

Agricultural Burning Practices & Research Task Force #108 Meeting Summary

Date: November 4, 2020
Location: Virtual Meeting held on Skype

| <u>Members Present</u> | <u>Affiliation</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 |
| Karen Lewis | WSU Tree Fruit Extension | Academia, (Tree Fruit) |
| <u>Alternates Present</u> | <u>Affiliation</u> | <u>Representing</u> |
| Keith Hurley | Yakima Regional Clean Air Agency | Eastern Washington Local Air Authorities |
| <u>Members Absent</u> | <u>Affiliation</u> | <u>Representing</u> |
| Dan McCarthy | Okanogan Horticultural Association | Agricultural Community |
| Bill Johnston | Washington State University | Academia, (Crop & Soil) |
| Robin Priddy | Benton Clean Air Agency | Eastern Washington Local Air Authorities |

Introductions and Announcements

The 108th Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force (Task Force) meeting was held on November 4th, 2020 via Skype 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 November meeting is reserved for hearing an annual burning summary and scoping changes to the Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Fall Season Burning Review

Daniel Matsche of the Washington Department 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 Fall of 2019 compared to Fall of 2020, as well as a review of revenue trends over the past 2 years. Revenue in 2020 has been very slightly down as compared to 2019, but this was well within the variability in amount of agricultural burning regularly experienced over many years. Mr Matsche also explained that Ecology's Ag burn team in Eastern Washington has been working closely with many fire districts in the region to get input on daily burn decisions before they go out for the day at approximately 9AM. This cooperation allows for better, more consistent burn decisions, and less confusion for permittees. Lastly, Mr Matsche reviewed the catastrophic impacts of wildfires in Malden, Washington in September, as well as the record-breaking impacts of wildfire smoke in the same month.

Update on Washington State Hemp Regulations

Scott Steinbacher of the Washington Department of Agriculture gave an update on the state regulations for growing hemp as an agricultural crop. The pilot program for hemp growing has been replaced by formal regulations. The number of permits has grown to 177 licensed producers in 2020. The product requires sampling with a THC percentage of less than 0.3 percent to qualify as hemp, according to the regulations.

Best Management Practices

Paul Rossow of the Washington Department of Ecology reviewed the idea 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. He has determined that at least one grower group in California recommends leaving the wire in during burning, but has not yet been able to contact regulatory agencies to see whether there is a regulatory consensus on this question.

2021 Meeting Schedule - Research Needs Discussion

The Task Force set the meeting schedule for 2021. The meetings are scheduled for June 2, 2021, and November 3, 2021.

Paul Rossow (Ecology) reviewed the role of the Task Force in recommending research projects into alternatives to agricultural burning and the recent history of this research. The Task Force asked that a Request For Research Proposals (RFRP) be prepared and disseminated in time for research proposal presentations to be given by prospective researchers at the next Task Force meeting in June. The Task Force asked that specific examples of types of research be provided in the RFRP, without limiting the scope of the research potentially acceptable.

Next Meeting

The next meeting (Meeting #109) of the Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force will be on Wednesday, June 2nd, 2021, online. 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...": [Ecology's Research Task Force Webpage](#))