

**Natural Resources & Pesticide Management Committee
Chairman Don Ament, Colorado**

**2005 Annual Meeting
Cooperstown, New York**

Committee Report

Summary of Committee Action:

Dialogue with Environmental Protection Agency. Beth Sauerhaft, Special Assistant to the Agricultural Counselor, discussed environmental issues affecting agriculture. She expressed a strong interest to continuing efforts to build working partnerships with state agriculture departments. EPA's overall philosophy is to look to the agriculture community for solutions to environmental issues, rather than viewing agriculture as the problem. The agency is taking more integrated approach to agricultural regulatory issues (i.e. looking at cross-media aspects) as a way to achieve environmental improvements.

Sauerhaft discussed and answered questions on several important issues for states including: (1) Implementation of the Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) rule. EPA will issue a proposed rule in January 2006 and a final rule in the fall 2006 to address issues raised by a recent court decision. The rule may change implementation dates and other permit requirements, but states should be prepared to comply with the basic CAFO rule requirements. (2) Recommendations being developed from the August 2005 White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation. (3) Final rules expected soon to clarify that Clean Water Act (CWA) permits are not required for pesticide applications to certain waterbodies. (4) Options are being reviewed to address the regulation of agriculture by-products as hazardous waste. (5) Air quality issues affecting agriculture.

Report from Association of American Pesticide Control Officials (AAPCO) Steve Rutz, AAPCO President, outlined their priority issues and activities. Key issues include pesticide container recycling, implementation of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) counterpart regulations, and registration of fumigants, including methyl bromide. AAPCO is also concerned about the Administration's management and performance goals to review federal programs which may result in funding reductions for state pesticide programs.

Report from American Plant Food Control Officials (APFCO). Joe Slater, APFCO Secretary, expressed their continued interest to work closely with NASDA on fertilizer related issues, including: (1) definitions for labeling fertilizer products; (2) policy on organic production; and (3) preemption issues.

Presentation from National Association of State Conservation Agencies (NASCA) Dave Vogel discussed NASCA's project to evaluate conservation programs and the delivery system.

Workshops have been held to develop specific recommendations to improve flexibility, increase local decision-making, and simplify conservation programs. NASDA is participating in the project.

NASDA Project on Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning (CMNPs). NASDA staff provided an update on plans to launch a new website called CNMP Watch. The website will provide information resources for producers, state and federal agencies and others on CNMPs. NASDA will conduct a survey to update state information and will publicly launch the website late fall 2005.

Discussion and Development of 2007 Farm Bill Recommendations. The committee continues to support NASDA's Agricultural Stewardship Block Grant Program and will consider additional changes to the original proposal. The committee will also develop proposals to: (1) improve current Farm Bill conservation programs; (2) energy initiatives; (3) farmland preservation; and (4) air quality standards. The committee asked NASDA staff to draft more detailed language on these issues and distribute the document to members for review and comment. The committee will consider holding a meeting in November in Kansas City to continue this work.

Policy Amendments:

Approved amendment (#2) offered by Pat Takasugi (ID) on behalf of Susan Combs (TX) exempting agricultural by-products from regulation under CERCLA and EPCRA.

Approved amendment (#3) offered by AAPFCO regarding security issues for fertilizer products. The committee refers the amendment to the Food and Agriculture Security Committee for consideration.

Deferred action on amendment (#9) offered by NEASDA and Douglas Gillespie (MA) regarding conservation funding formulas. The committee will defer action and further discuss as part of its 2007 Farm Bill recommendations.

Deferred action on amendment (#10) offered by NEASDA and Douglas Gillespie (MA) regarding conservation technical assistance. The committee will defer action and further discuss as part of its 2007 Farm Bill recommendations.

Committee Work Plan & Priority Issues:

- Continue work and development of 2007 Farm Bill recommendations.