

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

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: December 11, 2023

LOCATION: Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

Member	Present	Absent
St. Pierre, Amanda	x	
Beckford, Roy	x	
Hazelrigg, Ann	x	
Chamberlin, Jonathan	x	
Pajak, Abbi	x	
Ransom, Earl	x	
Rebozo, Ryan		x
Schubart, Steven	x	
Owen, Sarah	x	
Harper, Wendy Sue	x	
DiPietro, Laura		x
Dwinell, Steve	x	
Griffith, Morgan	x	
Guests in Attendance		
Jessica Tessier Stephanie Smith Christina Van Dunk (Windsor Group) Sydney Miller (UVM) Emily May (Xerces) Jill Goss Jonathan Wolff (Biotechnology Innovation Organization / Crop Life America) Zach Szczukowski Lisa Fantelli Doug Johnstone Samantha Alger (UVM) Riley Titus (Crop Life America)		

Meeting called to order: 1:00 PM EST

Meeting adjourned: 2:03 PM EST

Next meeting: Monday January 22, 2024, 1-4PM

Agenda:

1:00 PM – Welcome & introductions

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

1:10 PM – Review and discuss AIB neonicotinoid treated seed BMP recommendations

3:45 PM – Public Comments

4:00 PM – Adjourn

New Action Items

Action	Responsible Party	Complete? (date)
Provide Morgan with additional suggestions for next topics for AIB to address	AIB Members	

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	

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

- 11/13/2023 meeting minutes accepted without edits

Review Neonicotinoid Use in Vermont report

- Summary of neonic use reported to AAFM by certified pesticide applicators (excluding private applicators)
 - [Neonicotinoid Use in Vermont](#)
 - Imidacloprid is highest use neonic
 - lawn care and ornamental applications using the majority of pounds applied each year – followed by golf courses
 - estimated use of neonics from treated seeds is 0.02-0.08 lbs per acre per year
 - maximum application rate for turf is 0.4 lbs per acre per year
- Wendy Sue would like this Neonicotinoid Use in Vermont report to be included with the AIB report to legislature.
 - It can be included it as an appendix in the 2023 annual report

Review and discuss AIB neonicotinoid treated seed BMP recommendations

- Members reviewed and left comments on the draft report of recommendations to AAFM
 - [AIB Recommendations to the AAFM Regarding BMPs for Neonicotinoid Treated Seeds DRAFT report](#)
- Discussion around the human health risk associated with treated seeds intended for human consumption or animal consumption.
 - Toxicologist member, Dr. Sarah Owen, edited the draft report to reflect discussion
 - AAFM wanted to clarify that they don't make distinction that treated seed information reported is for human consumption or not human consumption. It is their

understanding that all corn is treated, can't assume in seed report that majority of treated seed is not intended for direct human consumption.

- It was noted that AIB is not done with this topic when the report that we are finalizing is submitted. AIB will play an important role by following up on research needed and re-evaluating and reviewing what is learned as policy recommendations evolve.

BMP recommendation status & next steps

- Next meetings January 22, 2024 and February 26, 2024
- Finalize recommendation and officially send to AAFM
- AIB annual report due January 15, 2024
- What's our next topic?
 - Ag plastics
 - Microplastics in agriculture
 - Rodenticides
- Jan 22 agenda items:
 - Heather Darby current research update and results and plans for future research
 - Discussion about AIB's next topic to address

Public Comments

- Emily May, Pollinator Conservation Specialist, Pesticide Program, The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation
 - [Public comment to Vermont AIB regarding best management practices for neonicotinoid treated seeds](#)
 - Wanted to note that there are crops that have neonic seed treatments that are for human consumption, i.e. squash, sweet corn and soy
 - Xerces works with growers on pollinator habitat projects, providing technical support to increase habitat and protect pollinators from effects of pest management practices.
 - Would like to see support for additional environmental monitoring included in recommendation
 - Water residues are an area of concern in other places in US
 - Would like to see more water monitoring in the recommendation
 - Other options other than seed lubricants and seed coating technologies to mitigate dust, did not see any mention of equipment modification within the recommendations
 - How available and effective are equipment modification (filters and deflectors) kits for planters?
 - To address the Halo effect, couldn't organic fields be used to provide information and comparison for legacy effects of seed treatment?
 - Xerces does not support recommendation to eliminate flowering plants in borders, unless it's just mowing plants that are in bloom at that time. Worries about a broad recommendation that would lead to using herbicide on borders or removing woody flowering plants in borders that would decrease valuable pollinator resources.
 - It is not just dust that moves off-site, AIB should look at filter strips and wind breaks to mitigate the risk of off-target neonic movement. NRCS offers financial assistance for these types of practices.

- Recommend treated seed disposal through hazardous waste disposal stream rather than solid waste disposal stream.
- Christina Van Dunk, Windsor Group
 - Windsor Group working with USDA on Discrimination Financial Assistance Program.
 - Application deadline is approaching – January 13, 2024
 - Hoping to reach as many farmers and ranchers as possible about the program
 - Contact information provided
 - USDA Discrimination Financial Assistance Program: Christina Van Dunk 845-272-4122. Email: Christina.VanDunk@windsorgroup-llc.com

** - indicates action item