

Community Consultative Committee
Minutes of Meeting 44 – 12 September 2007
Sydney

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jenni Mack (Chair), Joe Elbustani, Peter Cone, Liz Hanna, Julie Buckley, John Temperley and Neville Prowse-Brown.

APVMA OFFICERS PRESENT

Tim Dyke, Alan Norden (field visits) and Antonia Exposito (Secretariat).

APOLOGIES

Jo Immig and Sam Beechey.

AGENDA ITEM 1 – WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed members and attending APVMA staff.

AGENDA ITEM 2 – ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The proposed agenda was accepted.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF CCC43

CCC 43 minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – CORRESPONDENCE

Members NOTED correspondence.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – BUSINESS AND ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was NOTED that action 43.4 was outstanding.

Action: 44.1 – Antonia Exposito to compile brainstorming notes from CCC 43 on Stakeholder Engagement Strategy.

AGENDA ITEM 6 – MEMBERS REPORTS

6.1 - Members activity since CCC42

Neville Prowse-Brown

Members NOTED Neville's written report. Neville advised that he has become a member of 'Rural Councillors' after attending a meeting of 'Listen to your Neighbour'. He has also been approached by Latrobe Regional Hospital and offered an interview with the aim of joining their focus group which has an interest in adverse reactions. This should take place in late September.

Liz Hanna

Members NOTED Liz's written report. Liz reiterated her activities with the Public Health Association of Australian (PHAA) and is preparing a PHAA

response to the Productivity Commission Study of Chemical and Plastics Regulation. Ongoing involvement with NcheM, Children's Environmental Health, enHealth and the Environmental Health Workforce. Liz undertook some online training on 'Psychological Effects and Community Stress for Health Professions.

Jo Immig

Members NOTED Jo's written report. Jo also provided additional papers on pesticides found in reef waters, in particular Diuron and Atrazine and the EU proposal to add endosulfan as a candidate for addition to the Stockholm Convention.

Joe Elbustani

Joe has had ongoing activities with AusVeg on pesticide use problems for vegetable growers. He expressed the concerns of growers in his area in regard to accessibility to necessary chemicals. He emphasised the apparent lack of knowledge about the minor use permit system and what kind of permits may be available to them. Tim Dyke explained how the permit system operates, the role and types of permits and the main avenues for accessing chemicals for minor uses. Tim gave a brief overview of the international collaborations in place which will offer significant opportunities for reducing costs of regulatory approvals for specialty crops, including opportunities for work and data sharing.

Peter Cone

Members NOTED Peter's written report. Peter highlighted the ongoing hazards to honey bees posed by the application of pesticides to crops. Peter has been involved in a program, in consultation with the NSW Apiarists Association and NSW DPI, which will involve the inclusion of a bee awareness plan in the cotton industry. Cotton growers will be required to develop a written Pesticide Application Management Plan in consultation with neighbouring properties, prior to the growing season.

Peter has had ongoing activities with DrumMuster and the Endosulfan Technical Working Group.

Sam Beechey

Members NOTED Sam's written report. Sam attended the Farmsafety Forum in which he took the opportunity to ask attendees what knowledge they had of the AERP. Sam expressed concern that those in attendance had little if any knowledge of what the program entailed.

Sam has been in contact with the OHS Officer at the Bairnsdale Hospital. Sam inquired whether they had treated any person(s) due to exposure to chemicals. The Officer advised that they had and they generally monitor condition and release patients after a few hours if no physical or visible signs remained. Records of these adverse experiences are not kept and or not passed on to the AERP.

Sam has had activities with Victorian Worksafe Authority in conducting 'Safety Days' with the aim of alerting small users of the dangers of unsafe storage practices.

Julie Buckley

Members NOTED Julie's written report. Julie expressed the concerns of cattle graziers in South Queensland, relating to the impact of 1080 restrictions for controlling wild dog numbers. Some graziers are turning to spider poison for use in baits to poison wild dogs. The name of the spider poison was not disclosed but she would make attempts to find out and advise members at the next meeting.

