

**Community Consultative Committee**  
**Minutes of Meeting 45 – 5 December 2007**  
**Canberra**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Jenni Mack (Chair), Sam Beechey, Peter Cone, John Temperley, Jo Immig (phone in) and Neville Prowse-Brown.

**APVMA OFFICERS PRESENT**

David Loschke, Simon Cubit, Les Davies (part)

**APOLOGIES**

Julie Northridge and Joe Elbustani.

**AGENDA ITEM 1 – WELCOME AND APOLOGIES**

The Chair welcomed members and attending APVMA staff. Ms Jenni Mack (Chair) advised that she has resigned from the CCC but will stay on until the recruitment for the replacement Chair has been finalised.

Dr Liz Hanna has also resigned from her position with the CCC.

The APVMA has recently advertised for six vacancies. Two of these will be filled by 27 March 2008 to replace Jenni and Liz . The remaining four positions will be filled in time for the June 2008 meeting. These four relate to the positions of Peter Cone, Sam Beechey, Joe Elbustani and Jo Immig which expire in May 2007. It was noted that Jo Immig's term expired in June 2006 but was extended by the APVMA Board in May 2007.

Members were advised that they were welcome to re-apply for their positions.

**AGENDA ITEM 2 – ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

The proposed agenda was accepted.

**AGENDA ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF CCC43**

CCC 44 minutes were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

**AGENDA ITEM 4 – CORRESPONDENCE**

Members NOTED correspondence.

Reference 07/10/I032: David Loschke has written to Alison Bleaney responding to her query about epigenetics. He provided a brief outline of the nature of the enquiry but indicated it was up to Ms Bleaney to provide CCC with a copy of the correspondence if she so wished.

The APVMA has written to the Chair of the CCC inviting input into the next Operational Plan.

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

It was NOTED all previous action items were completed.

## **AGENDA ITEM 6 – MEMBERS MATTERS**

### **6.1 - Members reports**

#### **Peter Cone**

Members NOTED Peter's report. Peter highlighted the need for the CCC to address environment issues as well as public health issues. The environment issue of the spray drift program needs capturing and the regulatory aspect of spray drift needs tightening up. Ongoing involvement with the NSW Apiarists Association aimed at reducing the risk to commercial apiarists posed by the application of pesticides to crops where bees are foraging or in proximity to where bees are active.

Peter also highlighted native vegetation exposure to spray drift and run-off as an emerging issue as well as and the impact of global warming in agriculture.

#### **Neville Prowse-Brown**

Members NOTED Neville's report. Neville added to his report the question whether plastic bottled water when exposed to heat such as in a car can lead to cancer based on early reports. David Loschke noted it was not a concern related to pesticides but agreed to look further into this issue and report back at the March 2008 meeting with his findings.

Neville expressed concern about the limited number of rural retailers that were prepared to stock 1080 baits due to the very significant training requirements that retailers were being required to undertake as a condition of selling the product. He noted that the new regulatory regime is due to be ready by 1 January 2008 but there have been no courses for the chemical trainers at this stage.

***Action 45.1 – David Loschke to look into the literature on the question of whether water from commonly used plastic bottles allowed to become warm (as in a hot car) can leach cancer-causing chemicals from the plastic possibility leading to cancer.***

#### **Jo Immig**

Members NOTED Jo's report. Additional reading material was provided for discussion on the emerging issues on agvet chemical management identified under Item 7.1.4.

#### **Sam Beechey**

Sam raised his concern with Phoscheck used in the suppression of fires. It is a big concern in the Gippsland area and if Phoscheck gets into the water catchment areas it would be detrimental.

Sam highlighted the concerns surrounding the death of several dolphins in Victoria's Gippsland lakes in November which has lead to the questioning of water quality. Over the past 12 months, nine bottle nose dolphin carcasses have been found, with no immediate sign of a cause of death. One theory is that the mammals are dying after eating fish carrying toxic chemicals which have come from either local industry or

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blue-green algae blooms. Many surviving dolphins have developed lesions, which appear to be a result of a fungal infection.

### **John Temperley**

Members NOTED John's report. John met with the Pesticides Research Reference Group late November. No further activity to report since CCC 44.

### **ITEM 6.2 – LABELLING COMMITTEE**

It was recommended to the CCC that John replace Liz Hanna, who has recently resigned from the CCC, on the APVMA's labelling project 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 – EMERGING ISSUES IN AGVET CHEMICAL REGULATION**

#### **Item 7.1.2 European REACH Program and its Relevance to Australia**

A paper was provided outlining the role that the European Union REACH program plays in dealing with the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemical substances and its aims to improve the protection of human health and the environment through better and earlier identification of the intrinsic properties of chemical substances. The new law was entered into force on 1 June 2007.

