

Meeting Summary
Agricultural Preparation/Adaptation Working Group (PAWG)
October 23, 2007, 10AM – 11:30AM PDT

Participants

Hedia Adelsman, Washington State Dept. of Ecology (non-member)
Kirk Cook, Washington State Dept. of Agriculture (Ag PAWG Lead)
Chris Feise, Washington State University
Erik Hulburt, Washington State Dept. of Agriculture (non-member)
Eric LaGasa, Washington State Department of Agriculture (non-member)
Debra Ann Inglis, Washington State University
Chad Kruger, Washington State University
Jeremy Littell, Climate Impacts Group
Bill Snyder, Washington State University

Summary

1. Welcome and roll call.
2. The next stage of the process for the Ag PAWG is to develop 2-3 near-term priority recommendations for preparing and adapting to the impacts of climate change in agriculture, and to identify priority recommendations for further research and next steps. Each PAWG is developing strategies to provide to the Department of Ecology, who will develop all the PAWG recommendations into the final Executive Order report. Each PAWG's recommendations will also be considered by the PAWG leads at a meeting in late November to ensure that all issues are addressed across the different sectors and to identify any overarching critical considerations that should also be included in the final report.
3. Chad Kruger provided an update about the WSU and UW work to scope climate change impacts on agriculture. The group will produce a draft preliminary report in early December about what they plan to look at through literature review, expert opinion, or modeling.
4. Impacts on the agriculture sector from climate change will likely be mixed. While there will be several negative effects, there will also be positive effects. Whether effects are positive or negative, adaptation will still be required. Some predicted changes (e.g. impacts to cropping systems from elevated temperature and increased carbon dioxide) are within the range of historical variability, but the primary concern is dealing with the uncertainty around impacts, especially from pests, diseases and water availability.
5. The group discussed that impacts from invasive species in particular are likely to be unpredictable. Washington is on the cusp of survivability for several pests, and there is a high probability of increased impacts from exotics as the line of winter survival shifts north with a warming trend. Impacts from exotic pests are both an export and production concern. Jeremy Littell cited modeling by Phil Mote (UW

Climate Impacts Group) that a mean increase of 1.6 degrees Fahrenheit for December, January and February, with a range of 0.7-3.6 F, is anticipated using averages from 1970-1999 through the middle 2020s.

6. **Issues and Impacts:** The PAWG members discussed the key impacts and issues that were developed after the August 21 meeting, and suggested refinements to the draft that was sent to the Department of Ecology. Kirk will incorporate the recommended modifications:

- a. **Water Availability:** The Ag PAWG will focus on issues and impacts unique to the agriculture sector, and let the Freshwater PAWG focus on other issues. The current issues and impacts narrative will be updated to include a description of the irrigation trends in Washington, particularly the irrigation trend emerging in western Washington, and the likelihood that this will likely be widespread in a few years. Ag PAWG members interested in water are encouraged to examine what the Freshwater PAWG has identified as issues, and provide feedback to Tom Myrum, who is on both the Freshwater and Ag PAWGs.
- b. **Pests:** Bill and Erik provided feedback that the potential for pest impacts needs to be described as one of the primary issues for agriculture to address. The PAWG suggested being as inclusive as possible, and including weeds and diseases as well as insects.
- c. **Animal Health and Disease:** PAWG members suggested reworking the narrative to parse out production issues from the disease issues. Bill recommended Jeb Owen at WSU to review and provide input into the impacts and issues as well as the recommended strategies.
- d. **Economics:** While this issue is a thread through many of the other impact areas, the members discussed the importance of describing the potential impacts of climate change on the economic viability of the agriculture sector, and the implications for restructuring the industry. The group suggested expanding the narrative to include what the effects of climate change will be on food production nationally and globally, and subsequent impacts on the Washington agricultural industry. While additional research is needed to identify the specific impacts on food demand and supply, it is possible to make general statements about what the impacts of climate change on global markets for both exports and imports. Describing anticipated changes in agriculture structure (marketing, transportation, packaging, etc.) as well as changes in consumer attitudes (increased demand for organics, local production, sustainability, etc) will form the basis for suggesting some strategies, which may include value-added approaches that the agriculture sector can pursue to take advantage of positive economic opportunities.

7. **Strategies:** The PAWG discussed the development of strategies for each of the impact areas, and identified volunteers and timelines for drafting strawman proposals. As members develop strategies, they will also identify areas for further research and potential next steps.

- a. **Water Availability:** The Ag PAWG will examine the Freshwater PAWG recommended strategies, and identify aspects that are unique to agriculture

from which to draw the Ag PAWG's recommended strategies (e.g. designing cropping system and other approaches to reduce agriculture water needs).

Leads: Kirk Cook and Chad Kruger will work with Tom Laurie, Craig Smith and Tom Myrum

Strawman distributed to group: Monday, October 29

- b. **Pests:** A possible strategy for dealing with pests is appointing a person to act as an invasive species coordinator to monitor developments and coordinate responses to pests, weeds and plant diseases. PAWG members have contacted various groups who are supportive of the idea. WSU has a new digital diagnostics system that is increasing the capacity of extension offices to diagnose unusual pest problems and diseases that could be part of the recommendation. In light of the decline in monitoring and surveillance funding from USDA, one idea proposed is to share funding for a statewide monitoring program between the state and commodities. Ag PAWG volunteers will develop this recommendation further.

Leads: Erik LaGasa, Bill Snyder, Debra Inglis

Strawman distributed to group: Monday, October 29

- c. **Animal Health:** Kirk will work with Dr. Eldridge, the state veterinarian, and Jeb Owen, a new professor from WSU, to develop strategies for preparing for animal diseases and livestock issues.

Lead: Kirk Cook, Dr. Eldridge, Jeb Owens

Strawman distributed to group: Between 10/29 and 11/5

- d. **Economics:** A group of volunteers will work on refining the impacts description and developing strategies to address anticipated impacts on agriculture from an economic standpoint.

Leads: Erik Hulburt, Chris Feise

Strawman distributed to group: Monday, November 5

8. PAWG members volunteered to work in small groups to quickly draft strawman strategies in each impact area that will be distributed in the next week. The PAWG will review and comment on these drafts over the next few weeks, and meet in November to refine these strategies. The tasks and responsibilities are outlined above.
9. November Meeting: A face-to-face meeting is planned for a morning of November 14 in Olympia. Those who cannot attend in person can call-in. Further details about this meeting will be sent out to the PAWG soon.
10. The meeting concluded at 11:15 a.m.