

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

**2003 Annual Meeting
Boise, Idaho
Committee Report**

Summary of Committee Action:

Dialogue with EPA and USDA on Environmental Issues Affecting Agriculture. The committee held an interactive session with senior EPA and USDA officials to discuss environmental issues (air, water, pesticides, waste) affecting agriculture and the policy outlook.

Jean-Mari Peltier, Agricultural Counselor to the EPA Administrator emphasized her ongoing interest to build partnerships with the state departments of agriculture. She noted that personnel changes in key agency offices for water, air, and general counsel are important to agriculture community. A critical emerging issue is animal agriculture and air quality. Other key issues for agriculture are: (1) new rules for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs); (2) a new voluntary Water Quality Trading Policy to address non-point pollution; and (3) upcoming new “watershed” rule to replace the Total Daily Maximum Load (TMDL) clean water program. EPA is also working closely with USDA on Farm Bill conservation programs.

Mack Gray, USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources & Environment, provided an update on implementation of Farm Bill conservation programs, funding and technical assistance. Rules for the new Conservation Security Program (CSP) should be released soon. He also emphasized that a key emerging issue is animal agriculture and air quality, along with implementation of the new CAFO rules. USDA is also working with EPA on endangered species issues which have potential adverse impacts on agriculture.

NASDA Project on Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning (CMNPs). NASDA staff and project consultant Ted Hartsig, provided an update on the NASDA Research Foundation’s work to design and develop CNMP program tools and materials for federal agencies, states, and producers. NASDA began a new state survey in July 2003 to compile information on the status of CNMP regulations, and state departments of agriculture are encouraged to complete the survey. The survey results and report are expected to be released in October 2003. As part of the CNMP project, a new website called CNMP Watch is being developed and will be launched later this year.

NASDA Project on State Environmental Guides. Tom Sommer, NRCS Liaison to NASDA reported on the NASDA Research Foundation’s project on “State Environmental Laws Affecting Agriculture.” Comprehensive resource guides, which outline state and federal environmental laws and regulations related to agriculture have been completed for all fifty states and are available on the NASDA web site.

Update on Pesticide Legislative and Regulatory Issues. Adam Sharp, EPA Deputy Associate

Administrator for Prevention, Pesticides & Toxics, reported on key pesticide management policy issues. The agency is continuing work on regulations for pesticide spray drift and will hold stakeholder listening sessions later this fall. EPA also expects to issue a proposed rule on coordination of the endangered species program this fall. In addition, he outlined efforts on atrazine mitigation plans, pesticide harmonization and implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA).

Report from Association of American Pesticide Control Officials (AAPCO). Tobi Jones, AAPCO President presented a new needs survey on funding for state pesticide programs. The survey finds that support for EPA pesticide programs and food testing programs are suffering. AAPCO also offered several recommendations for support of state FIFRA laboratories. NASDA and AAPCO are continuing joint efforts to educate Congress and the Administration on the need for adequate funding for pesticide programs.

Presentation on “The Value of Herbicides in U.S. Crop Production”. Leonard Gianessi, National Center for Food and Agriculture Policy, presented a new report on the use of herbicides in crops. The report finds that the non-use of herbicides would have significant impacts on agriculture in areas such as farm economics, labor requirements, and soil erosion.

Policy Amendments:

Approved amendment (#20) offered by Peter Hofherr (MO) regarding the use of urea and nitrification inhibitors in fertilizers as a Best Management Practice.

Approved amendment (#29) offered by Pat Takigugi (ID) to encourage rapid approval and availability of new noxious weed control tools.

Action Items:

Approved an action item, offered by Charles Bronson on behalf of SASDA, expressing support for the Pesticide Safety Education Program.

Committee Work Plan & Priority Issues:

- Prepare comments on upcoming EPA regulatory proposals on Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, and pesticide spray drift.
- Continue work with AAPCO to promote adequate funding for state pesticide programs.
- Continue to monitor 2002 Farm Bill conservation program implementation and provide comments on proposed rules.
- Facilitate and schedule “outreach” conference call meetings between NASDA members and senior EPA officials.
- Participate in agricultural coalitions on FQPA implementation and environmental issues.