Jo Immig joined the committee via teleconference and provided an overview on REACH, highlighting the application of the precautionary principle, how REACH works, greater global processes and forums and pointed out the shift in which the Europeans will now regulate their chemicals in relation to the REACH.

#### **Item 7.1.3 WHO Collaborating Centre for Research on Children's Health (Prof Sly 10.00am teleconference)**

Professor Sly of the Telethon Institute made a presentation to the CCC on the major environmental factors that impact on the health and well being of children from conception through to adolescence. Members thanked Professor Sly for his very interesting presentation and were very interested in the research the WHO Collaborating Centre for Research on Children's Health is currently undertaking.

Professor Sly mentioned his intention of producing a 10-20 page document to make information more accessible to a broader range of people.

Professor Sly has advised he will supply material for the emerging issues report.

#### **Item 7.1.4 Emerging issues in AGVET chemical regulation**

Jo Immig participated via teleconference to discuss chapter headings. Members NOTED the draft paper provided by Jo Immig for discussion on Emerging issues in AgVet chemical management.

A new section named 'Knowledge & Information' was added.

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This relates to the community engagement;

- what is driving policy and regulation?
- what are supermarkets and farmers going to do if the community increasingly prefers food on which pesticides have not been used?
- global trends in agriculture including possible effects of global warming;
- changes in food technology;
- what paradigm is Australia following?
- Soil science - fertilisers, fertiliser use, more organic based

Jo and Jenni will work together to move further on the list of emerging issues for presentation at the next CCC meeting. The possibility of incorporating a “case study” of a particular pesticide, possibly atrazine, was also discussed.

### **ITEM 7.2 – HARSHNESS INDICATORS PROJECT**

John Temperley briefed members on the Harshness Discriminators Committee teleconference held on Tuesday 20 November.

The meeting was convened to consider the *Report on Discriminators of Pesticide Harshness* by consultant Gavin Hall and to prepare recommendations for the CCC in respect of the next steps in the project. CCC42 agreed that the aim of this project was to produce a domestic label key and web based tools to inform consumers and others how information on the label can be used to choose the least harsh product.

The meeting generally discussed the limitations of the signal heading but it was noted that these and their precise meanings are referenced in law and the APMVA was obliged to respect them.

The committee felt further consideration should be given to whether other language could be used, perhaps around “degree of care” needed to handle the product.

It was agreed that the CCC as a whole consider appropriate terminology to explain signal headings to consumers.

It was agreed that consideration be given to producing a poster and/or two page pamphlet to guide people through the ranking for product type and relevant information.

Simon Cubit has undertaken to commence the design work on the web version prior to the March 2008 CCC Meeting.

It was also noted that other committees have expressed interest in this work and it would be useful to get their input at the draft design phase.

***Action 45.2 – Invite feedback from the ITC & ILC at draft design stage***

### **ITEM 7.3 – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Members NOTED the paper provided by Simon Cubit on the Community Engagement Strategy brainstorming notes from CCC 43 and would like to see a communication strategy developed for discussion at the March 2008 CCC meeting where members will also further brainstorm ideas

***Action 45.3 – Simon Cubit to prepare presentation for discussion at March CCC meeting.***

## **ITEM 7.4 – AERP REVIEW**

At CCC42 the Chair indicated that the previous APVMA Board had expressed concerns at the low levels of AERP Ag reporting and asked the CCC for its views on the program. A report has been prepared by CCC members on the AERP and has been forwarded to the APVMA CEO and (Advisory) Board to be fed into the AERP review, to take place in mid 2008.

Members acknowledged that whilst the AERP Ag program is a young program it does appear that after three years the public is not embracing the program. Members suggested that a separate model be developed for AERP Ag.

## **ITEM 7.5 – CHEMICAL REVIEWS**

### **Item 7.5.1 List of priority reviews**

Les Davies spoke about the list of priority reviews. In response to questions concerning participation in the priority setting exercise, Les explained that the priority was based on advice received from APVMA's external advisory agencies, the Department of the Environment and Water Resources (DEW) and the Office of Chemical Safety (OCS) within the Department of Health and Ageing (DOHA). Les advised that this is a living list and as new nominations come forward they will be fitted within the list in order of priority.

Members discussed the need to describe the different levels of priorities and dates on the review list indicating the stage the review is up to and an indication of the timeframe of the review.

CCC members suggested that this information be distributed to stakeholders in the next Regulatory Update.

### **Item 7.5.2 Presentation on new review webpage**

Liesl Schiller gave a presentation on the new Chemical Review webpages.

Members were invited to provide feedback on how the new pages could be further improved.

