EPA Region 5 Pre-SFIREG Meeting Report

Meeting Dates: November 7th and 8th, 2018
Meeting Location: Chicago, Illinois - EPA Region 5 Office
Report Prepared By: Brian Verhougstraete (MI) – Region 5 SFIREG Representative
In Attendance: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin, and EPA Region 5

Full SFIREG Topics

1. State Updates:
   The most states reported that dicamba continues to be the most significant issue impacting their pesticide programs. Another common issue was C&T impacts and the problems posed by not having the corresponding EPA guidance documents.

   Illinois reported that they have had to contract with retired employees to help with their dicamba cases. Illinois also indicated that they are experiencing a significant (fivefold) uptick in pesticide complaints across the board and attributed this increase to the publicity surrounding dicamba.

   Michigan is now one of 10 states in the country with legalized recreational marijuana. They also reported that they continue to deal with cases of methomyl misuse. Although the state had relatively few dicamba complaints in 2018, they did report that they were aware of significantly more instances of off-target damage that was not reported to the State.

   Minnesota experienced a reduction in dicamba complaints in 2018 but attributed the drop to a decrease in dicamba use due to poor growing conditions. Minnesota reported that they are closely monitoring the release of isoxoflutole-tolerant soybeans due to concerns that there is no registered isoxaflutole herbicide for use on the beans. There is concern that states may face a similar situation as 2016 when dicamba tolerant seed was released without the corresponding herbicide. Minnesota also reported that they are finding traces of chlorpyrifos in water and rain which they believe is a result of an increased use of the chemical on soybean aphids that have become resistant to newer insecticide chemistries.

   Wisconsin had three near-mis incidents between UAV's and aerial applicators in the 2018 growing season.

   Indiana continues to struggle with high numbers of dicamba complaints and the resulting fallout from the investigations. The state also reported that they are in the early stages of rule making to codify requirements for registering 25(b) products in their state.

2. Dicamba:

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

Deliberative Process / Ex. 5

3. C&T Update:
   Don Baumgartner provided an update on the revised certification and training rule including the planned C&T PREP course and Region 5 C&T workshop scheduled for April and May of 2019. Don also shared that the Certification Plan Template, Q&As, and Checklist are being reviewed by EPA and there is no current timeline for approval. SLA's expressed the importance of receiving these documents as soon as possible so they will have enough time to update and submit their plans by the May 2020 deadline. SLA's agreed that the Region 5 SFIREG chair will draft a letter to OPP's Director expressing how critical it is for states to receive the template/Q&A/checklist documents and encouraging the Agency to approve and share the documents as soon as possible.

4. UAV's
   Joshua Stamper of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) lead a discussion about the use of UAV's as an inspection and investigation tool. MDA is beginning to explore the use of UAV's in their programs and believes it could be a very valuable tool when investigating certain drift complaints or fish kill incidents. UAV's could also be beneficial for hazardous activities such as bulk storage inspections or for emergency response. It was recognized that the use of UAV's for regulatory purposes is a complicated and sensitive issue and SLA's will need to invest significant time and effort prior to incorporating a UAV into their regulatory program.

5. RARE Project
   Two collaborative research projects were presented by Region 5 and the Office of Research and Development, National Homeland Security Research Center. One focused on evaluating surface wipe sampling parameters for detecting pesticide residues on indoor surface materials; and the other involved surface dissipation studies and decontamination studies for cleaning indoor surfaces contaminated by pesticides. Both of these projects were undertaken to support state pesticide regulators and other agencies that seek federal guidance and technical assistance in responding to indoor pesticide misuse in homes and businesses. Publications are being developed and will be announced when available (hopefully throughout 2019).