

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

51st MEETING – 25 June 2009

ATTENDANCE

MEMBERS

Dr Heather Yeatman (Chair)	Public Health Association of Australia
Mr Neville Prowse-Brown	Australian Landscape Trust, East Gippsland Landcare Network, Victorian Farmers Federation, East Gippsland District Council, Monash School of Rural Health, East Gippsland Organic Association, Redgum Conservation Management Network
Mr John Temperley	Farmsafe Australia Inc
Mr David Lawson	Australian Consumers Association
Mr Anthony Amis	Friends of the Earth
Mr Joe Elbustani	Greenhouse Vegetables Association, NSW Farmers Association

APVMA

Dr Raj Bhula	Program Manager Pesticides
Dr Simon Cubit (part)	Public Affairs Manager
Dr David Loschke (part)	Principal Scientist, Pesticides
Ms Kirsty Fraser (part)	AERP
Mr Les Davies (part)	Chemical Review Manager
Mr Jay Kottage (part)	Principle Evaluator, Pesticides

VISITOR

Mr Michael Dornbusch (part)	Office of the Gene Technology
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APOLOGIES

Mr Peter Cone	National Farmers Federation
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1. INTRODUCTION

Item 1.1 Welcome and Adoption of Agenda

1. The Chair opened CCC51 at 9.00am welcoming CCC members and APVMA staff.
2. CCC noted an apology from Mr Peter Cone.
3. CCC ADOPTED the agenda.

Item 1.2 Minutes & resolutions of CCC50

1. CCC ACCEPTED the report of CCC50 with minor editorial changes.

Item 1.3 Actions from previous meetings

1. CCC NOTED the status of actions as follows:
 - CCC49 Item 3.1 –
 - (a) to be addressed at CCC52
 - (b) to be addressed at CCC52
 - CCC49 Item 3.2 – harshness indicators on APVMA web - completed
 - CCC49 Item 4.5 – addressed in paper at agenda item 5.3 - completed
 - CCC49 Item 5.1 – addressed at agenda item 3.1 - completed
 - CCC50 Item 1.6 – CCC teleconference -completed
 - CCC50 Item 2.1 – spray drift booklet distributed – completed
 - CCC50 Item 2.1 – full report, recommendations and findings of the forum on Effectiveness of Risk Control Measures to Reduce Occupational exposure to members – Farmsafe haven't met to approve recommendations yet – in progress – leave on action list
 - CCC50 Item 2.2 – copy of atrazine report from the WHO/FAO joint meeting on pesticide residues - completed
 - CCC50 Item 3.1 – addressed at agenda item 3.2 - ongoing
 - CCC50 Item 7.1(2) – update on APVMA projects and working group – addressed at agenda item 4.4 – completed
 - CCC50 Item 7.1(4) – advisory board view on the role of the CCC – CCC Chair to discuss with APVMA CEO – leave on action list
 - CCC50 Item 7.1(5) – APVMA CEO meeting with CCC Chair – completed
 - CCC50 Item 7.4 – special expert advisory panel meeting outcome – addressed at agenda item 7.1

Item 1.4 CCC correspondence register

1. CCC NOTED the correspondence register.

Item 1.5 Declaration of financial interest

1. CCC NOTED standing disclosures of relevant direct or indirect financial interests declarations returned by all current members of the CCC.

2. MEMBERS REPORTS

Item 2.1 Members Reports

David Lawson

1. David provided a written report for CCC51 advising the following:
 - a. a member of the public from WA is still in contact in relation to an adverse experience report of over vaccination in companion animals. He provided a copy of a letter received on 8 June providing a range of comments on;
 - i. over-vaccination in companion animals
 - ii. small animal veterinarians are not required to ensure that tablets they dispense are sold to the user in appropriate containers
 - iii. no legal requirement for small animal veterinarians to provide or keep any record of the batch number and expiry dates of medicines they dispense to pet owners
 - iv. consumers of veterinary services, should at the very least, be given the benefit of all the relevant (latest research, risks vs. benefits etc) information that they need to make informed decisions about companion animal treatments.
2. David urged this consumer to await the outcome of the special APVMA expert advisory panel meeting held in April. The outcome of this meeting will be discussed in agenda item 7.1.
3. David also advised members that the collapse of Timbercorp and Great Southern Plantations has caused concerns for the local area, as Timbercorp is the largest producer of avocados and a significant employer in the region. All of Great Southern timber plantations in the area had been listed for sale about one month before they went into liquidation.
4. David also mentioned briefly that the Qld government had recently passed the Reef Protection legislation, however no firm plans or consultation with affected farmers and producers had occurred regarding restrictions and controls to be imposed.