### **Item 7.5.3 Atrazine**

Members NOTED the report from Joan Ashton on Atrazine indicating new users' concerns to the proposed restriction. Members indicated they were anxious to see an outcome of the Atrazine review and were concerned at any further delay in restricting access to the chemical.

There was further discussion in relation to Atrazine in ground water. Jo Immig indicated there is a new report available on Atrazine found in Tasmania's drinking water. Members asked that Atrazine be included on the next agenda.

***Action 45.4 – Members to be provided with URLs to the 2003 and 2007 White Paper on the Potential for Atrazine to Affect Amphibian Gonadal Development out of session.***

***Action 45.5 – Jo Immig to provide David Loschke with the report on Atrazine in Tasmania's drinking water.***

**AGENDA ITEM 8 – APVMA REPORTS**

**ITEM 8.1 – PESTICIDES PROGRAM**

Members NOTED the Pesticides program report.

**ITEM 8.2 – VETERINARY MEDICINES PROGRAM**

Members NOTED the Veterinary program report.

**ITEM 8.3 – REGULATORY STRATEGY AND COMPLIANCE PROGRAM**

Members NOTED the QA&C program report.

**ITEM 8.4 – APVMA COMMITTEE UPDATES**

**Item 8.4.1 – RLC**

Members NOTED minutes of the RLC.

**Item 8.4.2 – ITC**

Members NOTED the minutes of the ITC.

**Item 8.4.3 – ILC**

Members NOTED the minutes of the ILC.

**AGENDA ITEM 8.5 – AUSTRALASIAN COLLEGE OF TOXICOLOGY AND RISK ASSESSMENT (ACTRA) (Les Davies report)**

Members NOTED Les Davies' written report on his attendance at the scientific session at the first Annual General Meeting of the Australasian College of Toxicology and Risk Assessment (ACTRA) held at the Department of Epidemiology & Preventive Medicine at Monash University in Melbourne on Friday 16 November 2007.

There was one amendment to the Steering Committee listed on his report. Associate Professor Sue Tecky has replaced Associate Professor John Edwards.

Les welcomed the initiative of ACTRA and outlined the membership details from 1 July to 30 June with an annual fee of \$110.00 ACTRA encourages new members with a professional interest in risk assessment.

**AGENDA ITEM 8.6 – CHEMICAL ISSUES**

Nil

**AGENDA ITEM 9 – MEETING DATES FOR 2008**

The following dates were Noted and accepted by members.

CCC 46 – 27 March

CCC 47 – 26 June

CCC 48 – 13 August

CCC 49 – 3 December

**AGENDA ITEM 10 – OTHER BUSINESS**

Nil

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Meeting closed at 2.50pm

**Appendix A**

Emerging issues in AgVet chemical management

Consider using glyphosate as a case study to illuminate a number of points

**Introduction**

- Global trends in agriculture
- Global trends in community demand eg towards organic
- How producers and suppliers are responding to community demand eg GMOs, organics
- Changes in food technology
- Climate change

What paradigm is Australia using – does this compare to other countries

What drives policy and regulation here vs. elsewhere

**Science**

1. Risk assessment and management

Problems with the methodology

- children's health
- other sensitive sub-populations
- precautionary principle (proof of safety vs. proof of harm)
- cumulative chemical load
- chemical mixtures
- endocrine disruption
- active ingredients vs. formulated products
- emerging diseases eg MCS

2. Use and Exposure

- Limitations of current knowledge
- Limited bio-monitoring in Australia
- Lack of residue testing etc
- Collecting data on use
- Spray drift
- Environmental impacts on native vegetation, soil science
- Climate change as ag shifts from dryer areas to wetter areas
- GMOS – implications for chemical use
- Body burden studies

3. Precautionary principle

4. Size matters

- Emerging research on exposures at high and very low levels – dose makes the poison, non-monotonic dose response curves
- Nanotechnology

5. Priority chemicals

- POPs (breast milk and body burden studies)
- Endocrine disruptors

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- Neurotoxic disruptors
- Inerts
- Formulated products

### 6. Capture of research and development

- How this can skew weight of evidence
- Silencing dissent (esp. scientists)
- The “sound science” debate

### **Regulation**

### 7. Regulation to advance new chemistry

#### What can we learn from REACH

- Play it safe – substitution principle i.e. replace hazardous chemicals with safer chemicals whenever they exist
- Duty of care - chemical manufacturers to guarantee their products do not negatively affect human health or the environment
- Right to know

### 8. Meaningful community engagement

- Trend analysis pointing to new era of activism and social engagement
- Who to engage with
- What to engage about
- Levelling the playing field
- Community right to know

### 9. Litigation

- Different laws around the world
- Willingness of chemical organisations to take part in litigation

### 10. Precautionary principle

### 11. Trade issues