

Minutes
Contra Costa Integrated Pest Management Advisory Committee
July 2, 2014

Members Present: Carlos Agurto, Pestec; Scott Cashen, Mt. Diablo Audubon; Terry Davis, Public Member At-Large; Doug Freier, Public Member At-Large; Chad Godoy, Agriculture Department; Susan Heckly, County Fish and Wildlife Committee; Michael Kent, Health Services; Marj Leeds, Public and Environmental Health Advisory Board; Patti TenBrook, Public Member At-Large; Allison Knapp for Joe Yee, Public Works;

(10 members present/7 voting members)

Members Absent: Jerry Casey, Public Works Facilities; Cece Sellgren, County Clean Water Program; Cheng Liao; Public Member Alternate

Staff Present: Vince Guise, Matt Slattengren, Agriculture Department; Peter Gollinger, Public Works; Jill Ray, Supervisor Andersen's office

Members of the Public: Eric Mussen, U.C. Davis; Robin Bedell-Waite, citizen

1. Introductions

2. Announcements

Chad Godoy, the newly appointed Agricultural Commissioner, introduced himself to the Committee.

The chair, Cece Sellgren, was absent, so Vice Chair Patti TenBrook conducted the meeting.

3. Public comment on items not on the agenda

There was none.

4. Approve minutes from May 7, 2014

A motion was made and seconded (MK/DF) to accept the minutes as written.

The motion passed unanimously:

AYES: Cashen, Davis, Freier, Heckly, Kent, Leeds, TenBrook

NOES: None

ABSENT: Sellgren, Liao

ABSTAIN: None

5. Hear presentation on the current state of honeybees from Eric Mussen, U.C. Davis.

The presentation is attached. The following are some of the points that Dr. Mussen made during his talk:

- The current state of honeybees in California is not dreadful, but it is not good.
- The drought during the past several years has caused serious problems for bees.
- Honeybees suffer from many kinds of stress. Dr. Mussen believes that malnutrition (i.e., the loss of habitat for nectar plants from urbanization and paving over land) is perhaps the most important stressor.
- Honeybees are also afflicted with a number of serious parasites and diseases that weaken colonies.
- Colony Collapse Disorder results in all the adult honeybees leaving the hive over a short period of time. The cause is still unclear, but it is probably a combination of factors.
- Pesticides have long been a problem for honey bees. Beginning in the 1800s the lead arsenate pesticides used in orchards were killing bees. All pesticides stimulate a detoxification reaction in bees.
- Bee keepers use a number of pesticides directly in bee hives to combat parasites and disease.

- Currently, a new class of pesticides called neonicotinoids is under heavy scrutiny. Dr. Mussen is not convinced that the agricultural use of neonicotinoids is causing a problem for bees. Landscape applications of these pesticides pose a far greater problem because there they are used at higher concentrations. Neonicotinoids persist in soil and water for long periods of time, and they affect insects at extremely low concentrations. Neonicotinoids could be used effectively as part of an IPM program as spray applications, but they are now primarily used as a systemic prophylactic whether the plant is infested with a pest or not. These pesticides contaminate the tissues of the plant, including the pollen, which can be deadly to honeybees. This contamination does not last forever, and in trees and other perennial plants it decreases over time.

Vince Guise asked about the health of California native bees. Eric Mussen replied that there has never been a census of native bees, but that native bees are not immune to some of the same problems facing honeybees. Native bees are also collecting contaminated pollen and laying eggs on that pollen; however, some seem to do fine.

Patti TenBrook asked whether soil drenches with neonicotinoids for Asian citrus psyllid (the psyllid that vectors a very serious citrus disease) were a problem for honey bees. Eric Mussen said that beekeepers stay away from citrus orchards in Florida where the psyllid has been established longer. Citrus growers need to do what is necessary to try to keep their trees healthy.

Robin Bedell-Waite asked about neonicotinoids in nursery plants. Eric Mussen replied that citizens are putting pressure on nurseries to end that practice, and he thinks it will change soon.

6. Hear updates from the Decision-Making, Cost Accounting, and Transparency subcommittees

Decision-Making subcommittee

Terry Davis, chair, reported that the committee has reviewed decision-making documents for Japanese knotweed and artichoke thistle from the Agriculture Department. The committee asked for some additions to the decision-making documentation form such as

- Adding questions to the “Sensitive Sites” section about the proximity of Pesticide Management Zones and well heads.
- Adding information about drift management including what measures are used to prevent drift and what surfactants and adjuvants are used.
- Adding some discussion about how the choice of pesticide is supported.

