

Agricultural Burning Practices & Research Task Force #79 Meeting Summary

DATE: May 4, 2010

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

<u>Members Present</u>		<u>Representing</u>
Karen Wood- Chair	Air Quality Program	Department of Ecology
Jeff Canaan	WA. Dept. of Agricultural	WA. Dept. of Agriculture
Jay Penner	Washington Association of Wheat Growers	Agricultural Community
Dan McCarthy	Okanogan Horticultural Association	Agricultural Community
Michael Bush	WSU Extension	Academia, (Tree Fruit)
Larry Cochran	WA. Assn. of Conservation Districts	Conservation Districts
Michael Ingham	Alfalfa Seed Industry	Agricultural Community
Bill Johnston	Washington State University	Academia, (Crop & Soil)
Sverre Vedal	University Of Washington	Public Health
Gary Pruitt	Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency	Eastern Washington Local Air Authorities
<u>Members Absent</u>		
John Cornwall	Grass Seed Industry	Grass Seed Industry

Introductions, Announcements

The 79th Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force (Task Force) meeting was held on May 4th, 2010, at the Department of Ecology's Eastern Regional Office in Spokane, Washington. The Task Force meeting began with the introduction of Task Force members and guests.

This meeting is a special meeting reserved for making changes to the Agricultural Burning portion of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) addressing agricultural burning which are necessary because of passage of Substitute Senate Bill 6556 in the 2010 legislative session.

Summary of Discussion Regarding Burning Fees

Karen Wood began by walking the group through the various handouts, which include documents detailing the number of acres burned in Washington from 2005-2009 and the revenue gathered from the permitting fees for those burned acres.

Gary Pruitt, Director of Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency (YRCAA) has averaged around 135 permits for orchard tear out/year. They have issued as many as 350 permits for orchard tear out. YRCAA will present a report after one fiscal year.

Yakima has about the same size permit program as Ecology (just pile burning).

The group felt that in the future the BMPs for pile burning may need revision. Additional outreach may also prove necessary

Mike Bush provided a summary of grower comments from the 4/15 subcommittee meeting. The recommendation was for permits up to 100 tons to cost \$80, and for permits over 100 tons to cost \$80 plus 50 cents for each ton over 100 tons.

Jeff Canaan asked how close to covering costs the proposal would come.

Gary Pruitt felt that the proposal would come close to YRCAA's costs.

Karen Wood said that Ecology does not have good numbers that separate the cost of administering the pile burning program and the field burning program costs. Ecology has always tracked agricultural burning as a whole. However, Ecology will start tracking these costs separately so they have the data available for the next time they examine the fees.

Mr. Penner moved to accept fee quantities recommended by the subcommittee. The motion passed.

The question arose of what a pile is? What does pile burning include besides orchard tear-out? How does this affect the BMPs? The group felt that the rule should include a definition of a pile. It was agreed that the language from the BMPs could be used to define a pile.

Karen Wood told the task force they need to accomplish the following things

- Decide between two different options for possible future fee adjustments. One would be to go through rule making as in 2006 and 2010 (presently). The other would be to set up a process in the rule to enable the task force to adjust the fee structure to be published by Ecology. This second option is referred to as the "process" option
- Determine the fee allocation for pile burning
- Set the minimum fee for field burning
- Set the per acre fee for field burning
- Make a policy decision regarding if local air authorities can keep the entire fee if their costs exceed revenue.

Karen discussed past practice. Then she walked through the legislative process and budget changes over the past few years.

The group discussed how much to raise the fee.

Jeff Canaan felt the sponsors of this bill show a legitimate place for general fund contribution to this program.

The group discussed the fee level.

Sverre Vedal felt that the Task Force should reduce their contribution to research during tough times.

The group looked at a proposal to reduce the research contribution 25 cents, for a total fee of 2.75 or keep a \$3 fee and give 25 cents more to Ecology.

Mike Ingham asked if farmers and the Task Force are getting sufficient return from the investment in research.

A motion for \$3 per acre for field burning passed. A motion for a 1.25 local / .50 research / 1.25 smoke management allocation for field burning passed.

The group discussed the risk of losing general funds from:

- Legislature reducing general fund contribution
- Ecology re-allocating general funds to other work such as SIPs

There was a motion for a \$30 minimum fee for field burning, the distribution: \$15 to local permitting authority, \$0 to research, and \$15 to authority doing smoke management. This motion passed.

The motion for the “process” option for fee setting passed.

There followed a discussion on the allocation of pile burning fees.

A motion for the following allocation for pile burning fees passed:

50 cents/ton (for tons over 100) with the distribution of 10 cents per ton for local permitting, 10 cent per ton for research, and 30 cents per ton for smoke management.

\$80 for amounts up to 100 tons, with the distribution being \$16 for local permitting, \$16 for research, and \$48 for smoke management.

The idea of putting language in the rule to allow local air authorities to keep the entire fee if their costs exceed revenue was rejected without a motion coming to the floor.

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, June 17, 2010, in Spokane.

Meeting #79 was adjourned at about 4:15 PM.