

Agricultural Burning Practices & Research Task Force #107 Meeting Summary

DATE: June 3, 2020

LOCATION: Virtual Meeting held on Webex

<u>Members Present</u>		<u>Representing</u>
David Knight-Chair	Air Quality Program	Department of Ecology
Larry Cochran	Washington Conservation Commission	Conservation Districts
Jay Penner	Washington Association of Wheat Growers	Agricultural Community
Mike Buckley	Alfalfa Seed Industry	Agricultural Community
Scott Steinbacher	WA. Dept of Agriculture	WA. Dept. of Agriculture
Troy Henderson	Whitman County Health Dept	Public Health
Robin Priddy	Benton Clean Air Agency	Eastern Washington Local Air Authorities
Karen Lewis	WSU Tree Fruit Extension	Academia, (Tree Fruit)
<u>Members Absent</u>		
Dan McCarthy	Okanogan Horticultural Association	Agricultural Community
Bill Johnston	Washington State University	Academia, (Crop & Soil)

Introductions, Announcements

The 107th Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force (Task Force) meeting was held on June 3rd, 2020 via Webex online due to limitations on travel and meeting face-to face caused by the COVID-19 virus situation. The Task Force meeting began with the introduction of Task Force members and guests.

The June meeting of the Task Force is reserved for reviewing the Spring Burning Season, and for the Task Force to consider revising, amending, and approving the Best Management Practices, (BMP's) for the upcoming year.

Summer Weather Forecast

Andy Brown and Jeremy Wolf of the National Weather Service (Spokane) gave a presentation to the Task Force on the Forecast for Temperatures, Rainfall, and Wildfire potential in the Inland Northwest for the summer of 2020. The forecast is for above normal precipitation in June, followed by below normal precipitation, above normal temperatures, and above normal chances of wildfire in Central and Eastern Washington and in Southern British Columbia in July and August.

Spring 2020 Agricultural and Outdoor Burning Review

Daniel Matsche of the Washington Dept of Ecology presented a review of the permitted burns so far in 2020, including a comparison of burn permits issued, acres permitted, tons permitted, and

revenue from burning in Spring of 2019 compared to Spring of 2020. The question was whether the COVID-19 situation had impacted burning in Washington. Although there are always seasonal and year-to-year variations in the amount of burning, the two seasons appear, overall, to be very similar. Mr. Matsche described the burning conditions in Eastern Washington in the Spring of 2020 to be mostly very favorable for smoke ventilation.

BMP's

Paul Rossow of the Washington Dept of Ecology spoke about the potential for developing a new, Vineyard Tear-Out Best Management Practice (BMP). One of the main reasons for such a BMP, as separate from the Non-Orchard Pile Burn BMP, would be to answer the question of how much trellis wire is permissible in vineyard tear-out burn piles. At this time, he had not gathered enough information from Oregon and California to determine whether there is a regulatory consensus on this question.

One of the required activities at the June meeting of the Agricultural Burning Task Force is either to modify or reconfirm existing Best Management Practices (BMPs), and to institute new BMP's.

The Agricultural Burning Task Force reinstated all existing BMPs (Non-orchard pile burning BMP, Orchard BMP, Cereal grain BMP, Non-cereal BMP, Spot Burn BMP, and Bale Burn BMP) with no changes by unanimous vote.

The BMPs are available at www.ecology.wa.gov/agburn

The newly instituted BMPs are valid through June 30, 2021.

Open Discussion

Task Force member Karen Lewis brought a disease impacting sweet cherry trees in Washington to the notice of the other meeting participants. Little cherry disease is caused by two different pathogens in Washington, but both result in unmarketable fruit, and are incurable in the trees affected. Ms. Lewis forecast significant increases in tear-out of cherry trees over the next several years, with a concomitant need for an increase in the demand for burn permits and burn tonnage.

Next Meeting

The next meeting (Meeting #108) of the Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force will be on Wednesday, November 4th, 2020 at a time and place to be determined, depending on the uncertainties in travel and face-to-face meetings resulting from the COVID-19. Information about the Task Force meetings, meeting summaries, completed and on-going research are linked on Ecology's Agricultural Burning & Research Task Force webpage (click in the box "I want to...": www.ecology.wa.gov/ABTF