



CTAG

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

CTAG Board of Directors June 2006 Meeting Summary Report to the AAPSE Board August 2006

1. Operational Issues

Expiring Terms & New Members: The terms of Jack Peterson, SLA representative and CTAG liaison to AAPCO, and Gina Davis, SLA representative, expired on March 31, 2006. Paul Liemandt fills the seat of SLA representative/AAPCO liaison and Janet Fults fills the SLA position; their terms end on 3/31/09. In additions, CTAG is adding one more SLA and CES representative to the Board. Nominations call will be sent out in August.

2. EPA Updates

Core Manual: NASDAF, as the cooperative agreement holder, holds the manual copyright. A motion to send a letter to NASDAF to recommend that on a case-by-case basis, NASDAF make an editable version of the manual available to SLAs/CESs upon request passed without exception. The letter will include a requirement for the SLA/CES to sign an agreement with NASDAF that stipulates that no original content can be deleted without express permission by NASDAF.

State Plan "Template": The "State Plan Template" was renamed the Certification Plan and Report Database (CPARD) to better reflect its function.

National Aerial Exams: NASDAF, NAAA and EPA are working together to develop an aerial core exam.

Performance Measures: EPA will use the reduction in human health incidents related to pesticide exposure as a primary measure, as mandated by OMB. Through grant guidance, the Agency is encouraging SLAs to develop relationships with their Departments of Health in order to get better or more data on the reporting of incidents.

3. Positive Identification Requirement for Pesticide Applicator Certification Exams

The Board unanimously approved the document with minor edits, but noted that this paper only deals with initial certification, as well as the importance of the 2nd paragraph. CTAG plans to release the final issue paper in July to partners and stakeholders.

4. AAPCO Emergency Reciprocity Update

The AAPCO emergency reciprocity document contains three major categories for reciprocity: agricultural plant and animal, public health and forestry. AAPCO presented this document to NASDA and received a favorable response. The document was approved by the AAPCO board and by the entire membership at the spring meeting, was distributed on the AAPCO listserve, and will be posted to their website.

5. Facilitating Conventional Reciprocity

The Board discussed two documents for discussion, background information and Twelve Recommended Practices for Effectively and Efficiently Issuing Conventional Reciprocity Pesticide Certificates. Most states do not have reciprocity in their regulations; the process and whether or not it is conducted is generally at the policy level, although it does differ between states. NASDA is interested in facilitating or endorsing reciprocity between states, and would be a good tool to use to encourage some consistency or standards for reciprocity. This issue could also be included in the regulatory proposal being developed by EPA.

A report will be sent to AAPCO, ASPCRO, AAPSE and TPPC highlight CTAG's work work thus far, especially on recommendation #3: Clearly indicate on certificates, on internal databases, and on public access web databases that a certificate is based upon reciprocity. No single action would be more helpful and less difficult to do than this small act. It would prevent applicants from using a reciprocity certificate to jump from state to state, and it would quickly eliminate the need for a state to verify credentials.]

6. Content-Relevant Exam and Manual Development

A process document for exam and manual development, and a document that outlines the challenges associated was disseminated by the workgroup and discussed. The Board indicated that it was impressed with the documents, and suggested that an issue paper be developed to outline definitions and a vision of what CTAG considers to be the standard process and why. The Board commented that the process document could be a tool that would allow anyone to jump into the exam/manual development process at any time. It is not a cost-prohibitive process, emphasizes flexibility and realism, provides guidance on developing defensible exams, and recognizes cost limitations across states. The document was called "approachable and practical". The workgroup will continue its fine efforts.

7. PSEP Funding

The request for proposals (RFP) is being reviewed by EPA's Grants Office and General Council and is expected to be published in August or September. The funding will come from the FY 2007 budget. Proposals with wider geographical coverage and letters of support from relevant states will be given preference. Funding for the first year will be \$950,000 and subsequent funding will depend on EPA's discretionary budget. The Board proposed expanding the grant review panel beyond EPA personnel to include representatives of regulators, training specialists, and those who would benefit from the training. The Board suggested including representatives from USDA's American Distance Education Consortium (ADEC). Kevin said he would explore options for broadening the review panel. The CTAG Board asked to be kept informed of developments.

8. Proposed Regulatory Changes

The Board discussed potential regulatory changes under consideration by EPA. Kevin shared the same presentation that he gave at the Western Region meeting in May and explained the inception and involvement of a PPDC Workgroup. The PPDC met the subsequent week and was requested to prioritize each of the 25 areas of regulatory change as high, medium or low. EPA will follow up with the subgroup by distributing issue papers and holding conference calls to discuss them, beginning with those with the highest level of interest. These issue papers will also be posted to the docket as public documents. The Board and other stakeholders are welcome to review the documents and provide comments. Representatives from most stakeholder organizations are represented on the subgroup and should be engaging the members of their respective organizations.

9. Pesticide Regulators Education Program (PREP)

A Pesticide Worker Safety PREP focused on the potential regulatory changes is scheduled for September 11-14, 2006. This course will deal with both Worker Protection and Applicator Certification and Training. Background materials will be distributed to participants upon acceptance in order to prepare them to actively engage in the discussion. The Board's charge is to make sure that all major regulatory issues are included for discussion and to make sure that critical stakeholders are nominated by their supervisors.

10. 2007 North American Pesticide Applicator Certification and Safety Education Workshop

Planning has begun for the 2007 North American Pesticide Applicator Certification and Safety Education Workshop to be held in Portland, Maine August 21-23, 2007. Traditionally CTAG issues (exam development, etc) have been part of the agenda, so the Board considered potential agenda topics. In addition, the planning committee is considering broad organizing themes. Traditionally, travel to the Workshop has been covered for one SL And one CES from each state. With the termination of the IAG with USDA to fund PSEP, some CES might not be able to attend. Kevin has committed to exploring options for funding travel to ensure that program stakeholders have an opportunity to attend and will report back to CTAG on what has been decided.

11. Ensuring Continued Competency

The Board suggested developing a document similar to the Exam Administration Manual with best practices and guidance on establishing a strong recertification program. The workgroup should research other similar industries (certified arborist, certified nursery) and compare the recertification requirements. Additionally, information on how states that are not as involved in selecting speakers for recertification sessions know that the programs and/or speakers are worthwhile. Another concern is the language in which the recertification is conducted; with a growing Spanish-speaking applicator population, states might need to consider how much a Spanish-speaking applicator would learn from a course in English. The Board charged a workgroup to explore the challenges, benefits and requirements associated with recertification credits, recertification workshops and required retesting.

12. Next Meeting

The next board meeting will be held in November 15, 16, 2006 in Charleston, SC (location not locked in yet). More information on the dates and location will be made public as available.