Cost Accounting subcommittee

Marj Leeds, chair, reported that the committee spoke at length with Kevin Lachapelle, Grounds Manager, about whether there was a landscaping problem that would improve over the long term if money for alterations was provided up front.

- The committee looked at replacing grass with artificial turf but this has a number of drawbacks:
 - It would require considerable amounts of herbicide to kill the existing grass.
 - Artificial turf is a petroleum product, and it is expensive.
 - Artificial turf doesn’t last forever and how well it could be recycled is not known.
- The committee concluded that artificial turf was not the answer.
- The Grounds Division is not using large quantities of pesticides. They use the most material at the Marsh Creek Firing Range because of fire and other safety regulations.
- The committee did not discover any particular landscaping problem to pursue.
- Preliminary recommendations are to avoid turf unless it is necessary at the site, install low water use or native plants when designing new landscaping or renovating old landscaping, and design landscaping to be low maintenance and to use as little water and energy as possible.

Transparency subcommittee

Patti TenBrook, chair, reported that the committee reviewed a report on all pesticide use postings for 2013. She also reported that Parents for a Safer Environment (PfSE) had requested that Public Works Vegetation Management separate their pesticide use into use on roadsides, flood control channels, and real property. The state currently requires electronic pesticide use reporting and there is no way to report separately on these

activities. In addition, the Department has no need to separate the data on the Pesticide Use Reports, and it would entail extra work for their very limited staff. Reformatting of information is not required for public records request. Joe Yee provided PfSE with a report from the Department's Maintstar work planning program that may help them separate the pesticide used by the Vegetation Management crew. The committee also reviewed how the County responds to concerns of the public.

7. IPM Coordinator report

Over the last two months the IPM Coordinator

- Spent the majority of her time on committee work—researching various topics, writing documents, and staffing the committees.
- Provided the Transportation, Water, and Infrastructure Committee a report on the County's IPM Program. Supervisors Piepho and Andersen are happy with the progress, and they appreciate the on-going documentation of the County's responses to concerns from the public.
- Prepared for the Pre-bid Conference for pest management firms who are interested in bidding on the County's structural IPM contract. Ten companies have responded to the invitation.
- Arranged to have Dr. Igor Laćan, U.C. Cooperative Extension Urban Horticulture Advisor, speak on maintaining landscapes during drought. County staff will attend, and municipal park maintenance personnel from around the County have been invited.
- Continued working with the Cities of El Cerrito and San Pablo and Beth Baldwin of the County Clean Water Program on IPM guidance documents for municipalities in Contra Costa County.
- Wrote an article on the new state and federal regulations for rodenticides that was published in Supervisor Andersen's July eNewsletter.
- As part of the City of Concord's pilot for addressing bed bug complaints in apartment buildings, accompanied the County Environmental Health Inspectors on their first bed bug inspection.

8. Hear reports from the Agriculture and Public Works Departments

Public Works, Facilities Division-Carlos Agurto, Pestec

- The skunks are now gone from the West County Detention Facility.
- A rat was seen in the Martinez Detention Facility, and Pestec is preparing to perform pest proofing there around the loading dock.
- Five bee swarms were captured in traps at the Contra Costa Regional Medical Center in Martinez. Pestec has relocated one swarm to Pleasant Hill in the care of a local beekeeper and is looking for homes for the other swarms, ideally nearby. There is research that shows that locally adapted bees thrive much better than those brought in from far flung locations.
- Ground beetles and crickets are invading the Byron Airport and the Byron Boys' Ranch. This happens every year.

Agriculture Department, Vince Guise

See also the attached report.

- Ground squirrel work will begin the 2nd week of July.
- Telar has been very effective on perennial pepperweed. Last year the Department used 12 backpacks of the herbicide on this weed and this year used only 2.
- There is much less perennial pepperweed this year in the patch of Contra Costa goldfields near Hwy 4; however, there remain a number of small clumps of the weed that were probably not treated last year.

Public Works, Vegetation Management Division, Peter Gollinger

- Crews are performing tree work—removing limbs that have failed and removing diseased trees.
- Crews will begin treating stinkwort (*Dittrichia*) soon. Stinkwort is early this year.
- Cattail treatments will begin soon.
- The Department will be conducting late season grazing.

9. Plan agenda for next meeting

- Reports and recommendations from the subcommittees
- Updates from the Departments

Respectfully submitted,
Tanya Drlik, IPM Coordinator