

**VERMONT AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND MARKETS (AAFM)
AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION BOARD (AIB)**

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: January 23, 2023

LOCATION: Vermont Agriculture and Environmental Laboratory (VAEL) 163 Admin
Drive Randolph Center, VT 05061 / Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

| Member | Present | Absent |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Ayer, Clara | x | |
| Beckford, Roy | x | |
| Bradshaw, Terry | x | |
| Chamberlin, Jonathan | x | |
| Cutler, Clarice | x | |
| Ransom, Earl | x | |
| Rebozo, Ryan | x | |
| Schubart, Steven | x | |
| Vose, Sarah | x | |
| Harper, Wendy Sue | x | |
| DiPietro, Laura | x | |
| Dwinell, Steve | x | |
| Morgan Griffith | x | |
| Guests in Attendance | | |
| Stephanie Smith | | |
| David Huber | | |
| Chris Anderson (Earth Matters) | | |
| Dillon Gabbert (Bayer) | | |
| Margaret Laggis (Bio Croplife America) | | |
| Clark Parmelee | | |
| Brooke Decker | | |
| Jonathan Wolff (Bio Croplife America) | | |
| Fred Putnam Jr (VT Beekeepers) | | |
| Bethany Creaser | | |
| Lisa Fantelli | | |
| Patti Casey | | |
| Zach Szczokowski | | |
| Mike B | | |
| Lisa Fantelli | | |
| Jill Goss | | |

Meeting called to order: 1:00 PM EST

Meeting adjourned: 2:15 PM EST

Next meeting: February 27, 2023 1pm – 4pm @ VAEL Randolph, VT

Agenda:

1:00 PM – Welcome & Introductions

1:05 PM – Agenda, previous meeting minutes & action item review

1:15 PM – Annual Report submission to Legislature

1:20 PM – PHARM activities update

1:50 PM – Farmer survey distribution plan finalization

2:30 PM – Non-neonicotinoid treated seed discussion

- Review information and resources shared and draft BMPs

3:45 PM – Public Comments

4:00 PM – Adjourn

New Action Items

| Action | Responsible Party | Complete? (date) |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Update Farmer Survey distribution plan with suggested contacts to reach dairy farmers and certified organic | Stephanie / Zach | |
| Provide AIB members with literature articles on non-neonicotinoid active ingredients identified in seed reports to date (metalaxyl fungicide) | Morgan | |
| Send draft written report regarding whether best management practices (BMPs) should be adopted for the use of treated article seeds that are not neonicotinoid treated article seeds to AIB for review/finalization before 2/15/23 | Morgan | |
| | | |

Ongoing Action Items

| Action | Responsible Party | Complete? (date) |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| AIB members let Morgan know if eligible for per diem reimbursement to receive necessary paperwork | All eligible AIB members | |
| Follow up with Sarah Vose about relevant specific rule proposed language changes addressing mosquito adulticide use | Dave H | 1/3/2023 |
| Provide final farmer survey and distribution strategy for AIB members to consider and provide feedback | Stephanie S | 1/20/2023 |
| Create AGR.AIB@vermont.gov email address | Stephanie S Morgan G | 12/21/2022 |
| Ask Kristina Sweet if AAFM has active list of grower and industry associations with contacts | Stephanie S | 1/23/2023 |
| Contact largest seed distributor registered in VT to ask about common product active ingredients used as seed treatments? i.e. which insecticide active ingredients? which fungicide active ingredients? Etc. | Stephanie S | 1/23/2023 |

| | | |
|--|----------|-----------|
| Share information on non-neonicotinoid treated seeds and draft generic BMPs to AIB for consideration | Morgan G | 1/18/2023 |
|--|----------|-----------|

Welcome & Introductions, agenda, previous meeting minutes & action item review

- 12/19/22 meeting minutes accepted without changes

Annual report submission to Legislature

- AIB 2022 Annual Report submitted to legislature on January 10, 2023
 - available on [AIB website](#) and on [Vermont Legislative Reports website](#)

PHARM activities update

- Dave Huber (Deputy Director of Public Health and Agricultural Resource Management Division, AAFM)
 - Pesticide rule approved by LCAR anticipated will become final in late February 2023
 - AAFM will be engaging in educational campaign about changes from the previous 1991 rule
 - Anyone who has questions please contact Dave @ david.huber@vermont.gov
- Stephanie Smith (Deputy Director of Public Health and Agricultural Resource Management Division, AAFM)
 - Reporting from seed regulators on quantity of treated and untreated seeds sold in VT
 - AAFM sent forms in December 2022 to be completed by seed distributors by February 15, 2023
 - Those that have to report sell >10lbs in the state (meet tonnage requirement)
 - This is first year AAFM has asked for treatment type information
 - Have about 30% response rate at this time
 - Only require information for agricultural seed, but did receive some info on flower and vegetable seed sales
 - See seed report available in meeting materials for specific information presented
 - Very preliminary information, AAFM anticipates have complete information by shortly after February 15, but will follow up with respondents and registrants who did not report on the new form.
 - AAFM have been in contact with American Seed Trade Association to get more information about seed (treated and untreated) sold in Vermont.
 - AIB members have no further comments or questions
 - Will present more detailed information at March AIB meeting

