

Natural Resources & Pesticide Management Committee
Chairman Leonard Blackham, Utah
Vice Chairman Bill Northey, Iowa
2008 Mid-Year Conference
Washington, D.C.

Committee Report

Summary of Committee Action:

Dialogue with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Environmental Issues Affecting Agriculture. *Jon Scholl, Agricultural Counselor, Office of the the EPA Administrator*, provided an update on several important activities related to agriculture.

- EPA is revising its 1998 policy on Air Quality for Wildland and Prescribed Fires to address agricultural burning. The agency plans to issue rules in summer 2008, and is seeking input from state agriculture departments. NASDA representatives from Idaho, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Florida will help provide input to EPA.
- EPA is revising rules on Renewable Fuels Standards (RFS) to accommodate recently enacted energy legislation. NASDA representatives from Iowa, Georgia, and Colorado will help provide input to the agency.
- EPA is reviewing comments on the revised rule on Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs). The agency plans to provide another comment period on specific issues and plans to issue a final rule in late summer or early fall 2008.
- EPA has proposed rules to exempt agricultural operations from reporting air emissions under the Superfund hazardous waste law. Comments are due by March 27, 2008. NASDA is working with an agricultural coalition to support the rule.
- EPA is continuing activities on Gulf Hypoxia and will hold a meeting next month to discuss implementation of an action plan. NASDA members are encouraged to participate because there are numerous impacts for agriculture.
- EPA will announce members for its new Farm and Ranch Advisory Committee on February 20, 2008. NASDA has nominated members for the committee.

Report on Wildfires and Agricultural Impacts. *Ed Roberson, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Assistant Director for Renewable Resources and Planning*, reported on the 2007 wildfire season and BLM efforts for recovery. Last year, there were devastating agricultural and environmental impacts on wildlife habitat, water quality, private property, infrastructure, grazing lands, animal displacement, livestock forage loss, and soil erosion. BLM is seeking partnerships with NASDA members for its Wild Horse and Burro Program for displaced animals.

Rick Kavle, USDA Forest Service (FS), Assistant Director for Fire & Aviation Management, discussed how wildfires are affecting agriculture and forest lands. Climate conditions and increased population growth near “open spaces” and forest lands are contributing to the wildfire problems. Funding for fire suppression reached almost \$1 billion in 2007 which has a huge impact on USDA-FS budget and other

programs such as invasive species control.

Report on Forest Service (FS) Open Space and Conservation Initiative. *Rob Mangold, USDA Forest Service (FS), Director of Forest Health Protection*, described the new strategy released in December 2007 to sustain working agricultural lands, conserve forest lands, grasslands, rangelands, and open space. The initiative emphasizes voluntary, community-based involvement rather than regulatory programs.

Update on Superfund Regulation of Animal Waste. *Christian Richter, representing the National Turkey Federation and U.S. Poultry & Egg Association*, reported on EPA's proposed rules to exempt agricultural operations from reporting air emissions under the Superfund hazardous waste law. Comments are due by March 27, 2008. NASDA is working with an agricultural coalition to support the rule. The rule only covers air issues and does not address the larger issue dealing with Superfund regulation of CAFOs. NASDA and the coalition are supporting legislation to exempt agricultural operations from broader Superfund regulation. Rebeckah Adcock, American Farm Bureau Federation, and Paul Bredwell, U.S. Poultry & Egg Association also discussed Superfund regulation issues affecting agriculture.

Update on 2007 Farm Bill Conservation Programs. *Tom Christenson, USDA-NRCS Deputy Director for Programs*, provided an update on the 2007 Farm Bill conservation provisions, including the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Conservation Security Program (CSP), and conservation innovative grants. The Administration opposes the regional equity provisions in the Farm Bill legislation. NRCS is preparing to implement and issue the required rulemakings when the Farm Bill is enacted.

Work Plan for Updating NASDA Policy Statements. NASDA and state staff from Florida and Montana will prepare a draft document to update policy statements. The draft document will be distributed to committee members for review and comment in the coming weeks.

NASDA Project on Pesticide Worker Safety Training. *Dick Herritt, NASDA consultant*, reported on the NASDA Research Foundation's project to provide pesticide worker training and educational materials.

Consideration of Policy Amendments and Action Items.

The committee recommended approval of Action Item D, offered by Chuck Hartke (IL) regarding availability of insecticide carbofuran.

The committee recommended approval of Action Item (unnumbered?) , offered by MASDA, to send a letter to EPA supporting research, development and availability of renewable fuels, including E20 and E30 ethanol blends.

The committee recommended approval of Policy Amendment #4, as amended, offered by Ron de Yong (MT) and Roger Johnson (ND), regarding carbon emissions cap and trade systems.