

12.14.21 Mosquito Control Task Force (MCTF) Minutes

December 14, 2021, 12:00 p.m. via Zoom

Meeting Topics:

- Call to order and introductions
- Routine business
- Calendar updates
- Presentations
- Subcommittee Updates
- Process updates
- Meeting close

Beth Card initiated the meeting at 12:02 p.m. Task force members in attendance included: Kevin Cranston, Nicole Keleher, Kathy Baskin, Eve Schluter, Heidi Porter, Julia Blatt, Russell Hopping, Kim LeBeau, Bob Mann, Priscilla Matton, Richard Pollack, Helen Poynton, Heidi Ricci, Stephen Rich, Richard Robinson, and Sam Telford. Beth provided an overview of the agenda and advised the task force that there would be a vote on meeting minutes from 10/13, 11/8, and 11/15. Beth asked the task force if there were any corrections to the three sets of meeting minutes and no corrections were voiced by the task force members. Beth noted that the task force would be voting on all three sets of meeting minutes. Beth took a motion to approve meeting minutes from Richard Robinson, seconded from Kathy Baskin. A roll call was conducted. Kevin Cranston (aye), John Lebeaux (not present), Nicole Keleher (aye and abstain from 11/8), Kathy Baskin (aye), Eve Schluter (aye and abstain from 11/8), Heidi Porter (aye), Derek Brindisi (not present), Julia Blatt (aye and abstain from 10/13, 11/8) Tonya Colpitts (not present), Anita Deeley (not present), Russell Hopping (aye), Kim LeBeau (aye), Bob Mann (aye), Priscilla Matton (aye), Brad Mitchell (not present), Jennifer Pederson (did not vote), Richard Pollack (aye), Helen Poynton (aye abstain from 11/8), Heidi Ricci (aye), Stephen Rich (aye), Richard Robinson (aye), Sam Telford (aye, abstain from 11/15)

Beth moved into calendar updates and noted that the ARPA bill was signed, which included a task force extension date through 3/31/22. It was noted that due to the timeline there may need to be some additional subcommittee and full task force meetings scheduled. Beth commented on the need for each subcommittee to have volunteers to put pen to paper for key themes and recommendations that subcommittee members wanted reflected. Caroline Higley noted the primary change to the calendar was the removal of April and May timelines. Heidi Ricci commented that she hoped we could meet the compressed timeline and noted one of the difficulties amongst the subcommittee was having a draft goal and framework for mosquito control. Beth clarified that each subcommittee had its focus area that they are charged with and that should be the focus where writing was happening, and recommendations are being made.

Presentation 1: Dr. Marc Nascarella - MA State Toxicologist for the Department of Public Health (DPH)

Dr. Nascarella noted that he advised internal and external stakeholders on scientific matters related to chemicals. Dr. Nascarella's day to day role was to assist local, state, and federal officials related to chemical exposure and working with other state agencies within and outside of MA. Dr. Nascarella commented that chemical exposures take many forms, and any chemical can be toxic. Clarification was provided that the dose makes the poison. Pesticides are poisons that have been designed to kill living things. He provided an example of how other things can be poisons. The example was table salt at a high enough level. Many things determine how harmful it is such as dose and individual characteristics – babies and people with hypertension are a characteristic that could make it harmful. Dr. Nascarella noted that the goal of regulatory toxicologists was to establish safe levels of exposure and estimate how much of a chemical a person might be exposed to over time.

It was discussed that pesticides are a group of chemicals where there is a fair amount known. Pesticide manufacturers are required to submit detailed registration packages to the EPA that describe testing. In addition, a similar approach was conducted in MA where pesticide packages for new active ingredients are submitted to a panel to ensure they can be registered. The application of pesticides from an aircraft triggers another review related to pesticide formulation. Several state agencies are involved in this process to ensure aerial pesticides used are effective and have the least amount of impact to the environment. Dr. Nascarella noted that we should limit the environmental exposure from pesticides but given the risk of mosquito borne illness the continued use of pesticides does not provide a concern.

Presentation Questions:

Heidi Ricci commented that her questions were not answered regarding data and vulnerable populations. Heidi Ricci requested other information be shared and provided a link to a book published by MIT professor Nick Ashford. Dr. Nascarella responded that chemical sensitivities are often like allergies. He provided the example of a peanut allergy and how some individuals could respond differently to peanut proteins than others. When evaluating chemicals in a regulatory review process, testing was designed to protect the most vulnerable individuals.

Richard Robinson asked a question about dose and characteristics of the recipient in relation to aerial spraying exposing a vast population to pesticides. Dr. Nascarella responded that in terms of evaluating risk, an important consideration is the characterization of exposure and was not sure how true the assumption was that a great deal of people are exposed during the aerial application of pesticides. Dr. Nascarella noted the established record of environmental testing that has been done, specifically to surface body water testing. Any levels that were found were lower than any levels capable of causing human health effects. In response, Heidi Ricci referenced that a person became very ill after a spraying event and the person did not report it to the state because they did not know how to. Beth noted that there were a few questions in the Q&A that could be addressed and followed up accordingly. Jennifer Pederson asked Heidi Ricci if the book and link that she distributed to the task force members had new research, as the book cited research from 1998.

Presentation 2: Hotze Wijnja, Ph.D. - MDAR Environmental Chemist

Hotze Wijnja conducted a technical presentation on fluorinated chemicals, and the PowerPoint presentation can also be located on the task force website. Hotze referenced OECD PFAS list and PFAS master list. He indicated that there are several definitions of pesticides from multiple entities. Some definitions incorporate more compounds than EPA current “working” definition. There are two pesticides registered in MA that meet EPA’s definition of PFAS. While PFAS was found in pesticide used for mosquito control, Testing indicated contamination occurred in treating plastic containers and leaching from those containers.

