The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Department of Agricultural Resources

225 Turnpike Road, Southborough, MA 01772

www.mass.gov/agr

PESTICIDE BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

March 17, 2026

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTTENDANCE

Michael Moore, DPH, Food Protection Program, (Chair)	Present
Taryn LaScola, MDAR, Designee for Commissioner Randle	Present
Meg Blanchet, DPH, Designee for Commissioner Goldstein	Present
Eric Seaborn, DCR, Designee for Commissioner LaChapelle	Present
Richard Berman, Commercial Applicator	Present

The Board did meet or exceed the minimum number (3) of members present to form a quorum and conduct business.

A. REVIEW OF MINUTES FOR January 20, 2026, and February 17, 2026

Motion: R. Berman
Second: T. LaScola
Discussion: None
In Favor: M. Moore, T. LaScola, M. Blanchet, R. Berman, E. Seaborn
Opposed: None
Abstained: None

B. PRODUCT REGISTRATIONS

Motion: That the Pesticide Board Subcommittee registers the pesticide products listed on the EIPAS PR March 17, 2026, Subcommittee cover sheet with the exception of the following products:

1. Sesquin 35 SL, EPA Reg. No. 91234-400,
2. Tide Metri 75 WDG, EPA Reg. No. 84229-67,
3. Travella 20 SG, EPA Reg. No. 91234-403,
4. LESCO Momentum XPD Herbicide, EPA Reg. No. 228-760-10404,Antapex WSG, EPA Reg. No. 91234-401,
5. RedEagle 2,4-D LV6, EPA Reg. No. 2217-413-85678, and
6. Norroa, EPA Reg. No. 94614-4.

Moved: R. Berman
Second: T. LaScola
Discussion: None
In Favor: M. Blanchet, R. Berman, T. LaScola, M. Moore, E. Seaborn

Opposed: None
Abstained: None

STATE RESTRICTED USE MOTIONS:
Restricted Use as Defined under the Groundwater Protection Regulations**:**
Move: That the Pesticide Board Subcommittee has determined that the use of the following products,

1. Sesquin 35 SL, EPA Reg. No. 91234-400, containing dinotefuran,
2. Tide Metri 75 WDG, EPA Reg. No. 84229-67, containing metribuzin, and
3. LESCO Momentum XPD Herbicide, EPA Reg. No. 228-760-10404, containing MCPA,

may cause an unreasonable risk to man or the environment, when taking into account the economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits of their use. This determination is based upon the leaching potential and toxicological concern of these substances as defined in the "Protection of Groundwater Supplies from Non-Point Source Pesticide Contamination" Regulations. Therefore, the Subcommittee hereby modifies the registration classification of agricultural/commercial pesticide products containing **dinotefuran, metribuzin,** and **MCPA** from general to restricted use for groundwater concerns.

Moved: R. Berman
Second: T. LaScola
Discussion: None
In Favor: M. Blanchet, R. Berman, T. LaScola, M. Moore, E. Seaborn
Opposed: None
Abstained: None

Neonicotinoid Motion:
Move: That the Pesticide Board Subcommittee has determined that the use of the following products:

1. Travella 20 SG, EPA Reg. No. 91234-403, and
2. Antapex WSG, EPA Reg. No. 91234-401, both containing dinotefuran,

may pose unreasonable adverse effects to the environment as well as to pollinators, when taking into account the economic, social, and environmental costs and benefits of their use in the Commonwealth and are thereby restricted. This is pursuant to the Subcommittee's decision on March 1, 2021, to modify the registration classification of products containing neonicotinoids, including **dinotefuran**, that have outdoor non-structural uses or outdoor non-agricultural uses on the label from general to state restricted use.

Moved: R. Berman
Second: T. LaScola
Discussion: None
In Favor: M. Blanchet, R. Berman, T. LaScola, M. Moore, E. Seaborn
Opposed: None
Abstained: None

2,4-Dichlorophenoxyacetic Acid (2,4-D) Motion:
Move: That the Pesticide Board Subcommittee has determined that the use of the following products:

1. RedEagle 2,4-D LV6, EPA Reg. No. 2217-413-85678, containing 2,4-D 2-ethylhexyl ester at 87.9%,

be categorized as restricted use pursuant to the Subcommittee's decision on April 14, 1989, to register products containing 20% or more of **2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid (2,4-D)** and/or its derivatives as state restricted use.

