

Washington State Commission on Pesticide Registration

March 11th, 2009
Natural Resource Building
Washington State Department of Ag Offices
Olympia, WA

Chair Byron Phillips presiding.

Commissioners present were Byron Phillips, Art Losey, Chuck Masters, Bob Berger, Erik Johansen, Bryan Sakuma, Cynthia Lopez, and Kurt Volker. A quorum was not present.

Guests were Ted Maxwell, Mike Luicelle, Heather Hansen, Dan Newhouse, and Kammeron Todd.

Staff present were Erin Gwinn and Alan Schreiber.

Call to Order

Byron Phillips called the meeting to order at 10:15am.

Minutes

Byron Phillips asked if there were any corrections to the minutes and to have them sent in via email to Erin Gwinn. There were no corrections.

Financial Report

Alan Schreiber reviewed all expenditures on the Profit & Loss statement. Alan Schreiber explained all expenditures that the Commission would incur through the end of the fiscal year. Erik Johansen asked whether in-state travel regulations were in force for Commissions as well as state agencies. Alan Schreiber stated that commodity commissions had been exempted, but that Washington State University had stated that this only applied to out-of-state travel; in-state travel is still approved.

Alan Schreiber stated that there was an agreement the Commission had with WSU which stated that if the College of Ag took a cut the WSCPR would take the same cut. Alan Schreiber explained the handout which detailed scenarios of where Commission funding may end up if the College of Ag received a 10%, 20%, or 30% cut.

Administrator's Report

Alan Schreiber stated that the largest amount of administrative time had been spent on legislative matters. Alan has been contacting legislators and lobbyists to educate them

about the Commission and what the Commission does. Alan Schreiber stated that of the legislators that were aware of us, they are generally supportive.

Alan Schreiber stated that time has also been spent on research funding contracts and funding letters that were sent out after the January meeting. Alan Schreiber stated that an extension on an old contract for researcher Joe Yenish had been performed. There was also an old contract for researcher Pete Bristow which was looked into by WSU and had to be researched in Commission archives.

Preparation for the Commission tour has begun. Currently the Commission office is in the planning stages. Alan stated that he has begun to look over the tour agenda to determine which stops should be done this year. This year's the tour will be on the west side of the state. At this point the tour should be very similar to the 2007 tour. Mike Shelby will be contacted soon to determine if there will be a tide gates stop. Alan Schreiber stated that dinner the first night would be a dinner at Deception Pass State Park. The first day focuses on agriculture, the second day is more focused on urban/natural resources. Alan stated that there needed to be a vegetation management stop. Alan stated that dinner in Long Beach would be in a different location this year, as last year it was windy and slightly miserable. Bob Berger asked about whether the Commission office should sample the attendees about whether economics/travel budgets would be able to allow people to attend. Kurt Volker stated that he felt the office needed to perform a preliminary survey to ensure that the tour would have more than 23 participants; he also suggested a pre-solicitation for commodity commission group sponsorships.

Ted Maxwell asked about cuts to the Commission and how that would affect funding for the tour. Alan Schreiber stated that the tour costs the Commission \$7,000 which is a small amount compared to other areas of funding. Alan stated that a tour for 50 people can't be done for much less than \$7,000; the Commission would either have to generate more money or the Commission would have to pay for more of the tour. Alan suggested having the tour on the 28th-30th of July with a secondary option of the 21st-23rd of July.

Dan Newhouse

Dan Newhouse gave an overview of his background in farming. He stated that he was elected to the legislature in 2002 and served until February 18th, 2009 at which time he was placed as the Director of the Department of Agriculture (WSDA).

Dan Newhouse gave a short overview of the agency. He stated that he knew from personal experience the work that the Commission performs; he stated that he is a hop grower and has benefitted from Commission funded research. He stated that one of his goals as the Director of the WSDA was to keep agriculture a viable industry and the Commission on Pesticide Registration is a large part of that. He explained that he knows about the current legislation which is trying to eliminate boards and commissions; he stated that the WSDA understands what the Commission does and it is their goal to keep the Commission off the list of list of commissions to be disbanded on the current boards and commissions bill.

Dan Newhouse stated that a lot of what was occurring with the elimination of boards and commission was restructuring. The essential tasks that boards and commission perform will still be performed, possibly by a state agency.

Heather Hansen gave an overview of the bills that are currently in the house and senate regarding the elimination of boards and commissions. Heather stated that she is fairly certain that these bills will pass, but that there will be amendments. Heather stated that she did not expect to see anything added, but that amendments might be made to remove entities.

Dan Newhouse stated that he feels the Commission on Pesticide Registration is integral to keeping the agricultural industry alive; the agricultural industry is an industry that is seen as being able to help the economy turn around.

Art Losey asked about the current bill on mole trapping. Director Newhouse stated that he was supportive of reversing the current initiative. He stated that it was important that this standard change.

Director Newhouse stated that the Commission on Pesticide Registration should feel free to contact him if there were any issues that did arise and to keep lines of communication open between the Commission and the WSDA.

Heather Hansen

Heather Hansen stated that there were fewer policy bills this session than usual. She stated that there was a feeling that if something was going to require money it should not be introduced, because there is no money for funding. Heather stated that the climate change bill looked like it would most likely pass. There is a feeling that this needs to be passed, as in the next few years a similar bill will most likely pass at the federal level.

Heather stated that the noxious weed board has a bill asking to include the wording rhizomes and plant part, which will help to help include knotweed.

