summary on revisions to the FIFRA/106 Groundwater QAPP. There are three major changes to the plan: allowing for expedited well sampling protocol of wells that have been pumping for several hours without having to first take temperature, pH and conductivity readings at three consecutive 5-minute intervals or more until two consistent readings are made; include metabolites and other cross-reactive compound analyses; and for contracting laboratories other than LCRA, which is presently limited in these analyses. By allowing expedited sampling, TCEQ completed the screening of the City of Amarillo PWS system in the 3 day time scheduled; otherwise, this would not have been possible. The flexibility in laboratory choice will also enable TCEQ to attempt to analyze for additional pesticides and metabolites. This will increase our understanding of immunoassay results in Texas.

Some discussion followed the summary. Bruce Lesikar asked if there would be any notation/qualifiers on the newer data collected using the expedited protocol. Janie Hopkins added that the TWDB notes any changes in their sampling protocol in their sampling results databases. Mr. Musick said this sounded like a good idea. Mr. Cherepon commented that this expedited protocol would possibly be only used once or twice, and not on a regular basis. It would likely be used only for situations, such as in Amarillo, where a large number of wells would need to be sampled in a week, and that it is highly doubtful it would be used at other times.

**b. Dissemination of BMP Educational Materials**

Bruce Lesikar had provided a summary of the BMP educational curriculum and outreach material at the January meeting. Mr. Musick directed discussion on how that this material has been developed, what is the best way to utilize it and to get it out to as many of the right people as possible. He asked Dr. Lesikar what has been done so far, and what are the plans. Dr. Lesikar said that in May, Dana Porter and Monty Dozier brought it to the county agricultural agent training in Lubbock and Amarillo. The agents have since been in a planning stage, leading up to educational efforts that are scheduled to begin in September, and producer education in 2006. Scheduled events are in place for the Panhandle region from January through March 2006.

Mr. Musick asked what guides or drives agents as to what to include in their training? Dr. Lesikar said whatever issues the producers are having at the time. Mr. Musick asked if the training involving the BMP curriculum could be applied to acquiring continuing education units. Both Dr. Bruce Lesikar and Dr. Ambrose Charles (TDA) responded that in the future attending the training would apply toward continuing education credits. There is a formal process for courses to be approved to qualify for continuing education units. Ed Baker added that the chemical manufacturing industry gets requests regularly for materials like these, and that he would look into pushing their use. Mr. Cherepon mentioned there will be a USDA/CREES water quality and quantity conference in San Antonio in May, and this curriculum could possibly be used at this event, as well as at an international or national irrigator conference in New Mexico in 2006. Mr. Musick asked if TCEQ could possibly present this to the 3-4 groundwater districts in the Panhandle region. Dr. Lesikar responded that he would look into this as a definite possibility. Mr. Musick finished with a request that anyone with additional suggestions or ideas should send them through Mr. Cherepon or himself.

**c. FIFRA Grant Re-issuance Update**

Mr. Musick stated that 2 grants fund the programs the ACS is involved in; The FIFRA and the Clean Water Act 106 Groundwater grants. The TCEQ has just completed negotiations with EPA on the 2006 grant, which will continue with no appreciable changes or significant affects to their budgets.

**d. EPA - SOS Settlement Agreement Notice on the Barton Springs Salamander**

Mr. Cherepon provided a handout summarizing the Federal Register notice related to the settlement agreement between the EPA and "Save Our Springs" relative to protection of the Barton Springs salamander from 6 pesticides. Atrazine, or triazine re-registration is the primary focus of this agreement, which also includes metolachlor, simazine, diazinon, carbaryl, and prometon. The EPA would have to provide effects determinations on how these various pesticides affect the endangered species of concern. The USGS has been involved in a water quality study at the springs for the past two years, but final review is not due till August 2006. Mr. Musick directed the SMP Task Force to track this issue, and asked what TDA's thoughts were on the subject. Dr. Charles responded that TDA has not been privy to any decisions by EPA, up to this point, and what plans they have for addressing this case. They do not yet know, or have not addressed how these pesticides, combined with other chemicals, would affect the animals health or endocrine system, or how to compare salamander to human health. Dr. Charles

stated that he doubts that there will be any opportunity for input in this process; however, TDA will try and keep up to date on this matter.

## **V. Information Exchange**

### **Legislative Session - Summary of Pesticide/Water-related Issues**

There were no significant issues related to pesticides and groundwater addressed by the recent Legislature. A bill was passed to dissolve the Agricultural Resources Protection Authority (ARPA) [Senate Bill 1680, effective date of 9/1/05]. A bill [Senate Bill 1354, effective date of 6/17/05] passed relative to quarrying and water quality. A more thorough summary of water issues and the Legislative session would be provided during the TGPC meeting in the afternoon.

## **V. Public Comment**

Mr. Cherepon mentioned another Federal Register notice. It addressed alachlor, one of the PMP pesticides. Anyone who wants additional information on this should see Mr. Cherepon after the meeting. There were no other public comments.

## **VI. Announcements**

The decision was made by the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee that the FY06 first quarter meeting of the Agricultural Chemicals Subcommittee will take place on 11/11/05 at 10:30 a.m., in TCEQ Building F, Conference Room 2210.

## **VII. Adjournment**

Recorded and transcribed by Alan Cherepon.

### **Attachments**

Highlights for Groundwater Pesticide Monitoring FY 2005

FIFRA QAPP Renewal Memo

Federal Register request for comments on the Settlement Agreement for the Barton Springs Salamander