Moved: R. Berman
Second: T. LaScola
Discussion: None
In Favor: M. Blanchet, R. Berman, T. LaScola, M. Moore, E. Seaborn

Opposed: None
Abstained: None

C. NEW ACTIVE INGREDIENT MOTIONS

Miller presented information on the new active ingredient (a.i.) ***vadescana***, formulated in the product Norroa (EPA Reg. No. 94614-4), a double-stranded RNA (dsRNA) 'miticide' for the selective control of Varroa mites in honey bee colonies.

Norroa is a ready-to-use packet of sucrose solution that contains 0.31% vadescana, a concentration of 4 grams of a.i./liter. Vadescana is classified as IRAC (Insecticide Resistance Action Committee) Group 35, the 'Targeted Protein Suppressors' mode of action. Vadescana is a 402-base pair sequence homologous to a part of the calmodulin gene in Varroa mites that results in sequence-specific posttranscriptional gene silencing. Vadescana dsRNA inhibits the production of the calmodulin protein in Varroa, which binds calcium cations and is involved in regulating various processes within the mites. Notably, it has been found that mite reproductive output is greatly reduced in the presence of vadescana, likely due to mite egg production being affected.
Handling: Norroa has no signal word, only 'Keep Out of Reach of Children', due to its very low toxicity. Therefore, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does not require first aid instructions on the label. Handlers are directed to wear baseline PPE (long-sleeved shirt, long pants, socks and shoes), but handling by hand without gloves is allowed. Because the product is a RTU pouch, no mixing or loading of the product occurs besides placing it inside the hive.

Uses: Norroa is only for use in honey bee colonies. The pouch is placed across the frames in a brood box and the applicator removes a sticker to expose holes allowing honey bees to access the sucrose/vadescana solution. Bees move the product to brood cells and incorporate it into brood food. It is thought Varroa mites become exposed on contact and absorb it into their bodies when they enter these cells to be sealed in as part of their reproductive cycle. The maximum application rate is four pouches per box per year.

Human Health: All vadescana formulations were classified as Toxicity Category IV (lowest level) for acute oral toxicity, acute dermal toxicity, primary eye irritation, and primary dermal irritation. An inhalation study was not required due to the application method creating no inhalation exposure. No dermal sensitization was observed.

The likelihood of vadescana affecting gene expression in humans is a function of two factors – its overlap with the human transcriptome and its ability to enter human cells. Bioinformatic analysis of vadescana has compared its 382 distinct 21-mers, which all match part of the Varroa mite calmodulin (CaM) gene, with the human transcriptome and found three that partially align. However, exposed mice, rats, and rabbits have between six and thirteen matching 21-mers but showed no toxic effects. Therefore, none are expected for humans. Vadescana has a half-life of about 5 minutes or less in simulated intestinal fluids. In mammals it likely would be digested in gastric fluid prior to reaching the intestines. Humans are routinely exposed to RNA in normal diet and those exposures have not resulted in any uptake of concern into cells. Rapid degradation also makes activation of an immune response from oral exposure unlikely.
Human exposure by oral, ocular, and inhalation routes are considered negligible due to the pouch application method. The most likely route of exposure expected to occur is oral via dietary consumption of honey produced by bees that are housed in brood boxes treated with Norroa. However, exemption from the requirement of a tolerance for vadescana residue was established by EPA in June of 2025 in or on honey and honeycomb if used in accordance with the label and good agricultural practices.

Ecological Risk: Avian and mammalian exposures are thought to be only secondhand and minimal. Furthermore, no 21-mers of vadescana exactly matching CaM's homologous sequences were found in zebra finches or humans. Adverse effects were observed for seven-spot ladybird beetles and Colorado potato

beetles, though these effects were attributed to reduced palatability of test diet and therefore likely non-toxic effects since the dsRNA sequence matches in these species are zero and two, respectively. Likewise, honey bees had no sequence matches with vadescana but some adverse effects. These were also attributed to dosed food aversion under the Tier 1 study conditions since the follow-up field study with the same product concentrations showed no adverse effects. No effects were seen in studies with green lacewings, predatory mites, or springtails.

All aquatic organism testing requirements were waived due to the projected lack of exposure due to the terrestrial use pattern. The rationales cited for waiving studies for these non-target organisms, including plants, were the "…in-hive administration, rapid environmental degradation rate, and narrow spectrum of activity."

