

WSSA Liaison to EPA  
Interim Report to the WSSA Board of Directors – Quarter 1, 2009  
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Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) organization:

The OPP is organized into nine divisions. Several of the divisions are responsible for risk assessment of pesticides, both to human health and the environment. Other divisions are responsible for risk management, including the Registration Division (RD) where I am located. These divisions are responsible for making sure pesticide labels are written clearly and appropriately according to federal regulations and so they can be used effectively without causing undue risks to humans and the environment. There are eight branches within the Registration Division, including the Herbicide Branch. The Herbicide Branch Director is Dan Kenny who is my immediate contact within the agency.

Schedule of first quarter visits:

December 8-12, 2008 – accompanied Steve Dewey on his final visit as liaison.  
January 12-15, 2009 – first visit as liaison  
February 23-27, 2009  
March 23-27, 2009

Overview of Activities: My visits to date have concentrated on meeting people and beginning the task of learning how the office operates. Steve Dewey was an excellent liaison. I am pleased to have the opportunity to follow him in this position and am very grateful that I was able to accompany him on his final visit to the agency. Steve set an excellent standard and completed his official tenure as SME on a very positive note with the agency (we have emphasized the fact that Steve will always be a resource – even if he is not on-site). However, one thing he told me in December was that he interacted primarily with the Registration Division (RD). The work we did in December left us both with the feeling that we will have an opportunity over the course of my appointment to build on the relationships that Steve developed during his 18 months at the agency. For your information, Steve gave an excellent presentation on the agency, his activities, and his impressions at the recent WSWS annual meeting.

My first quarter as liaison has provided the opportunity to interact with a broad group of people in OPP and APHIS. I have met people in RD, Special Review and Reregistration Division (SRRD), Biological and Economic Analysis Division (BEAD), and Environmental Fate and Effects Division (EFED), thanks to Dan's introductions. WSSA officers, Lee VanWyche, Janis McFarland, and Kurt Getsinger (APMS liaison to EPA) were on site in February to meet with Debbie Edwards, Director OPP, and staff from her office, division, and branch heads (arranged by Lee). The discussion topics were the NPDES court ruling, spray drift, management of herbicide resistant weeds, and invasive/endangered species issues; subsequent meetings and interactions have come about because of this meeting. Kurt and I also spent time with Dan discussing how we can work together to bring the cumulative knowledge of WSSA and APMS to questions from EPA regarding the current practices and needs of growers and land managers.

Overall, I am very impressed with the people I have met and with the work they are doing. I'll have more to add in later reports as I learn more about the agency and how they do business.

Plans for second quarter: The office works on a compressed schedule where employees have every other Friday off. Therefore, the majority of the business takes place Monday through Thursday. I am adjusting my schedule to allow me to be on site during the busiest part of the week (as long as funding allows).

April 27-May 1. During my April visit, I will present a seminar on my background and program at NMSU.

My May trip will occur the week of May 11 and is re-located to Florida. Drs. Bill Haller (Univ of Florida) and Kurt Getsinger are hosting a field trip (Orlando to the Everglades) for Dan Kenny (OPP/RD), Allison Wiedeman (EPA Office of Water), and other appropriate OPP and OW personnel, to observe first hand aquatic plant control (APC) operations, and to discuss APC, NPDES, and other relevant issues with key regional, state, and local agencies. This trip is an outcome of the February visit with Debbie Edwards.

June visit is not scheduled but will be back in DC at OPP headquarters.