There was a bill introduced about residential turf in King County which would outlaw phosphorus on residential turf. This has been turned into a King County Ordinance which is currently going through hearings. Heather stated that if this ordinance is passed and follows previous trends, Pierce and Snohomish may adopt the policy within the next few years.

Alan Schreiber asked Heather what would most likely happen with the Washington State University (WSU) budget. Heather stated that as of today the House is proposing a 12-15% cut and the Senate is proposing a 21% cut. These numbers change on a daily basis. She stated that the House has a strong sense of protecting WSU's agricultural extension programs because this will help the state's economy in the long run. Heather stated that most likely it will be June before we would know what was going to happen to the WSU

budget. Heather stated that the plan as of now is to keep the College of Ag as whole as possible.

Heather stated that in the legislature's eyes the WSDA is seen as a frugal and efficient small agency.

Heater stated that recently a report had come out about WSU, NOAA and pesticides. The conclusion by NOAA is that instead of having an additive effect certain pesticide are having a synergistic effect. This is misleading because the levels they are using are much higher than those ever found in Washington. They used the highest level ever detected in the San Joaquin Valley including spill events. She stated that the report is misleading, Dan Bernardo's feeling is that this is good research portrayed badly. She stated that if Cris Grue's research were published this would be very helpful. He is currently trying to have his research published in the same journal that the controversial article was originally published in.

Pesticide Notification Network

Jane Thomas presented the proposal for Pesticide Notification Network (PNN) 2010 fiscal year funding. Jane stated the number of updates and sign up increases in 2009. Four talks were given on PNN and three of those talks were requests from entities in Oregon. This year the system was used to get input for WSDA, EPA, and NOAA information. Upcoming this year, they will survey PNN users to understand the ease of use and whether all information needed by users is being presented.

Byron Phillips asked about the PNN and cuts that WSU must incur, specifically with extension. There were questions regarding a situation in which Catherine Daniels' position might be cut and whether Jane would remain to run the program. Catherine stated that in that case we would have to get the money back from WSU and then hire Jane as an independent contractor to run the database.

Alan Schreiber stated that the Commission would likely have a budget cut and this could then cause a budget cut to the funding of the PNN proposal. Jane Thomas proposed that she would like to do the survey in such a way that the users give info on which services can be cut. Bob Berger stated that he would appreciate knowing how the users feel about the importance of the project. He stated that he would like the survey to be sent out and the data to be accumulated; he would like this data to be presented to the Commission.

Byron Phillips asked about the benefits percentages. Jane Thomas and Catherine Daniels explained the higher rate of benefits shown to lower paid employees and how the benefits percentages work within the university system.

Washington Ag Project

Alan Schreiber introduced Tracy Probst. He went over the Washington Ag Project schedule and status report including the progress report for the crops completed and in progress for the year this far.

Kurt Volker stated that the documents need to be spell/grammar checked. Byron Phillips asked about hit tracking as well as getting the word out to users. Alan Schreiber stated that in the RFP notification this would be included. Kurt suggested calling it Compendium of Washington Crops and restated that the crop profiles should be reviewed.

Bob Berger stated that this is the type of information grant requestors use as crop values. He stated that he often wondered whether projected crop values on grants were accurate. Alan Schreiber stated that the information on the grants should be from NASS or the WA Ag Project. Bob Berger suggested that the document be reformatted so that it was alphabetical by page.

Administrative Contract

Byron Phillips stated that at the May meeting there would be a vote to determine whether or not to renew the current administrative contract. Byron asked that people review and make notations on the contract which would be discussed at the May meeting. He stated that in particular he would like people to take a look at the tasks that the administration was being asked to perform.

Alan Schreiber asked about the criteria in the current contract which states that the administration is to “complete a review of all commission projects”. Alan Schreiber asked about tracking; there are very few GLP studies that are done currently, as opposed to when the Commission was founded. Chuck Masters stated that this could just be a status report on the projects. Erik Johansen stated that the wording in this portion was vague, he suggested that the intent of this section be clearer.

Alan Schreiber stated the amount of the current administrative contract.

Bob Berger spoke about the documentary which was recently released including Commissioner Ben Barstow. Chuck Masters and Byron Phillips suggested watching the documentary at an upcoming meeting.

Other Business

Alan Schreiber commented on the report presented by Fox News about the boards and commission bill was aired on the previous week. The story talked about why the Pesticide Incident Reporting and Tracking board was being cut and not the Commission on Pesticide Registration. Alan stated that he and Bob Berger had been interviewed in regard to the report, but when the story was released the Commission on Pesticide Registration was not mentioned.

Byron Phillips stated that at the next meeting he would like to take a look at the commission having a proactive role in pesticide use surveys due to the NASS surveys are going away. Art Losey stated that this was a huge undertaking. Byron stated that he didn't think the commission could do it on the level or scale that NASS would be able to perform, but that it could be done on a scale that was smaller and more manageable.

Byron also stated that Commissioners should think about continued maintenance of the WA Ag Project after the initial funding period was over. Erik Johansen asked whether a PNN notice had gone out about the WA Ag Project.

Alan Schreiber asked Commissioners about their thoughts on PNN funding if the Commission received a budget cut. There was a consensus that no area of funding would be sacred as far as budget cuts were concerned and PNN could very well have a budget cut. Chuck Masters suggested asking pointed questions of the PNN user group to determine whether PNN is a worthwhile use of funding. Chuck Masters asked if it would be possible to get a list of those entities using PNN.

Byron Phillips stated that a good question to think about might be how important is the notification of new products and changes on labels versus the having the database available to users.

Meeting adjourned at 2:11pm.