Endangered Species Act: EPA has made a "No Effect" determination for all listed species and their designated critical habitats resulting from the proposed uses of Norroa. Because of the low toxicity and hazard to all non-hive species, EPA also concluded that consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service is not required in this case.
Fate: The results of two degradation studies were submitted to determine the environmental fate of vadescana. Residues on squash flowers indicate this a.i. has a half-life of 4 to 20 hours in the environment. Bees from treated hives had an average of 900 ng vadescana/bee 24 hours after treatment, which was considered limited physical uptake and unlikely to be transferred to plants in any significant amount while foraging.
Groundwater Protection: ***Vadescana*** does not meet the criteria for being classified as a potential groundwater contaminant in Massachusetts.

LaScola asked whether this miticide acts as a birth control agent because it interferes with the varroa mites' reproduction. Miller indicated that, while it is sometimes described like that, the mites' reproduction is effectively slowed down during the time that Vadescana is active by interfering egg production, but mites could ultimately reproduce again. Miller noted that this miticide needs to be used along with other measures to control Varroa in beehives. It is most effective when mite populations are relatively low and when there is not a lot of nectar flow in order maximize the sucrose intake along with the miticide. Berman asked how extensive the Varroa mite issue is in apiaries in Massachusetts. LaScola stated that MDAR's apiary program staff has indicated that it is still a big issue that affects honeybee populations in MA. Moore recalled the presentation and registration of a different new miticide a few years ago. LaScola indicated that beekeepers are excited about having another new tool to control this challenging pest.

Move: that the Pesticide Board Subcommittee approve the product registration for Norroa, EPA Reg. No. 94614-4, containing the new active ingredient ***vadescana,*** which has never before been registered in Massachusetts.

Moved: R. Berman
Second: T. LaScola
Discussion: See above
In Favor: M. Blanchet, R. Berman, T. LaScola, M. Moore, E. Seaborn
Opposed: None
Abstained: None

D. ***Policy Discussion:*** **The Pesticide Board Subcommittee will continue the discussion on a proposed draft policy for voting on agenda items that require substantial review and evaluation. (Vote required)**

Moore stated that an earlier draft of this policy was shared with the Subcommittee following last month's meeting. A somewhat updated version was screen-shared during the meeting. Moore reviewed a section of

the document that focuses on the non-routine topics that require substantial review, deliberation and evaluation before a vote can be taken and placed on the agenda. Moore noted that the agenda may have "Vote Required" listed with the topic, but that it is acceptable that voting is postponed to a future meeting to allow additional time for review and discussion. Moore stated that this agenda does not require a vote given that it is considered a working document described the policy for handling topics that are coming up for evaluation by the Subcommittee.

Burgess, MDAR legal, mentioned that following the discussion at the last meeting, MDAR received one additional comment from the Subcommittee. The comment was related to the requirement for notices and agendas to be posted no later than 48 hours prior to any public meeting, not including weekends and legal holidays. In the additional comment received it was suggested to change this to 72 hours. The Subcommittee considered this request and it was pointed out that the 48-hour requirement for notice and agenda is an Open Meeting Law requirement. It was pointed out that meeting materials are typically provided to the Subcommittee well before the 48-hour notice period, and the 48-hour requirement is associated with the routine agenda items. While the routine items are included, the effort to develop this policy document was focused on the procedures for handling non-routine items. The Subcommittee agreed not to change the 48-hour requirement at this time and it was recognized that this is a working document that can be updated as needed. The Subcommittee also agreed that this item did not need a vote.

E. NEW BUSINESS

Moore noted that Subcommittee will hold a virtual public hearing on the individual review of rodenticides that is scheduled for the following day. The Subcommittee discussed several aspects related to the logistics for this public hearing. LaScola addressed several questions relative to how the public hearing will be handled. It was pointed out that this hearing is an opportunity for the public to participate in a public hearing and share their comments as well as an opportunity to provide written comments. The comments from this public hearing as well as the previous public comment opportunities will be included with the information for the rodenticide individual review.

Berman asked about the letter from the Golf Course Superintendent Association of New England, that was sent to the Subcommittee. Berman noted that the request for the active ingredient review was not on the agenda for this meeting. LaScola clarified that MDAR has a process for new active ingredient (NAI) reviews and that scheduling of these reviews is based on sequence of when the applications have been received. MDAR typically does not modify the sequence of NAI in response to requests for expedited review to make process fair and unbiased.

F. ADJOURN

Motion: To adjourn March 17, 2026, Subcommittee Meeting.**Moved:** R. Berman
Second: T. LaScola
Discussion: None
In Favor: M. Blanchet, R. Berman, T. LaScola, M. Moore, E. Seaborn
Opposed: None
Abstained: None