Peter Cone

1. Peter was not available to attend CCC51, although he did provide a written report outlining the following:
 - a. Peter recently delivered a lecture to students in a postgraduate course at the University of New England on the subject of farm chemicals and their regulation. These students included chemical company representatives, commercial agronomy advisors and state government regulatory officers. During the course of the lecture Peter had reason to refer to the APVMA Adverse Experience Reporting Program and was very surprised and somewhat concerned when all of the students (except the QLD DPI regulatory officer) indicated they had never heard of the Adverse Experience Reporting Program.

- b. Peter stated after some explanation of the program, the students agreed this was a very good concept and system, which they could see being used to bring about worthwhile change and all indicated they would use the system. Given these were professional people closely involved in agricultural production at a commercial level, Peter expressed his concern they were unaware of AERP and was even more surprised when it became evident none of them had accessed the APVMA website.
This raised two significant questions:
 - i. firstly, why is it professional people such as these, are not obtaining information about APVMA: and
 - ii. secondly, is APVMA placing too much reliance on the web page as their major method of disseminating information? Part of the discussion indicated professional people in agriculture are probably suffering an increased burden of electronic information overload and simply do not have time to go to the APVMA web page unless they have a specific reason.
2. Peter recently observed a short program on pay TV called Janella Purcell's – "Get a Life". The thrust of the program was to consider a range of non-toxic pesticides and cleaning products rather than commercial preparations.
- a. part of the program involved examination of a home garden pesticide product where Janella explained that there were no "ingredients" listed on the container as the camera zoomed in on the active constituent statement.
 - b. Janella's explanation indicated that chemical manufacturers did not have to indicate "ingredients" on the label. In short Peter stated, Janella had no idea what she was talking about on this subject yet she was portrayed as an expert in this area.
 - c. Peter has indicated that perhaps this person might be able to be educated on this matter and used in a positive manner to disseminate some useful but accurate information to the public on home garden products and their appropriate selection.

John Temperley

- 1. John provided members with a written report outlining a number of items relating to Farmsafe Australia:
 - a. 2009 National farm health and safety conference is being held at The Vines, Swan Valley, Perth October 13-15 2009, hosted by Farmsafe WA, information can be found on the Farmsafe WA website <http://www.farmsafewa.org/>
 - b. recommendations of the effectiveness of risk control measures to reduce occupational exposure to pesticides forum held on 23 March 2009 are being presented to Farmsafe Australia
 - c. Australian Centre for Agricultural Health and Safety (ACAHS) recently published a paper in the Australia New Zealand Journal of Occupational Health and Safety. A copy of this has been sent to all CCC members

- d. ACAHS has further developed a series of Farm Safety Induction Resources for employers, employees, contractors, the cattle and horticultural industries and indigenous workers. These resources can be downloaded for use from the Farmsafe Australia website www.farmsafe.org.au and the ACAHS website www.aghealth.org.au
- e. a farm health and safety toolkit for rural general practices has been developed with factsheets and is available at http://www.aghealth.org.au/tinymce_fm/uploaded/Health%20Workers/screen_gp_toolkit.pdf There is a section on pesticides and human health, with reference to the APVMA website promoting reporting of adverse experiences
- f. Victorian coroner recently released findings and recommendations into 8 deaths that occurred on Victorian and Tasmanian farms related to quad bike use on those farms. Among the coroner recommendations are:
 - i. four wheel motorbikes should not be referred as all terrain vehicles (ATVs)
 - ii. quad bikes should not be used to carry loads except on level ground
 - iii. they should not be recommended for spraying operations unless on flat terrain

Joe Elbustani

1. Joe advised members of the following:
 - a. reiterated language is always an issue with chemical users
 - b. regulators believe farmers should have certain qualifications to run a farm, but the reality is that people from non-english speaking backgrounds start in another country or community as a grower.
 - c. difficulty for farmers to comply with regulation if they do not have the relevant education to be able to read and write; the community should provide a better education for these people
 - d. the need to do a refresher course to renew a license every 5 years, and the costs associated with the training and renewal, advising that 90% of farmers go to get the license not necessarily to do the training, which is not achieving what it is intended to achieve which is further educating these people