Farmer survey distribution plan finalization

- Zach Szczokowski put together a distribution plan proposal
- AGR.AIB@vermont.gov email address was established and will be used to disseminate info from the board
- The survey will be disseminated to a combination of AAFM networks and non-governmental member networks including:
 - Water Quality Program database
 - Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association

- Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association
- Northeast Organic Farmers Association of Vermont
- Vermont Sugar Makers Association
- Northern Grain Growers Association
- Vermont Horse Council
- Vermont Sheep and Goat Association
- Young Farmers Coalition of Vermont
- Champlain Valley Farmers Coalition
- Vermont Farm Agriculture Health and Safety Alliance
- Vermont Association of Conservation Districts
- New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Growers Association
- Vermont Grass Farmers Association
- Discussion on possible additions to the distribution list:
 - **Add Vermont Organic Farmers Nicole Dehne because they are more in contact with commercial organic farms
 - Can leave NOFA and VOF on the list because will capture the non-certified but still organically minded farms, as well as the certified organic farms
 - Should we add a question about size of operation to the survey?
 - Yes, have the Required Agricultural Practices defined Small, medium, large farm as options in multiple choice question.
 - How is conventional dairy captured?
 - **Send survey to milk handler contacts (AgriMark and DFA)
 - **Also can send to Vermont Dairy Producers Alliance; Connecticut River Watershed Alliance; Franklin/Grand Isle Farmer's Watershed Alliance
- How long between survey introduction and date close?
 - Reminders will be sent but to original distribution list that is expected to forward to their networks
 - AIB members agree to leave it open for one month with reminders to distribution list to help with participation
 - AIB agrees (unanimously) to let AAFM proceed with email and distribution to list provided.

Non-neonicotinoid treated seed discussion

Act No. 145 requires the following:

Sec. 5. REVIEW AND REPORT ON BMPS FOR TREATED ARTICLE SEEDS

On or before February 15, 2023, the Agricultural Innovation Board shall submit to the Senate Committee on Agriculture and the House Committee on Agriculture and Forestry a written report regarding whether best management practices (BMPs) should be adopted for the use of treated article seeds that are not neonicotinoid treated article seeds. The report shall include:

- (1) a summary of the Agricultural Innovation Board's review of treated article seeds that are not neonicotinoid treated article seeds, including identification of treated article seeds that may have adverse effects on human health or the environment;
- (2) a recommendation of whether BMPs for treated article seeds that are not neonicotinoid treated article seeds should be adopted and whether they should be adopted by rule; and

- (3) proposed BMPs for treated article seeds that are not neonicotinoid treated article seeds.
- CA: treated seeds that are not neonic are hard to get, is this true?
 - Hard to make a recommendation without seed survey results first. Would lean towards BMPs for all treated seeds
- What do we know about non-neonic treated seeds?
- TB: we still don't know much because of missing data.
- Should we restrict/limit use of neonics?
 - Surprised VT doesn't have any rules around how to handle seeds that are treated
- RR: how specific should some of these recommendations in BMPs be? i.e. define buffers, define survey methods, etc
- SD: there are existing language in seed regs that require language on seed labels. And proposed EPA language to add more required labeling on treated seeds.
- JC: seed treatments in general and then there is the pesticide portion if you read the label spells out these BMPs, which is the law. So I question if we have BMPs for things that are spelled out on labels. Do we just encourage that the label be followed?
- TB: makes the most sense to call these treated seed BMPs because even if have neonic will still fall within this guidance.
- AIB options at this time:
 - Recommend to legislature a set of generic BMPs for all treated seeds that are recommended as guidance BMPs
 - Recommend to legislature a set of generic BMPs for all treated seeds that are adopted by rule
 - Recommend not take action at this time because we are going to draft BMPs for all treated seeds including neonicotinoid treated seeds specific BMPs
- We don't have any complaints/incidents reported to AAFM concerning non-neonicotinoid seed treatments (public health or environmental)
- We didn't do lit review on non-neonicotinoid treatment options
 - **AAFM to provide information about active ingredients used on seeds treatment(s) reported to us that do not include a neonicotinoid ingredient
- AIB members think we should wait until neonicotinoid BMPs and more information
- Would be helpful to know what the actual rules are now. What regulations currently apply to users and those that apply treatments to seeds?
- February 15, 2023 report should include:
 - At this point AIB not ready to anticipate making recommendations for neonic treated recommendations (including both neonic and non-neonic)
 - Add in requirements that are already in place (seed labels and pesticide labels)
 - Need to know sales of seed in VT and what treated with before making recommendations
 - Still developing information and don't want to make recommendations without this information
 - Don't want to have recommendations above and beyond current labeling requirements (seed and pesticide labels)
 - There are other voluntary BMPs available so farmers aware of practices
- **AAFM will draft report and send to AIB for edit/suggestions
- AIB unanimously agrees to wait.

AIB discussion on meeting schedules

- We have charge to recommend on policies introduced to legislature so meeting schedule will be front loaded into the beginning half of 2023
- February 27 proposed as meeting date
 - will make schedule for meeting plan for rest of 2023 at this meeting to accomplish all required charges including meeting location
 - 2/27/23 meeting will be at VAEL and can include lab tour after meeting
 - Can also meet in Williston at AAFM offices for future meetings.

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Public Comments

- none

** - indicates action item