



# CTAG

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

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## **Certification and Training Assessment Group (CTAG) Board of Directors Meeting November 2009 Report to AAPCO**

The CTAG Board of Directors met in Baltimore, Maryland on November 17 and 18, 2009. The following Board members participated in the meeting: Kevin Keaney, Roger Flashinski, Joe Spitzmueller, Dan Wixted, Sherman Takatori, Wayne Buhler, Jeaneanne Gettle, Becky McGuire, Doug Jones, Richard Pont, Janet Fults, David Duncan, Carol Ramsay, Candace Bartholomew, Michelle DeVaux, William Hoffman, Jim Parochetti.

### **1. Organizational Updates**

The Board welcomed Joe Spitzmueller of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture as the newest member of the CTAG Board. Four Board members' terms will expire on March 31, 2010. The Board will begin formal solicitation of nominations in January 2010.

### **2. 2009 NAPACSEW Debrief**

The Board discussed the 2009 North American Pesticide Applicator Certification & Safety Education Workshop. Overall, the workshop evaluations were very positive on the substance of the meeting. Participants were dissatisfied at the lack of refreshments, cost of meals, and some of the administration. EPA will be soliciting input from SLAs and CES about when and where to have the 2011 workshop. EPA will not be using a meeting management contract for the administration of the 2011 workshop.

### **3. EPA Updates**

#### **STAG Funding Formula**

EPA will be using the revised formula for STAG funding in fiscal year 2010. The revised formula more accurately reflects the burden on SLAs for applicator certification programs by giving more weight to the number of commercial applicators than to the number of private applicators. All states have received information on why the changes are being made.

#### **Certification and Worker Protection Standard Regulation Change Update**

EPA is moving forward with proposed changes to the applicator certification regulation and the worker protection standard. The Certification and Worker Protection Branch (CWPB) has developed draft regulatory text and is working on the preamble. The EPA Administrator is stressing the importance of including consideration of environmental justice and children's health issues. The Worker Protection Standard is being used as a good example of how to consider environmental justice throughout a rulemaking process.

### **Certification Plan and Reporting Database**

It is likely that the regulatory changes under consideration will result in the need to amend the Certification Plan and Reporting Database significantly. EPA would like to postpone all major changes until the proposed rules are final rather than requiring states to make significant changes twice within a relatively short timeframe. Currently, a few functions of CPARD are not completely operational. Reports for category data do not sort by category and by state, which is a function requested by many stakeholders.

### **EPA Worker Safety Program Poster**

Emily Selia of EPA's Certification and Worker Protection Branch presented a new EPA poster to the Board for discussion and comment. The poster lays out the functions of the worker safety program, areas of EPA that are engaged, program stakeholders, and other general information. The Board suggested including general information, such as what is a pesticide and expanding the scope to cover turf and ornamental, structural, and public health pest control (focus beyond agriculture).

### **PSP Grant: 5-Year C&T Plan**

The Board discussed potential activities to enhance the certification and worker protection programs that could be carried out under EPA's new 5-year cooperative agreement for pesticide safety. Some ideas raised by the Board were a soil fumigation manual, exam and powerpoint; online training modules; Audience Response System training; Regional activities; output and outcome development; regional or national manuals or exams; pollinator protection; endangered species; and a national exam question database.

## **4. Recertification Workgroup Reports**

### **Recertification Training Content Workgroup**

The workgroup members (Candace Bartholomew, Doug Jones, Dan Wixted) reviewed documents about recertification training content from 15 states to determine what states require and what standards they use to evaluate content. The Board decided that the focus of recertification should be on maintaining ongoing competency, not developing or emphasizing standards beyond those established for initial competency. The intent of this workgroup is to outline what the ideal content of a recertification training program should cover. The workgroup will update the content of the current prepared document based on the Board's suggestions.

### **Online Recertification Training Content**

The workgroup looking into online recertification training (Rebecca McGuire, Margie Read, Laurie Gordon, Fred Fishel) developed a draft document to outline an ideal internet course and what would be unacceptable. The workgroup will do more research into numerous aspects of online recertification training. The Board specifically noted that there is no recommendation for an absolute requirement to verify the identity of a person taking an online training course; the recommendation is to allow participants to self-certify and for the state to conduct sampling (e.g., follow-up phone calls) to verify participation. The workgroup will provide an

updated draft of the document at the next meeting detailing minimum, ideal, and unacceptable online recertification programs.

### **Recertification Quality Assurance**

The workgroup on recertification quality assurance (Sherman Takatori, Doug Jones, Janet Fults, Rhonda Hirnyck) has had a few discussions, but came to the Board for suggestions about how to proceed. The Board recommended that the workgroup prepare a document that lays out the minimum, ideal, and unacceptable manners in which to assure the quality of recertification programs. The workgroup will develop a paper for discussion at the next meeting that covers how states are conducting quality assurance for recertification programs.

