

Agricultural Burning Practices & Research Task Force #66 Meeting Summary

DATE: February 9-10, 2006

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

<u>Members Present</u>		<u>Representing</u>
Grant Pfeifer- Chair	Air Quality Program	Department of Ecology
Sverre Vedal	University Of Washington	Public Health
Jay Penner	Washington Association of Wheat Growers	Agricultural Community
Michael Ingham	Alfalfa Seed Industry	Agricultural Community
Dave Lauer	Benton County Clean Air Authority	Eastern Washington Local Air Authorities
Larry Cochran	WA. Assn. of Conservation Districts	Conservation Districts
John Cornwall	Grass Seed Industry	Grass Seed Industry
Bill Johnston	Washington State University	Academia, (Crop & Soil)
<u>Members Absent</u>		
Michael Bush	WSU Cooperative Extension	Academia, (Tree Fruit)
Bob Gore	Dept. of Agriculture	Dept. of Agriculture

Introductions, Announcements

The 66th Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force (Task Force) meeting was held on February 9th, 2006, at the Department of Ecology's Eastern Regional Office in Spokane, Washington. The meeting was briefly resumed the following day to discuss one remaining issue (fees) prior to the rule advisory committee meeting. The Task Force meeting began with the introduction of Task Force members and guests.

The February meeting is reserved for hearing research project reports, scoping future funding needs and discussing research direction. Per the Task Force Governance Document it is also scheduled for scoping changes and discussion about Best Management Practices, (BMP's).

Research Update Presentations

The four research projects the Task Force recommended funding during the 2005-2007 biennium are commencing and researchers were invited to share their progress at this meeting. In the alfalfa study, the plots have been established and are ready for further work later in February, 2006. Regarding Mark Lewis' straw pulping study, Karen Wood of Ecology summarized (from personal communication with the principal investigator) that the results of the Yakima mill's commercial run of container production from straw pulp were encouraging. Bill Johnston shared with the rest of the

Task Force that the grass had been planted, but that there would not be meaningful results to share until the harvest was completed later in the year.

Agricultural Burn Permitting Fees

Mr. Pfeifer summarized the background on fees charged for agricultural burning permits, which he had discussed in some length during the previous meeting. Much discussion took place on the relative merits of fee increases, within the limits of the maximum of \$2.50 per acre established in RCW (currently the fee is \$2.00 per acre). The allocation of the collected fees between the local permitting authorities, Ecology, and the research account were also discussed. The current fee is split as follows: \$1.25 per acre for the local permitting authority, \$0.25 per acre for Ecology, and \$0.50 per acre for research. It was proposed to adjust the split to \$1.25 per acre for the local authority, \$0.50 per acre for Ecology and \$0.25 per acre for research for 2007; and \$1.25 per acre for the local authority, \$0.50 per acre for Ecology and \$0.50 per acre for research for 2008 and beyond as summarized in the chart below. This proposal was voted upon and approved unanimously.

<i>Fee Level</i>	<i>Local Administration</i>	<i>Research</i>	<i>Ecology Administration</i>
<i>2006 -\$2.00 per acre</i>	<i>Up to \$1.25 per acre</i>	<i>50 cents per acre</i>	<i>25 cents per acre</i>
<i>2007 -\$2.00 per acre</i>	<i>Up to \$1.25 per acre</i>	<i>25 cents per acre</i>	<i>50 cents per acre</i>
<i>2008 and beyond - \$2.25 per acre</i>	<i>Up to \$1.25 per acre</i>	<i>50 cents per acre</i>	<i>50 cents per acre</i>

Paul Rossow of Ecology presented the Task Force with evidence that the mass of fine particulate generated by a typical acre of orchard tear out debris is approximately twice as much as the mass of fine particulate generated by a typical acre of burned wheat stubble. Dr. Vedal proposed to double the minimum fee for orchard tear out permits from the current level of \$25.00 for up to ten acres, to \$50.00 for up to twenty acres. Dr. Lauer seconded the proposal. The proposal was tabled until input from the absent Michael Bush, representing orchard interests, could be gathered. (see notes from 2/10 meeting below)

BMP's

At the last meeting Karen Wood, supervisor of Ecology's eastern region burn team, talked to the Task Force about the possibility of changing a Best Management Practice (BMP) to allow, in some circumstances, the burning on ground where a crop will not be planted in the same season as the burn. There are several growers in Whitman and Lincoln County that routinely burn in the fall for a spring planting. These growers chisel the stubble, burn what is left above ground, and then leave the ground fallow for the winter. This practice decreases the amount of residue burned by burying some of the

stubble, while at the same time the buried stubble provides structure to soil to prevent erosion over the winter. Ecology has worked with growers to allow the practice on a limited basis outside of the BMPs, which is allowable under the rules, as long as an adequate description is provided to Ecology, the local Conservation District, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The Task Force decided to leave the BMP unchanged, with the understanding that the existing process allows for the practice under limited circumstances.

The Task Force also instructed Ecology to modify the Spot Burning BMP so that it is more understandable to permittees and permitting authorities. In defining what a spot burn permit is used for, the BMP will explain that any burn which is definable and predictable is required to have a Field Burn Permit, not a spot burn permit. This change is to be ready for the Task Force's approval at the next meeting in June.

The last BMP change the Task Force requested was that a bale burn BMP be developed which reflects the already-in-use bale burn permit application. Ecology will draft this BMP for Task Force consideration at the June meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 PM.

February 10th, 2006

Meeting #66 of the Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force was reconvened at the Dept of Transportation office in Spokane located at 2714 N. Mayfair St. at 10:05 on Friday, February 10th. Present at that time were all the members present the previous day, except for John Cornwall, and with the addition of Michael Bush. The proposal of the previous day was briefly discussed and unanimously accepted. The minimum fee for orchard tear-out burning will go to \$50 for up to 20 acres, and the distribution of funds for such a permit will be \$12.50 to research, \$12.50 to the local permitting authorities, and \$25.00 to Ecology. The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 AM.