



Highlights of meeting # 31 held on February 22nd, 2007 in Victoria
for complete minutes and background information go to
<http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/partners/index.htm>)

Focus Session on Water - Jim Mattison of the BC Ministry of Environment (MoE) gave a brief overview of the status of water in British Columbia, including regulatory issues, existing snow packs and future considerations with climate change. Ted van der Gulik of the BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands (MAL) gave a presentation on a list of 28 agriculture water principles collected as part of the Agriculture Component of a Provincial Water Strategy.

The following key priority issues were identified for the Water Task Group to deal with:

- Livestock watering in and off-stream and the ability to secure licenses
- Governance - water pricing for agriculture, licensing of groundwater
- Drought management planning - sharing the resource vs. priority rights
- Water conservation by agriculture to be used for agriculture sustainability and growth
- Reclaimed water use by agriculture not result in reduced access to fresh water.
- Infrastructure funding related to flood protection, drainage, and increased storage

The Agriculture Water Task Group will meet to develop an issue paper for the Provincial Water Strategy that addresses the above topics.

Pat Bell, Minister of Agriculture and Lands - Minister Bell highlighted the proactive role taken by the government with respect to climate change. The challenges facing the province will also provide new opportunities to the agriculture sector with bio-diesel production and carbon sequestration. The province will be taking a Pacific Rim approach to this initiative and will be engaging in discussions with California, Oregon, Washington and Alaska.

- Steve Thomson, BCAC, advised that wildlife agriculture interactions were a growing problem and that industry will be coming back to government to address this issue.

Nutrient Management Committee – Highlights include:

- Planning for an Okanagan Nutrient Management Study in the summer of 2007, with funding support by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) is now underway.
- An Environment Canada (EC) Fraser Valley poultry manure movement pilot project is underway.
- An Agriculture Environment Initiatives funded manure management demonstration project, lead by the Langley Environmental Partners Society in conjunction with the BC Horse Council has expanded to a provincial scope.
- The Fraser Valley Soil Nutrient Survey project has been completed. An Executive summary and full report will be available soon with the minutes on the website noted above
- Science Forum on Nitrate in the Abbotsford-Sumas Aquifer - George Derksen (EC), provided a short update on a forum being held in Abbotsford on April 26th.

Environmental Management Act Code of Practice and Regulatory Review - Helene Roberge (MoE) provided an update on the progress of various Codes of Practice under development. The goal of the revised regulations is to provide for a more flexible format for authorizations.

Codes of Practice and Regulations of note for agriculture include:

- Soil Enhancement using Wastes Codes
- Organic Matter Recycling Regulation
- Slaughter Industry Code of Practice
- Poultry Processing Code of Practice
- Open Burning Smoke Control Regulation

The agriculture industry will be notified of the review of regulations pertaining to agriculture as they reach the consultation stage. Policy intentions papers can be found at:

http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epdiv/ema_codes_of_practice/index.html

Wildlife Act Review - Scott Black (MoE) indicated that the target for posting of a discussion paper on the Wildlife Act review is the spring of 2008. The Agriculture Industry is considered a stakeholder and will be contacted directly if the review proceeds.

Ecological Goods and Services – Ken Nickel (MAL) updated the committee on a session with BCAC, MAL and other agencies held in November. A session on May 7th in Richmond is planned featuring an Australian approach to EG&S. Partnership Committee members will be invited to attend.

Livestock Waste Tissue Initiative - Regulations from the Federal Government governing disposal of this material are expected in July 2007. There is \$5 million available to work with processors for the management and disposal of liquid waste tissue material. The program will help processors adhere to the new regulations.

Environmental Farm Plan Program

The following summarizes the Beneficial Management Practices (BMP) under the National Farm Stewardship Program funded throughout the province since the inception of the program:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| • Applications reviewed | 1169 |
| • Applications approved | 996 |
| • Program funds to producers (committed and expended) | \$5.4 M |
| • Total project value (approximate) | \$18 M |
| • Ducks Unlimited Canada funding for selected BMP's | \$172,406 |

Canada-British Columbia Water Supply Expansion Program

Program figures since inception up to and including the Jan 1, 2007 application date:

- Tier 1 (On-Farm) - 549 applications reviewed, 345 approved. Total funding expended and committed is \$1,068,000 of an original allocation of \$1,900,000.
- Tier 2 (Multi-User)– 40 applications reviewed, 24 approved. Total funding expended and committed is \$2,313,000 of an original allocation of \$2,500,000.
- Tier 3 (Strategic Planning) - 56 applications reviewed, 32 approved. Total funding expended and committed is \$2,115,000 of an original allocation of \$1,100,000.

Applications for all Tiers will be accepted until June 1, 2007. Continued effort will be made to promote the Tier 1 component of the Program.