

## Agricultural Burning Practices & Research Task Force #61 Meeting Summary

DATE: June 10, 2004

LOCATION: Department of Ecology Eastern Regional Office, Spokane, WA.

<b><u>Members Present</u></b>		<b><u>Representing</u></b>
Grant Pfeifer- Chair	Air Quality Section Manager	Department of Ecology
Don Potts	WA. Dept. of Agricultural	WA. Dept. of Agriculture
Sally Liu	University of Washington	Public Health
Michael Bush	WSU Extension Educator	Universities or Colleges
Jay Penner	Wheat Industry	Agricultural Community
John Cornwall	Grass Seed Industry	Agricultural Community
Michael Ingham	Alfalfa Seed Industry	Agricultural Community
Charles Golob	Crop and Soil Sciences	Universities or Colleges
Larry Cochran	WA. Assn. of Conservation Districts	Conservation Districts
Dave Lauer	Benton Clean Air Authority	Eastern Washington Local Air Authorities

### **Membership/ Governance**

---

The Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force (Task Force) meeting began with the introduction of Mike Ingham, the new alfalfa seed industry representative. Mike is filling the seat of Mark Wagoner who has resigned from the Task Force. Mark was the last of the original appointed members on the Task Force and has attended nearly every meeting since 1992. Mark will be missed, the Department of Ecology, (Ecology) and all past and present members thank Mark and wish him the best. Grant presented an appreciation plaque to previous Task Force Member, Cheri Rodgers, who left the task force last year to devote more time to her duties as Spokane City Council member. (Mark received his plaque at a meeting of his peers in Touchet on June 23) Cheri was the Local Air Pollution Control Authority representative prior to Dave Lauer's appointment.

The June meeting of the Task Force is normally reserved for revising, amending, and accepting the Best Management Practices, (BMP's) for the upcoming year. This year however, a number of other items were also discussed. Results from the *Exposure and Health Assessment of Agricultural Burning Smoke* (Pullman Health Study) and *Assessment of Farmers' Exposure to Smoke from Agricultural Burning*, as well as an overview of the upcoming rule-making process were presented. Rule making is part of Ecology's commitment to revise its Washington Administrative Code (WAC. 173-430) the agricultural burn rule per settlement of a previous lawsuit.

Due to the full slate of business, (BMP meeting), and the desire of the Task Force to see and hear the presentations, the Task Force meeting had a working lunch.

## **Presentations**

---

Dr. Sally Liu presented the results of the Pullman Health Study. The Pullman Health Study was research conducted as part of the Save Our Summers (SOS) and Ecology Settlement. The Study was to look at the effects agricultural field burning smoke has on a select group of people living in Pullman. The subjects in the study were all medically diagnosed by physicians as mild to moderate asthmatics. While the final report has not yet been published, the public presentation can be viewed at,

[http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/pdfs/Town\\_Meetings\\_final.pdf](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/pdfs/Town_Meetings_final.pdf)

Dr. Liu also presented information from a study conducted in Columbia County in the fall of 2003 on the effects of smoke on farmers who are actually doing the burning, titled *Assessment of Farmers' Exposure to Smoke from Agricultural Burning*, (Farmer Exposure Study). A special "thank you" is extended to the Columbia County growers and Columbia Conservation District for participating, hosting and being involved in the study. The presentation of the Farmers Exposure Study can be found at,

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/air/pdfs/Farmers-taskforce2.pdf>

The final presentation in the morning was given by Melissa McEachron, a member of Ecology's rule writing team. Melissa has been involved with agricultural burning since the original rule, WAC 173-430 Agricultural Burning, was written in 1994-1995. Melissa's presentation covered the basic steps of the rule-making process. The rule-making process is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2004 and be finished prior to the fall of 2005.

