

June 2014: ESA Subject Matter Expert (SME) USEPA Report.- Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee (PPDC), Conditional Registration Tracking System, School IPM-Expanding Adoption, 21st Century Toxicology, Pollinator Protection, and Endangered Species.

The US Environmental Protection Agency convened its first biannual Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee meeting since the 2013 Federal Government Sequester. ESA's SME, Mark Whalon MI State U, attended as a full member of USEPA's PPDC, June 5-6, 2014. The meeting was packed with critical updates, committee reports and entomology-related decisions.

Among the most important updates presented by the USEPA was the **Conditional Registration Tracking System** which will see a complete rebuilding of USEPA's IT processes designed to make the Agency more assessable. In addition, the Agency is launching a Conditional Pesticide Registration website (<http://www2.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/conditional-pesticide-registration>). The website will monitor and publish data submission and registration processes and approval which should significantly improve pesticide use conformation to Agency decisions. The site also provides a process to check all the data required for conditions of registration and a monitoring mechanism so that those interested can track submission and decision progress.

The Agency and contractors presented a very encouraging presentation on the adoption of **School IPM Programming**. Over the last number of years the Agency has supported a concerted effort to develop, document and educate K-12 schools across the US to adopt IPM strategies, tactics and tools to improve school structural and grounds pest management to reduce student exposure and risks (school.ipm@epa.gov). If you are not aware of this effort please take the time to witness the amazing growth and transformations this IPM programming is effecting across the US.

Since 2010 the Office of Pesticide Programs has endeavored to accelerate its science-based evaluation and registration of new active pest management materials by basing decisions upon sound science while meeting the US's risk management standards. This effort is known as **Toxicity Testing in the 21st Century** which is part of an international effort to base pesticide registration processes upon sound science. The Agency has engaged various US and global science sectors in a process of jointly developing the science to reduce *in vivo* animal testing, increasing the Agency's registration through-put while reducing pesticide exposure risks across the US. Details can be found on line (<http://www.epa.gov/opp00001/science/testing-assessment.html>). A part of this effort is the EPA's Endocrine Disruption Screening Process which is under the 1996 Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (Sect. 408p). Essentially this effort supports the development of valid *in vitro* means to assess the array of endocrine disrupting chemistry impacts on humans, animals and the environment. It also includes assessment of these chemistries in food, water and the atmosphere. The program includes estrogen, androgen and thyroid pathways and an immense array of analytical systems that require examination and refitting to accomplish the Agency's goals.

From the ESA's perspective, certainly one of the most interesting and important subjects undertaken by EPA's PPDC is the **Pollinator Protection Subcommittee to the PPDC**. This subcommittee is the largest of all advisory bodies under PPDC's mandate. Hardly a day goes by when the USEPA is not mentioned in the US media where bee decline is concerned, therefore even highly placed Agency administrators staff attend these meetings at times. But, to date there are no 'smoking guns' but rather a breadth of issues ranging from nutrition through virus and pesticides. A recent count of potential factors affecting honey bee decline reached fourteen! Obviously some are more important than others and insecticides in particular and pesticides in general are under scrutiny by the Agency where bees are concerned. Thus the PPDC Pollinator Protection Working Group has a number of subgroups which attempt to parse the complexity of decline into small pieces that can be analyzed. The Pesticide Labels subgroup for instance has been working to get a harmonized and protective language for pesticide users. EPA has compiled all existing residual toxicity data into a database which will be publically available in 2014. The Workgroup has also made significant headway on the implementation and communication of Best Management Practices which will be posted on the Agency's web page soon. New applicator training information will soon be required for all new and renewing pesticide users. Several training modules and materials are already in trial settings across the US. Essentially, as these resources are completed they will be posted on the USEPA web page. A final, and very significant, addition to the Workgroups efforts is the **Recommendation for More Uniform and Transparent Bee Kill Investigations**. Additional subsectors of the Pollinator Workgroup are addressing seed treatment and non-Apis bee impacts and protection.

Probably one of the most significant discussions the PPDC organizers prepared was a joint Fisheries and Wildlife Service (Paul Souza) and EPA-OPP (Don Brady) report on the joint Services **Endangered Species Act (ESA)** program status. Most of the presentation and discussion focused on two aspects of the Act's mandate: 1) Endangered Species (ES) Habitat Maps and 2) impinging Pesticide Applications. Currently the Fisheries and Wildlife Service has over 1500 ES range maps which were previously difficult to access and interpret by the USEPA as it sought to restrict Pesticide Application areas near ES habitats as mandated by the ESA. Apparently, the Service and Agency experienced difficulty in exchanging these mandated resources aimed at deriving specific ES protection maps that could be legally enforced where off-target pesticide applications were concerned. At the outset, the Service did not have sufficiently detailed ES maps, and therefore the EPA could not derive sufficiently accurate pesticide spray restriction areas on maps that applicators could use. Yet, the National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) does have land use maps of sufficient precision to guide pesticide applications even with sub-acre precision. These Crop Land Data Layer maps together with the Senses of Agriculture data and Services improving ES maps may now begin to provide the precision necessary for the Services and USEPA to begin to follow through on the mandated regulation under the ESA of pesticides near suspected endangered species habitat. This is a clear 'step forward' in begging a new era of Government cooperation and perhaps progress in protecting and preserving ES and their critical habitats.

ESA SME Calendar: 2014- Currently the SME's from the ESA and the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) are planning two or three additional trips to the USEPA in 2014: 1) our next trip will be to join the **Insecticide and Weed Resistance Action Committees** (IRAC and FRAC) meetings in Washington DC late summer, 2) the **second PPDC meeting** scheduled for early October or November at USEPA and a late November or early December **planning session with the Office of Pesticide Programs** at USEPA.