

## Agricultural Burning Practices & Research Task Force #112 Meeting Summary

DATE: June 1, 2022

LOCATION: Virtual Meeting held on Teams

<b><u>Members Present</u></b>		<b><u>Representing</u></b>
David Knight-Chair	Air Quality Program	Department of Ecology
Larry Cochran	Washington Assoc. of Conservation Districts	Conservation Districts
Jay Penner	Washington Association of Wheat Growers	Agricultural Community
Scott Steinbacher	WA. Dept of Agriculture	WA. Dept. of Agriculture
Mike Buckley	Alfalfa Seed Industry	Agricultural Community
Karen Lewis	WSU Extension	Academia, (Tree Fruit)
Scott Windsor	Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency	Eastern Washington Local Air Authorities
<b><u>Members Absent</u></b>		
Bill Johnston	WSU Crop and Soil Science	Academia
Dan McCarthy	Okanogan Horticultural Association	Agricultural Community
Chris Skidmore	Whitman County Public Health Department	Public Health

### **Introductions, Announcements**

---

The 112th Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force (Task Force) meeting was held on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022 via Teams online due to limitations on travel and meeting face-to face caused by the COVID-19 virus situation.

Scott Windsor, the director of the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency, was introduced as the new representative of Eastern Washington Clean Air Agencies.

The June meeting is reserved for hearing an Spring burning summary and approving any changes to the Best Management Practices (BMPs), and hearing updates on research funded upon recommendation of the Task Force.

### **Best Management Practices (BMPs) Discussion**

Paul Rossow from Ecology explained that there have been no calls or need of changes to the existing BMPs. The Task Force voted unanimously to accept the BMPs as written for another year.

### **Spring 2022 Burning Review**

Daniel Matsche of the Washington Department of Ecology presented a review of the permitted burns so far in 2022, including a comparison of burn permits issued, acres permitted, and tons permitted from the Spring season of 2021 compared to the Spring season of 2022. There have been about half as many agricultural acres and tons burned in Central and Eastern Washington in the first half of 2022, as compared to the first half of 2021. Much of this disparity was caused by the extreme drought conditions in 2021 causing very low crop yields in many areas. Mr Matsche states that there was 1 complaint about agricultural burning this spring, with 26 complaints about other burning, mostly complaints about outdoor disposal burning by neighbors.

Mr. Matsche also discussed upcoming online permit application options which should be available to the public soon, and modern workplace environment changes at Ecology,

### **Research Grant Presentation**

Russ Davis, president of Organix, presented the outcome of the research so far on using wood chips from orchard trees to act as a medium for using worms to treat dairy cattle effluent at a dairy in the Columbia Basin. The contract took some time to complete with Ecology, so the research is not as far along as hoped; however, the preliminary work shows promise for the development of a mid-scale mobile chipper able to produce the desired chips, which range from 1 to 2 inches, and have a requirement of very few fine particles.

### **Hemp rules update**

Tricia Ehrlich, from the Washington Dept of Agriculture, gave an update on hemp production in Washington. The number of permits to grow hemp is lower by almost 50 percent compared to last year. When hemp needs to be disposed of due to excessive THC levels, the vast majority of growers choose tilling in rather than burning.

### **Next Meeting**

Dave Knight asked the other members of the Task Force whether they would prefer an in-person meeting in November. The consensus was positive for an in-person meeting, while keeping virtual options open for those who need it.

The next meeting (Meeting #113) of the Agricultural Burning Practices and Research Task Force will be on Wednesday, November 2, 2022.