Anthony Amis

1. Anthony advised members he is working on the emerging issues project on database/information by compiling a list of websites and going through emails with issues that have arisen during January – June 2009.
2. Anthony provided APVMA with questions referring to concerns of aerial sprays in Tasmania;
 - a. who decided what pesticides can be mixed together, when aerially sprayed and on what basis
 - b. can roundup, oust and brush-off be missed and aerially sprayed
 - c. where is the permit that allows this (if it needs a permit)
 - d. what crops/vegetation can this mixture be used on

3. APVMA advised members they would respond to these questions out-of-session and distribute to members via the CCC secretariat.
4. Anthony advised members the DPI Victoria is expanding their testing regimes on waterways.

ACTION	APVMA to respond to questions on aerial sprays in Tasmania and distribute to CCC members out-of-session
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Neville Prowse-Brown

1. Neville provided a written report advising members that his involvement with the APVMA over the last quarter has been interesting and rewarding, especially with the Adverse Experience Reporting Program with APVMA staff visiting East Gippsland during the East Gippsland Field Days on 1 & 2 May. This exercise reinforced how many chemical users did not know of the AERP nor of the APVMA, which emphasizes the importance of educating the users and general public on the role of the regulator and the purpose of the AERP.
2. Neville also attended the “Chemcert” Vic conference on 27 & 28 May and stated many course presenters were still talking about the visit from APVMA last year.
3. Neville provided APVMA folders and other promotional material at the conference, with the remainder used by “Chemcert” Vic to post out to presenters that were unable to attend the conference. “Chemcert” Vic has requested another 50 information packs to be forwarded for their distribution.
4. Neville congratulated the AERP staff on the work they have done towards developing awareness of APVMA and AERP in the field and he believes the most cost effective way to building on this awareness is via the presenters of the chemical programs.

ACTION	APVMA secretariat to provide “Chemcert” Vic with another 50 information packs
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Heather Yeatman

1. Heather advised members that the recruitment for the education position has been completed and will be discussed in further detail at agenda item 4.2.
2. Heather recently had a meeting with the APVMA CEO to discuss the following issues:
 - a. the APVMA CEO will be travelling to Europe for a series of OECD and other international meetings, visiting the UK Pesticide Safety Directorate and Veterinary Medicines Directorate, the European Medicines Agency and the European Commission discussing, among other things, how they link their community committees with consumer groups and provide feedback to the CCC
 - b. APVMA received an email from CropLife, which made a number of comments in relation to the functioning of the CCC, although they failed to send the letter to the CCC Chair.

- i. within the letter CropLife stated “*The CCC is no more than a convenient vehicle for activists to legitimise their outlandish and misleading campaigns*”.
 - ii. the CCC believes CropLife fail to see the critical importance and function of the CCC and its value to the operations of the APVMA
 - iii. the CCC chair will respond to the CropLife letter and in a separate letter invite them to participate in an upcoming CCC meeting so they can see first hand the positive relationship it has with the APVMA in dealing with the issues of community concern regarding the use of agricultural pesticides and veterinary medicines
- 3. During discussion arising from this letter, the CCC members identified it was important to solicit the views of the other committees regarding the CCC and to share knowledge between committees. Key questions that need to be addressed included:
 - a. what are ILC members’ views of the role and rights of the community in relation to pesticide use
 - b. does the ILC have a position on the education role of the APVMA

ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CCC Chair to respond to CropLife letter in relation to the functioning of CCC 2. Write to CropLife inviting them to attend an upcoming CCC meeting
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Item 2.2 Role of committee members

- 1. This item was discussed out of session with members in relation to sitting fees and remuneration.

3. BUSINESS ARISING

Item 3.1 Genetically modified organism (GMO)

- 1. APVMA and OGTR provided members with an informative presentation on the genetically modified organism process.
- 2. OGTR provided an overview on;
 - a. the Australian Gene Technology regulatory system in gene technology, in particular GM crops
 - b. the gene technology objective – protecting the health and safety of people and the environment, by identifying risks posed by or as a result of gene technology, and by managing those risks through regulating certain ‘dealings’ with genetically modified organisms (GMOs)
 - c. what they do and don’t regulate
 - d. how they regulate and compliance activities undertaken
 - e. preparation of the risk assessment and risk management plan (RARMP)
 - f. further information on the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator can be found on their website at www.ogtr.gov.au and questions can be answered via 1800181031 or ogtr@health.gov.au

3. APVMA provided a presentation on the role of the APVMA in regulation of genetically modified products outlining the interaction between APVMA and OGTR.