Presentation Questions:

Jennifer Pederson noted that there was one pesticide that MA had approved which now met the standard PFAS definition. Jennifer asked if the SRB looked at that product? Hotze responded that those are not relevant to the MCDs as they are used in the greenhouse industry. In addition, he noted that the Pesticide Board Subcommittee was currently discussing fluorinated compounds.

Presentation 3: Clint Richmond – The Sierra Club

Clint Richmond conducted a presentation on PFAS, and the PowerPoint presentation can also be located on the task force website. Clint Richmond’s presentation included several slides detailing examples of PFAS structures, fluorinated pesticide and pharmaceutical structures, PFAS classification and listings, PFAS working definition and registered pesticides, and pesticides used in mosquito control. Clint noted that the state of MA has approved 87 fluorinated ingredients. Clint commented that he did not think the regulatory framework was sufficient and as a

state and country we were suffering from PFAS exposure. As a result, Clint noted that he felt the goal needed to be the elimination of synthetic pollutants.

Presentation Questions:

Beth Card thanked Clint and noted that it was important to have different viewpoints and opinions. Heidi Ricci asked both Hotze and Clint if the EPA had a roadmap to study PFOS and PFAS. Hotze noted that the roadmap goes through 2024. Hotze commented that the review will group categories to be more efficient in testing to get relevant information. Jennifer Pederson asked if DEP had been looking at the precursor transformation issue or other chemicals into PFAS compounds. Kathy Baskin responded that DEP continues to follow the science of PFAS regularly and they are looking at the data continuously. Kathy Baskin also commented that she would look into the question more specifically and report back to the full task force. Beth noted that in 2022 EEA was expecting to have the legislative report on PFAS and that PFAS was a high priority for all of us.

Subcommittee Updates:

Pesticide selection – Bob Mann

Bob Mann noted that the subcommittee was progressing to complete their directives by late February. The subcommittee was looking at three directives and the PFAS directive will be reviewed last. Bob shared the subcommittee draft timeline with the task force and noted that they were speaking on majority and minority views. The subcommittee was discussing all views and noted that if there was not a complete majority then dissenting views would also be presented. Task Force members commented that it would be good if the document could be circulated as soon as possible. Jennifer Pederson expressed concern with sharing the document because edits were still being made and the document was not finalized. It was agreed that more time will be provided. It was agreed that subcommittees would be able to finalize their draft documentation before sharing content across other subcommittee teams. It was also noted that there would more than likely be a January meeting where there could be a more formal presentation on the outline of recommendations.

Best practices - Richard Robinson

Richard Robinson shared slides with draft recommendations and noted that none of the recommendations had been voted on yet. Richard commented on the charges for the subcommittee related to IPM implementation and trying to establish thresholds for action, data-based decision making, limiting adulticiding, and ensuring each MCD employs an entomologist. The remaining charges increased the state's role in providing statewide surveillance and state-based mosquito management. Additional areas focused on protecting water supply, human and ecological health, reducing the number of requests for nuisance calls, and development of an online system for private applicators. The subcommittee was also discussing the use of published research-based criterion for determining a public health emergency, banning aerial based adulticiding, protecting organic agriculture, and expanding the availability of opting out to a broader group of landowners.

Policy Structure - Stephen Rich

Stephen Rich noted that the subcommittee was starting to see a consensus in the decision to repeal and revise MGL 252 and enabling legislation. Conversations took place in relation to modifying funding mechanisms and replacing the existing SRB with a cross agency mosquito oversight board (which would include DPH) to conduct reviews, outreach, and engagement. The subcommittee group discussed developing an updated mission statement and creating standards for operation which could include representatives from other states to bring value and perspective. A directive was discussed regarding the creation of a uniform funding structure for MCDs which could allow for municipal participation with DPH responsible for surveillance. This was determined to be an area that may also overlap into the Best Practices subcommittee. Stephen closed out his update discussing the establishment of menu-based mosquito control services.

Local engagement – Heidi Ricci

Heidi Ricci noted that the subcommittee was still drafting recommendations and they had good ideas that are not written up yet. Heidi Ricci discussed the need for an overall goal and framework, as it's important to the development of their recommendations. Heidi addressed the first directive and the difficulty operating under the current constraints of the MCDs. The subcommittee was thinking about ways to get input from the public regarding statewide planning like surveillance, protocols, education, material from the state, and optional structure. One option for structuring would be through the state funding basic services and municipalities would opt in and pay for optional systems. There were also discussions about the municipal opt out process for this year and future years. Heidi suggested the landowner opt out process being centered around IT systems, electronic annual renewal, and using GPS instead of physical markers. Heidi closed with the need for increased transparency of rare species information and a pilot program on non-target impacts in terms of measurements on non-targets and collaborating with other entities.

Process Updates

Beth Card noted that ERG was creating an internal web page to capture all the public comments which would be available for task force members to download for a time. The MCD survey on salt marsh management, adulticiding, and larvaciding was discussed and it was mentioned that it would be made available for all subcommittees to review. A public listening session was being scheduled in January and public comments captured through that session will be brought back to the full task force for final discussion and vote.

Meeting Close:

Beth Card mentioned that there would be a January task force meeting and thanked all the task force members for the work being conducted in the subcommittees. Seeing no other questions or comments from the group Beth took a motion to adjourn the meeting from Richard Robinson. Seconded by Julia Blatt. All those in favor said aye. The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.