### **5. Direct Supervision Survey**

Doug Jones has taken responsibility for finishing the direct supervision survey started by Tim Drake. He has followed up with specific states to collect data from those who had not responded and now has a total of 46 state responses. The Board recommended organizing the prepared summary document in bullets, and clarifying the certain questions that were unclear. The Board will review the updated documents and results at the next meeting and discuss whether to publish the results for informational purposes or to use them to develop recommendations for state programs.

### **6. Verifying Attendance at Recertification Programs Document**

This document is now final and will be released to the public and posted to the CTAG website.

### **7. Aerial Manual and Rights-of-Way Manual and Syllabus**

NASDARF has a final draft of the Aerial Manual and the exam is complete. The Rights-of-Way materials will also be available sometime in 2010. The Board recommended that EPA and the new cooperative agreement partner ensure that national manuals are available electronically and can be adapted by states. To potentially increase the rate of adoption, EPA noted that it plans to be more flexible about how the national manuals and exams can be used, allowing states to use sections of the material without adopting the entire document. EPA will issue guidance for appropriate use of national materials in 2010. The Board recommended making the manual available in an edit-friendly format to states upon request and with some conditions on use. The Board decided to put out a communications piece to let stakeholders know that the manual is available in a more accessible format.

### **8. Funding Fact Sheet**

This fact sheet is now final, and has been distributed via the AAPSE listserve as well as to PSEP coordinators. The goal of this document is to provide concise, clear information that can be understood by internal and external stakeholders on how PSEP funds are distributed from EPA to USDA to the Cooperative Extension programs.

### **9. PPRS Template Revisions**

Bill Hoffman of USDA provided an update on revisions to the PPRS template used for PSEP annual reporting. In the short term, there are a few changes to the system that will be made by

March. In the longer term, USDA is undergoing reorganization and part of USDA that collects the reporting data may change.

#### **10. Federal Agency C&T Plans Fact Sheet**

Richard Pont distributed a Q&A document to the Board on certification plans for Federal Agencies. This document does not cover Tribal certification plans. The Board recommended making the document more streamlined by providing an overview, explaining what a Federal Agency plan is, what agencies have plans, how state and federal programs interact in general, and who to contact for more information. The Board will discuss a revised version of the document on a conference call before the next meeting.

#### **11. Soil Fumigant Mandated Training**

The Board continued discussion of the EPA decision to require specific training on the labeling of soil fumigants as part of the reregistration approval process. The Board supports efforts to allow a proctored, closed-book, written exam in lieu of the registrant-provided training required on the label. Washington State has discussed this option with registrants, and they have informally agreed to support the development of training and exam materials if EPA approves the alternate option. The Board discussed the best way to move forward, and decided to support the efforts by Washington State to allow states to administer a single category exam in lieu of registrant training, and to encourage EPA to provide support for the development of new training and exam materials. A letter was sent December 2, 2009, by Roger Flashinski on behalf of CTAG to EPA (Rick Keigwin and Debbie Edwards) to support the Washington State proposal.

#### **12. NPDES Permits**

EPA is moving forward based on the decision by the Sixth Circuit court that requires a permit under the Clean Water Act for pesticides applied to or near water. The Cotton Council and other organizations have appealed to the Supreme Court to have the decision heard and possibly overturned. EPA plans to have draft permits available for discussions with states in January or April of 2010, so that they can be finalized before the requirement for permits becomes effective in April 2011. The Board discussed whether and how to engage in the NPDES permit actions ongoing with EPA and the states. Although there are not many certification issues, training on the new permit requirements and when they apply will be important. The Board will talk about potential training resources at the June meeting. Joe Spitzmueller is on the EPA workgroup discussing the permits and will keep CTAG up to date.

#### **13. Pesticide Safety Portal**

Based on responses to a survey to states and extension about the utility of the PSP website, Washington State will discontinue the PSP website.

#### **14. Pesticide Education Stewardship Website**

Wayne Buhler gave the Board an overview of the Pesticide Education Stewardship website (<http://pesticidestewardship.org>). The website summarizes principles of pesticide stewardship, directs users to resources by stewardship topic, and provides educational modules and self-

assessment tools. The website currently has 12 major topics, 9 of which are ready for public consumption, and a section on pesticide safety for the homeowner. To expand the content, funding is needed to buy peoples time to build more modules. The program's initial funding is nearly all spent. In addition, the website could use more outside reviewers. Suggestions for other content that would be useful on this website included pollinator protection information, worker protection, PPE, and avoid non-target damage. Roger Flashinski, on behalf of CTAG, has provided a letter of support regarding the website to Dr. Buhler.

#### **15. Next Meetings**

The next meeting of CTAG will be June 8-9, 2010. The fall meeting will be the week of November 15, 2010.