ACTION	APVMA secretariat to send copies of the OGTR and APVMA presentations to CCC members.
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Item 3.2 Draft framework for education

1. CCC members discussed the issues relating to the education of users of agricultural and veterinary chemical and the community, defining the following questions as areas that need developing:
 - a. who are we identifying as the most important groups that need educating and who are priorities for education initiatives
 - i. general public, users, trainers/education providers, industry groups, health workers, growers, farmers, lectures, Chemcert training of trainers, English as a second language
 - b. what is the scope of the education role of the APVMA
 - c. how and what to report as an adverse event - framework required
 - i. rights in relation to adverse events
 - ii. how to submit an adverse event
 - iii. where to submit it
 - d. how to understand and appreciate the registration system
 - e. label use and reading labels – seen as a critical issue
 - i. 90% of market gardeners do not read labels
 - ii. general users go on prior knowledge/recommendations
 - iii. labels seen to be too involved and take too long to read
 - iv. APVMA assumes people read the label
 - v. if people are not able to read, they shouldn't be in the farming industry – they are not fulfilling their duty of care
2. APVMA need to look at what is being provided now in APVMA's current communication strategy and identify:
 - a. the gaps in the current co-ordination of education and work on how it can be enhanced
 - b. who does what within the APVMA stakeholder groups
 - c. resources for education - demand and responsibility
3. CCC members agreed to identifying who and what topics for education as the priority issues, with the how, where and when to be addressed in the 2010/11 financial year.
4. CCC members and APVMA would like to thank Peter Cone for his time and effort in the paper provided as it generated a great deal of discussion.

ACTION	David Lawson to compile a table on education for CCC members, mapping out what the tasks are, who's actual role it is and how it can be provided and distribute out of session prior to CCC52
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4. GENERAL BUSINESS

Item 4.1 AERP update

1. Members NOTED the update on AERP provided to CCC52 specifically outlining:
 - a. AERP update on East Gippsland Promotion advising that the APVMA staff spent two days at the East Gippsland Field Day talking to both the general public and other industry groups such as WorkSafe, DrumMuster, East Gippsland TAFE, DPI, Landcare and the EPA
 - b. travelled around the region calling on target groups, providing a brief explanation of the AERP (Ag & Vet), and supplied information packs, including Adverse Experience Reporting Forms
 - c. provided a short presentation at a Chemical Users course, spoke to the Placement Coordinator at the Monash University School of Rural Health (East Gippsland) and spent time at the DPI in Bairnsdale talking to staff
2. APVMA staff were happy with the contacts made and information dissemination during their time in East Gippsland, although it is still too early to determine if the increase in awareness of the AERP will lead to an increase in the number of AERs received.
3. APVMA advised they would be attending the Hydroponics Conference in July in Sydney and the Henty Field Day in September 2009 to promote the APVMA and AERP.
4. APVMA congratulated and thanked Neville Prowse-Brown for all his time, effort and hard work promoting the APVMA and AERP.

Item 4.2 CCC Recruitment update

1. APVMA provided CCC with an update on the recent recruitment exercise advising:
 - a. applications for the positions of OH &S and Education closed on 27 March 2009
 - b. interviews for the position of community education were held on 11 June 2009
 - c. decision has been made, and the position has been offered to the successful applicant
 - d. successful applicant verbally accepted the position. Once formal notification of acceptance has been received, the successful applicant will be announced
2. The APVMA will readvertise shortly for a person with a community organisation and/or local government background. If members have any contacts they feel may be appropriate for the position, please advise the CCC secretariat.

Item 4.3 APVMA Corporate plan update

1. APVMA advised CCC that the corporate plan is currently with the Ministers office and will be printed once approval is received.

ACTION	APVMA to provide all CCC members with a copy of the new APVMA corporate and operational plans.
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Item 4.4 APVMA Update on projects and working groups

1. CCC members NOTED the update on projects and working groups for 2009/10.
2. APVMA advised this list would be reviewed every 6-12 months.

