



CTAG

Certification & Training Assessment Group — National Partnerships for Safe & Effective Pesticide Management through Education, Training & Competency Assessment

Certification and Training Assessment Group (CTAG) Board of Directors November 2008 Meeting Summary Report to AAPSE

1. CTAG Operational Issues

The Board will be voting for a Vice-Chairperson and seeking nominations to fill the resulting vacancy. Nominations will also be sought for 1 SLA and 1 CES to fill two positions whose terms will expire March 31, 2009: Janet Fults (SLA OR) and Andrew Thostenson (CES ND). The Board elected to renew Sherman Takatori's (SLA ID) term for 3 years to March 31, 2012. (Per the charter, the Board has the discretion to extend the term of a member who was initially elected to serve out an existing term.)

2. EPA Updates

EPA Communication with SLAs. EPA will explore the possibility of ensuring that appropriate NASDA communiqués go to Environmental Commissioners in states in which environmental rather than agricultural departments comprise the SLA.

EPA Regulatory Change. EPA has completed a mandatory evaluation of the potential impact on small businesses and a report will be published shortly. The review by EPA, the OMB, the Small Business Administration, and small business representatives suggested changes that would provide similar protection while alleviating some burden on small businesses. EPA will be providing an update to the PPDC on the status of the proposed regulations either at the April 2009 or fall 2009 meeting.

Formula Funding. Amended formulas for PSEP and STAG funding, proposed by the respective CTAG workgroups, will be used by EPA and USDA. The PSEP formula is in place, and the STAG funding formula will be implemented in the near future. Under the new structure of the PSEP interagency agreement, there will be more accountability and consequences for unspent funds, as well as possible re-allocating such funds.

3. Accountability for PRIA Funds

USDA will collect reports for PRIA funds distributed to the PSEP and is considering how best to package them to show how the dollars are being used. USDA believes leveraged resources, such as jointly sponsored events, inter-state cooperation for training, and collaboration on manual development would be valued by funding entities.

4. 2009 North American Pesticide Applicator Certification & Safety Education Workshop Update

A contract is in place with the Charleston Place Hotel for the August 11-13, 2009 Workshop, with an optional Agricultural Tour on August 10. A planning committee has been formed and suggestions for format and topics are being collected. The committee will inquire as to interest in providing a professional development event at some point during the workshop.

6. Direct Supervision Survey

A survey on state direct supervision requirements was sent to the state lead agencies through AAPCO-SFIREG. The information will be used to make recommendations to EPA on requirements that should be adopted at the federal level, and to develop a best practices document. Results will be presented to CTAG in January 2009.

7. National Exams and Manuals

Core. EPA staff attended regional meetings and marketed core exam and manual adoption. EPA will be flexible in working with states that want to adopt the exam and/or manual. The new director of NASDA will also market these products actively to the SLAs as a way to conserve state resources. A version of the core manual in which typographical errors have been corrected is available on the NASDA website.

Aerial. The aerial manual and exam are undergoing review by the expert committees, and NASDA aims to have it ready to print in the 2nd quarter of 2009. This should allow sufficient time for states to include it in training and testing programs in 2010.

Right-of-Way. NASDA has taken a different approach in the development of the rights-of-way materials. An expert committee was formed to identify the job duties and skills involved in right-of-way vegetation management. Another meeting is planned for the group to develop an outline of the exam and a detailed syllabus. The end result will be flexible resources that states can tailor to their own needs.

8. Recertification Training

CTAG is considering developing a document that would address quality assurance for recertification programs. Rather than providing specific recommendations or endorsing a certain type of recertification scheme, the document should provide guidance on how to implement improvements in each area for each type of recertification scheme. Three areas considered priorities by the CTAG Board are verification of attendance at recertification training, on-line training (including security, quality, and content), and content of training relevant to continued competency of certified applicators. CTAG will develop a draft document for review by other stakeholders by January 2009. This draft will be viewed as a starting point for discussions with the stakeholders.

9. Soil Fumigant Label Improvement Project (RED) / Product Stewardship

EPA is running a label improvement project as part of the re-registration eligibility decision (RED) document implementation for soil fumigants. EPA wanted to add registrant-provided training as a part of the RED for risk mitigation. The Board decided to develop a letter to EPA outlining an alternative to the proposed stewardship program.

10. Pollinators

An EPA pollinator committee seeks to ensure that the Agency is doing enough to protect pollinators from pesticides. The Board noted that existing competency standards cover non-target organisms and recommended that the committee consider conducting outreach to beekeepers in addition to applicators.

11. Database of Subject Matter Experts

A database of subject matter experts will not be pursued as concerns were raised about maintenance and AAPSE members can use their listserv to solicit names.

12. Process to evaluate / re-evaluate trainers

CTAG has previously discussed certifying trainers to ensure they have the ability to meet the learning needs of trainees. The Board decided to incorporate trainer certification/verification into the recertification blueprint document. It will be included as a recommended best practice, but at this time the Board will not recommend setting a national standard or including requirements for trainer competency in the regulations.

13. Workgroup Report – CTAG Website

The new CTAG website is posted at CTAGinfo.org. The Board will market the new website at the 2009 C&T Workshop.

14. Centralized Personnel Directory

A centralized personnel directory of people with C&T responsibilities will not be pursued. Liaisons raised the idea with their organizations, but the continued need to maintain their own databases precludes any saving of resources.

15. PSEP Materials Web Enhancement

Washington State University hosts a Pesticide Safety Portal, which was created to serve as a resource for materials for states to post and share applicator and consumer education. A review of the website suggests that it is not kept up-to-date by all states. The Board is looking into whether and how to better maintain and market the site.

16. Establishing a National Question Items Database

The Board discussed establishing an online national question database with exam items. Because of the potential for online security breaches, the Board agreed that this idea could compromise exam security and should not be pursued further.

17. Next Steps for CTAG

While developing an accomplishment report, the Board will be considering other areas of the applicator certification and training program where standards could be developed or improved. A key area of future activity by the CTAG Board will be in developing best management practices for recertification programs. The Board will continue to emphasize cooperation and to work with partner organizations.

18. Next Meeting Dates

The next meeting dates for the CTAG Board have not been set. Board members are requested to reserve the week of June 8th 2009 for a meeting. The fall meeting is tentatively set for the week of November 16th 2009.