John Temperley

Members NOTED John's written report. John highlighted his activities with Farmsafe Australia about the AERP. Farmsafe Australia suggested that information about the AERP be forwarded to Australian Rural Divisions of General Practice and that posters displayed at rural chemical retail stores would be a good vehicle for promoting the program.

John will be attending the 6th National Farm Health and Safety Conference 2007. The APVMA will be displaying at the event to promote the AERP.

The Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety has been successful obtaining research funding to examine the Effectiveness of Risk Control Measures to Reduce Occupational Exposure to Pesticides.

Action 44.2 – John Temperley to forward to members links to Farmsafe's new website and Ag Health and Safety.

Action 44.3 – Liz Hanna to distribute to members her PHAA position paper to the Productivity Commission Study of Chemical and Plastics Regulation.

ITEM 6.2 – LABELLING COMMITTEE

No further activity on labelling committee.

ITEM 6.3 – INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

No further activity on international developments.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – WORK PROGRAM

ITEM 7.1 – STATE OF NATION REPORT UPDATE

At CCC 42 it was proposed that Jo Immig, John Temperley and Liz Hanna form a working group and develop a scoping document.

Members were requested to provide content or ideas about the project to Jo. A draft scoping document was tabled and NOTED by members. The Chair suggested that a brainstorming session be held at CCC 45 to consolidate feedback for inclusion in the report. Once finalised the report will be forwarded to the APVMA (Advisory) Board.

Action 44.4 – Members to provide Chair with suggestions to be covered at the brainstorming session.

ITEM 7.2 – REDUCED RISK CRITERIA PROJECT UPDATE

The Minor Use Liaison Office (MULO) hosted a forum in Canberra on 21 June 2007. The forum hosted speakers that operate successful minor use programs in other countries. The purpose of the forum was to highlight current domestic and international approaches to the registration of crop protectants for specialty crops.

A discussion paper was developed to allow further input into the best approaches to establish an effective minor use program in Australia. (paper provided to members). The Minor Use Liaison Office seeks comments on any aspect of this discussion paper and is specifically seeking comments on:

1. the importance of the establishment of a Specialty Crops Unit;
2. the roles of different bodies – RDCs, DAFF, APVMA. Growers etc;
3. the process for developing regulatory submissions including determining research priorities, the annual prioritisation process and the commissioning of field trails;
4. the scale of funding and any opportunities for matching funding; and
5. the location of the Unit.

Alan Norden gave an overview of the discussion paper and highlighted international work on the IR-4 and Australia's joint worksharing with the UK and Canada as a future project.

The Global Summit will be held in Rome in December 2007. Alan and Dr Raj Bhula will be representing the APVMA.

ITEM 7.3 – HARSHNESS INDICATORS PROJECT UPDATE

The sub-committee, consisting of APVMA and CCC Members, met on March 21 2007 at APVMA offices. At the meeting a range of labels were considered and six potential discriminators identified. It was agreed that the next step would be for the APVMA to progress work on the development of a domestic label key poster. In the meantime, Hall Regulatory Consulting was commissioned to produce a report on the 6 potential discriminators and how each discriminator can be used to indicate the 'harshness' of the chemical product.

The Consultant's report has been submitted to the APVMA and was tabled and NOTED by members.

Action 44.5 – Teleconference to take place between sub-committee and Tim Dyke before the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 7.4 – CHEMICAL REVIEW

Item 7.4.1 – Atrazine

The APVMA plans to finalise its review of atrazine and undertake regulatory action in addition to measures already implemented.

APVMA met with community representatives in June 2007 to allow them the opportunity to inform the regulator of ongoing and emerging concerns with atrazine. Community representatives expressed concerns that atrazine at very low levels could affect hormonal development in male frogs and this raised concerns for human health,

if atrazine were to make its way into drinking water. The APVMA proposes to complete the current review and implement revised label instructions, in order to reduce the likelihood of atrazine finding its way into waterways. The review may be reopened if further studies raise significant environmental or human health concerns.