ACTION	APVMA to provide CCC with an updated list of projects and working groups at CCC54.
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5. APVMA REPORTS

Item 5.1 Pesticides Program

1. Members NOTED the Pesticides program report.

Item 5.2 Veterinary Medicines Program

1. Members NOTED the Veterinary Medicines program report.

Item 5.3 Regulatory Strategy and Compliance Program

1. Members NOTED the Regulatory Strategy and Compliance program report.

6. APVMA COMMITTEE UPDATES

Item 6.1-6.3 ILC, ITC & RLC

1. CCC NOTED copies of papers from other consultative committees provided for information:
 - a. the approved minutes of RLC35 [September 2008] and actions from RLC36 [March 2009]
 - b. the approved minutes of ITC26 [September 2008] and actions from ITC27 [February 2009]
 - c. the approved minutes of ILC40 [November 2008] and actions from ILC41 [April 2009]

7. OTHER BUSINESS/NEXT MEETING

Item 7.1 Outcome of special expert advisory panel meeting held on 15 April 2009

1. APVMA advised members that the special expert advisory panel meeting held on 15 April 2009 considered over vaccination in detail and the small animal vaccination guidelines.
2. Members asked who makes sure the vet is providing correct advice to the consumer?

- a. the Veterinary Surgeons' Boards aims to provide relevant, accurate and timely advice and assistance to the public and practitioners on matters and increase the awareness amongst the public and profession of the Boards roles and responsibilities. If members of the public have a complaint, the Board requires that:
 - i. a complaint be made in writing, providing all relevant details and be signed by the complainant;
 - ii. all involved parties including the author of the complaint, must be properly identified and named; and
 - iii. written permission must be given by the complainant for the Board to release part or all of the complaint to any person it deems necessary in the investigation of the complaint, including the person about whom the complaint is made.
3. APVMA stated there needs to be better information provided to the AERP, some examples of this are;
 - a. quality information and how it has been collected
 - b. the severity of the reactions
 - c. need to break it down as a first vaccination or a re-vaccination
4. APVMA advised members that the development of a policy of re-vaccination is currently a work-in-progress.
5. David Lawson thanked APVMA for the updates of progress and indicated the consumer is happy to hear something is being progressed, and things are moving in the right direction. This consumer has also had correspondence and discussions with the AERP section, which has improved the information flow.

Item 7.2 Potential Australian implications of UK Georgina Downs case

1. CCC members asked if there were any potential implications for Australia after the UK case of Georgina Downs recently winning her landmark High Court action against the UK Government over its failure to protect people in the countryside from exposure to toxic pesticides sprayed on crops.
 - a. APVMA advised members the UK Government has appealed against this ruling in April
2. The CEO APVMA is currently in the UK and will be visiting the UK Pesticide Safety Directorate to discuss this issue and what were/are they doing so APVMA are able to learn what they can about their issue.
3. APVMA advised they are concerned about this issue and the health of agronomists, field workers and also those exposed to casual and incidental exposure. The endosulfan review raised a number of concerns as part of the development of the spray drift policy and how to address human health issues. There will be a formal policy based on:
 - a. a scientific risk assessment for bystanders
 - b. a specific science based risk assessment model tied to the most vulnerable member of the community (this is based on a naked baby rolling around in the sprayed areas taking into account hand to mouth

activities); this was presented by APVMA to OECD in February 2009 and the OECD members were very interested

4. APVMA provided an example of a mock up label which will be very prominent at the front of the label providing:
 - a. each product and its use patterns
 - b. a scientific assessment
 - c. in conclusion – the need for a protective buffer zone or not for various risks
5. APVMA are not empowered to take a position to mandate there be zero risk. APVMA link the level of acceptable risk to acceptable health standards such as the acceptable daily intake (ADI) and the model takes into account that the exposure from spray within the buffer zone should fall below the ADI. APVMA advised Australia is leading the world in regard to specific risk buffer statements and will be able to confirm more information when the APVMA CEO returns from discussions with the UK Pesticide Safety Directorate.

ACTION	APVMA to provide CCC members with a presentation on science based risk assessment at CCC52.
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Item 7.3 Simazine review update

1. APVMA advised CCC the review is going ahead and for members to check the progress of the review via the APVMA website.

Item 7.4 Implications for APVMA if state responsibilities are taken over

1. APVMA advised they are unable to comment on the implications until they are advised by DAFF of the outcome of control of use consultations via a control of use working party. A paper is being developed by DAFF.

Other business/date for next meeting

1. CCC AGREED CCC52 would be held on 18 September 2009.
2. CCC advised they would like the dates for 2010 meetings to be available at CCC52.

The chair thanked members for their attendance and input and closed CCC51 at 3pm.