



Highlights of meeting # 37 held on March 5th 2008 in Victoria
for complete minutes and background information go to
<http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/partners/index.htm>

Air Quality

Lower Fraser Valley Air Emissions – Hugh Sloan, FVRD provided an update on air quality issues in the Fraser Valley. Significant agricultural sources of ammonia include manure management and handling, fertilizer, animal housing and biological or chemical processes in the soil. Greenhouse gas sources are anaerobic decomposition, waste handling, farm vehicles, fertilizer application and enteric fermentation. Agricultural emissions in the Fraser Valley are significant. He noted that the majority of BMP's under the EFP program had a primary focus on water, with a secondary focus on air.

Wood-fired Greenhouse Boilers – Tony Wakelin, MOE provided an overview of wood fired boiler issue for greenhouses explaining the differences between provincial and metro Vancouver standards for testing and reporting.

Poultry Industry Dust Control Project – Kevin Chipperfield, SPFG updated the committee on the status of the poultry industry dust control project. Project objectives include that the treatment should not be obtrusive, should enhance production and be acceptable to neighbours. Vegetative filters of two rows of trees can capture up to 69% of the dust. Electrostatic filters are being tested to reduce the dust levels inside the barn. Preliminary results indicate increased visibility and an improvement of air quality discharged from the barn. This technology shows promise for a BMP on air quality.

Open Burning Regulations – Rebecca Freedman Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport (MHLS) Reported that the regulation has been moved from the MOE to MHLS. Freedman provided an update on the consultation taking place on changes being made to the regulation. An intention paper will be released after the election in May

Water Issues

Wetland Stewardship Partnership Overview – Andrea Barnett, Ducks Unlimited and Ted Pobran, MOE provided background on the Wetland Stewardship Partnership (WSP), which has developed a Wetland Action Plan with linkages to Living Water Smart, Climate Change Initiatives, Conservation Framework and the Pacific Coast and Canadian Intermountain Joint Ventures. The WSP is working towards a “no net loss of function” for wetlands in BC. Projects include a Green Bylaws Toolkit, Groundwater Bylaws Toolkit (OBWB), a Wetland Evaluation Guide, a Wetland Function Assessment Tool and the development of Wetland BMP's.

Living Water Smart Implementation – Donna Caddie, MOE updated the Living Water Smart Plan. An implementation plan is currently under development includes five implementation themes: governance, legislation and regulatory change; efficiency, outreach and public awareness; science information and learning; watershed planning and restoration; community planning and development.

Drinking Water Action Plan – Tim Lambert, MHLS provided an overview of the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport and the drinking water action plan. Key issues with respect to agriculture are the turbidity advisory and the management of livestock in watersheds.

Ministers Penner (MOE) and Cantelon (MAL) joined the meeting for lunch and engaged in a short discussion on agriculture and environment issues with respect to air quality and climate change.

Climate Action

Crop Adaptation to Climate Change – Ben Kangasniemi, MOE outlined a proposed project to identify the redistribution of crop suitability based on present and future climate scenarios for BC. Deliverables would include: gridded climate dataset for BC future climates; new and integrated soil databases to link soil maps to the Soil Landscapes of Canada database.; enhanced Land Suitability Rating System model; perennial crop requirements (selected apple, cherry and grape varieties) to run on the system; crop suitability maps for selected BC regions for current and future climates.

Adapting to Climate Change – Jenny Feick, MOE provided a presentation on climate change effects on biodiversity and how we will need to adapt. Climate change will impact hydrology, crops, species, pollinators, disease outbreaks and other issues. Extreme temperature changes will impact nature and cause nature to be significantly different than we know today. To help BC Biodiversity we will need many different strategies to address the problem. We also cannot depend on our current thinking while nature is in flux, we need to adapt and allow systems and ecosystems to respond to change.

Committees

Habitat and Farmland Committee

Building Setbacks - An MOU on the building setbacks will be developed as soon as a letter of approval is received from the BC Agriculture Council. A meeting with the vegetable commodity group is being held in mid – March.

BC Trail Strategy – Many organizations have expressed issues with the trail strategy with respect to agriculture and water.

Biodiversity – **Sylvia Von Schuckmann** MOE updated the committee on biodiversity and habitat issues.

Nutrient Management Committee

Abbotsford Groundwater Forum (February 25, 2009) About 130 stakeholders attended this forum, organized to raise awareness of the aquifer issues, communicate findings from the 2007 Science Forum, and to communicate governance options. Topics included recent groundwater research on the Abbotsford-Sumas Aquifer, the Canadian Drinking Water Guideline for nitrates, the Living Water Smart initiative, BMPs and governance in agriculture and non-agriculture sectors.

Review of Manure Spreading Advisories Process

Manure Spreading Advisories are periodically issued for south coastal BC after an approval process involving producers, MAL and MOE. The subcommittee responsible for these advisories will meet by the end of March to consider ways to streamline the process.

Link between Anaerobic Digestion (AD) and Nutrient Management

Gustav Rogstrand (MAL) informed the NMWG that a nutrient management plan, signed by a qualified professional, is expected to be required before importing non-agricultural waste onto farms for anaerobic digestion.

Program Updates

Canada-BC Environmental Farm Plan Program and National Farm Stewardship Program

The EFP/NFSP Working Group decided to maximize funds to producers for Beneficial Management Practice (BMP) projects, while keeping the planning component of the program available until March 31, 2009.

Canada-British Columbia Water Supply Expansion Program - Philip Bergen (AAFC) advised that all program funds have been allocated and the Program Working Group is meeting as needed to manage the wind down of the program.

Next Meeting – June 11, 2009 in Abbotsford