Item 7.4.5 – Endosulfan Update

In 2002 the APVMA took regulatory action on products containing endosulfan. Following this action the APVMA cancelled all endosulfan products that were ultra-low volume prior to 2002. In 2005 the APVMA took further regulatory action to delete certain horticulture uses because of residue concerns. Review outcomes in 2005 also included new label instructions overing amend withholding periods, safety directions and re-entry statements. A permit was issued to enable the phase-in of these review outcomes.

The EU proposal to have endosulfan included as a persistent organic pollutant under the Stockholm Convention was noted. The APVMA will revisit this issue as information becomes available.

Item 7.5 – AERP

At CCC42 the Chair indicated that the APVMA (Governance) Board had expressed concerns at the low levels of AERP Ag reporting and asked the CCC for its views on the program. As a first step, the APVMA prepared a consolidated report of AERP references from previous CCC minutes for members.

Members have since written to their constituents inviting them to provide feedback on the program. A paper has been prepared consolidating feedback from stakeholders and the brainstorming session conducted at CCC 43 where members exchanged ideas of how the AERP could be better promoted. This report will now be forwarded to the APVMA (Advisory) Board and will also feed into the AERP review.

Action 44.6 – Liz and Julie to provide Chair with text about medicos not reporting adverse effects or poisonings to be included in letter to accompany AERP report.

AGENDA ITEM 8 – PROGRAM REPORTS

Item 8.1 – Pesticides Program

Members NOTED the Pesticides program report.

Item 8.2 – Veterinary Program

Members NOTED the Veterinary program report.

Item 8.3 – QA&C Program

Members NOTED the QA&C program report.

Item 8.4 – Strategic matters (NchEM, Productivity Commission Study, Structural Re-organisation)

Members were provided with a copy of the Productivity Commission Study into the Chemicals and Plastics Regulation. The Commission has been asked by the Australian Government to assess Australia's current system of chemicals and plastics regulation, including its effectiveness in achieving public health, occupational health and safety,

and environmental outcomes, and its impacts on productivity, competitiveness and efficiency.

The areas of relevance to agvet regulation would be policy objectives, structure and framework, inconsistencies in regulation between the Australian Government and the States and Territories and international work sharing.

The APVMA has put forward a written submission outlining some recommendations. Participation in the study is open to the public and CCC members were encouraged to put forward their submissions. Members were in agreement that the timeframe for public consultation of one month is unrealistic. Release of draft report due March 2008.

Action 44.7 – CCC to circulate their submissions to members.

Members were updated on the changes to the APVMA organisation structure and management responsibilities. An overview of the key themes of the new structure were discussed:

- a flattened management structure of the registration programs to allow increased resources to be directed towards timely and quality evaluation and processing of applications;
- small registration teams will be joined to form two larger registration sections. This frees up senior resources to be focussed on registration work rather than management;
- re-structure of the programs so that one of the programs has a focus on strategic issues, reform, operational policy development and stakeholder engagement. This program will be called the Regulatory Strategy and Compliance Program, managed by Tim Dyke; and
- chemistry and residue assessment functions will be integrated with the chemical review functions allowing for more responsive links.

The implementation will take a staged approach and any changes to processes and procedures will be done as a second phase.

Item 8.5.1 – RLC

Members NOTED minutes of the RLC.

Item 8.5.2 – ITC

Members NOTED the minutes of the ITC.

Item 8.5.3 – ILC

Members NOTED the minutes of the ILC.

AGENDA ITEM 8.6 – CHEMICAL ISSUES

Nil

AGENDA ITEM 9 – NEXT MEETING

5 December 2007 and APVMA Board Christmas function.

AGENDA ITEM 10 – OTHER BUSINESS

Nil

Meeting closed at 4:00pm.