## **BMP's**

---

During the past year the orchard community has worked with the Task Force to develop new orchard BMPs. During the most recent legislative session (2004) changes to the Clean Air Act required additional attention and revisions to the BMPs for orchard burning in Urban Growth Areas (UGA's). Ron Draggoo from Douglas County and Chrissie Phelps, Ecology, presented a final draft of the Orchard Crops Best Management Practices for Task Force review, revision, and adoption. Much of the discussion centered on a verification form required by the BMP and whether the agencies named in the law have experts capable of certifying a pest problem. The Task Force adopted an Orchard Crop BMP with the understanding that if verification of a pest problem by an expert develops into a concern the Task Force could and will revisit the issue. Some minor changes such as sentence structure, wording, grammar, and the inclusion of local areas in the BMP text are necessary. Chrissie Phelps agreed to make the recommended revisions to the BMP prior to publication. The Task Force would like to thank Ron Draggoo for his involvement and leadership in the completion of this BMP project. See attached Orchard Crop BMPs

Ecology submitted a request for an addition to the Cereal Grain BMP's. The BMP addressing re-cropping in irrigated farmland to a fine-seed crop is not included in the current BMP's (though it was in the previous version). Ecology would like the fine-seed section readmitted. The Task Force voted to approve the addition. See attached Cereal Grain BMPs- Pg. 9

The Task Force recommended approval and adoption of all current BMP's, including revisions that were adopted as interim during the past year. (The Task Force had voted to amend the non-cereal BMP, Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), on an interim basis at its February meeting.

#### **BMP Manual**

During the past two years Ecology has been working on a project to publish pertinent alternatives to burning and related farming practice research in one manual. The idea for this manual was suggested by wheat growers during settlement discussions for the SOS 3 lawsuit in 2000 and funding was obtained through an EPA Region 10 grant. The manual, which is more of a reference manual of BMPs, is out in draft form and has gone through peer review. At the time of Task Force meeting #61, members had not had sufficient time to review the new manual. Review and discussion of the manual will be held at one of the upcoming Task Force meetings.

#### **Task Force General Discussion**

---

A number of issues about non-cereal crops were brought before the Task Force. Concerns included mint residue piles, vine crops, and bale burns. Karen Hand, a permitting agent from the Upper Grant Conservation District will work with the Burn Team on the mint issue. The Task Force would like to hear from an industry spokesperson about vine disposal and how vineyards dispose of agricultural waste.

The Task Force also heard about concerns that hay producers face this spring. Due to the moisture this spring there may be a lot of water damage to hay crops and the concern is how to dispose of the rotten hay. Another issue or "heads-up" for the Task Force was presented by Gretchen Borck, Washington Association of Wheat Growers (WAWG), regarding the possibility of the CRP program in some areas of the State coming to an end. This could be a situation where a large number of acres would be going back into crop production and might need to be burned before other farming practices are resumed. Gretchen will keep the Task Force informed about changes the Federal government is considering regarding the CRP program.

#### **Public Comments:**

---

Karen Hand from Upper Grant extended a thank you to Ecology for breaking Grant County into burn zones and offered a vote of confidence about the way the burn unit has worked to use metering as a burn decision tool.

Jeff Schiebel, a farmer in the Odessa area, would like the Burn Team to take a look at adjusting the hours of the burning allowed in the Odessa region of the Columbia Basin. The Columbia Basin has weather patterns during the summer months that warrant earlier start times. The morning inversion dissipates earlier and the winds routinely pick up in the afternoon. The afternoon winds make it difficult to burn because of fire-safety concerns and the smoke is unable to rise and disperse.

Chrissie Phelps informed the Task Force that Ecology will be commenting on EPA's pesticide labeling requirements.

ABTF Meeting #61

June 10, 2004

Page 4 of 5

Patti Gora thanked Ecology for their work in managing agricultural smoke and that, for her family in the Pullman area, great improvement has been noted. A balance seems to have been achieved so farmers have the ability to retain burning as a tool when necessary and asthmatics remain healthy.

**Next Meeting**

November 18, 2004 (Thursday)

Location: Benton Clean Air Authority, board room.

114 Columbia Point Drive,

Richland, WA.

ABTF Meeting #61

June 10, 2004

Page 5 of 5