

Livestock/CAFO Working Group

Charge from Groundwater Management Area Advisory Committee

Create the 2014 Livestock/CAFO Task List

Working Group Members

Charlie McKinney, Chair (Department of Ecology), Kirk Cook (Department of Agriculture), Dr. Kefy Desta(WSU), Elizabeth Sanchez (Yakama Nation), Helen Reddout (CARE), Jason Sheehan (Dairy Federation), Jim Newhouse (South Yakima Conservation District), Laurie Crowe (South Yakima Conservation District), Patricia Newhouse (Citizen), Steve George (Yakima County Farm Bureau), Stuart Turner (Turner & Co., Inc.)

Meetings/Calls Dates

Meeting: Thursday, August 15, 2013 6:30-7:00 pm

Location: Radio KDNA – Granger, Washington

Participants

Tom Tebb (Department of Ecology), Steve George (Farm Bureau), Patricia Newhouse (Lower Valley Citizen), Sue Wedam (YVCC-Lower Valley), Douglas Moore, (Lower Valley Citizen), Jim Dyjak (Citizen), Jason Sheehan (Dairy Federation), Heidi Matson (Yakima County Staff)

Key Discussion Points

We need to meet with the Irrigated Ag Work Group to make proposal on how to define the work groups. Sitting in different rooms talking about the same thing isn't effective. Anything related to crops would fall into the Irrigated Ag category and this group will focus on Livestock.

Figure out what each group is going to focus on so we don't work on the same thing.

Discussed looking at Hermiston's Report for a structure to follow as we move forward, but use our own information. Looking at other states' information would be beneficial at building our own framework.

Discussed soil sampling:

- How do we get volunteers?
- Is it confidential or public?
- If someone is willing to allow testing on their property we need to protect them. We need to make sure we are doing the right thing.
- All pieces of land are not equal throughout the valley. There are different soil types. So how do we differentiate when to go deeper?

- Each foot gets tested up to 8-10 feet.
- We need more than 20 samples.
- Do we test all soil types? There may be some people who don't have a proper septic system that are contributing to the problem.
- We need to identify the potential problems, septic system, over fertilization, and do 3 or 4 different types of testing.
- If you test a dairy farm, break up the testing. Don't use just the lagoon; rather, test the barn area, corrals, etc. Test 2 or 3 different places, there may be different results.

Jean Mendoza had some good ideas. We support taking action where needed. We need to remember that we are all working towards the same goals and blaming any certain group would deter them from helping find a solution.

Department of Ecology has stated that they will protect information. It would be easy to test public land, however the data gathered may be compromised based on land use (ex: it may be argued that in the right-of-way commercial vehicles have spilled contaminates).

The general consensus is that the landowners need protection so the testing needs to be confidential.

- How do you categorize the results so no one knows who the sample is from?
- We need to talk about crop type, irrigation type, and soil type.
- What is the source of the nitrogen, manure or commercial?
- We may need to hire a third party so they can talk to farmers about the results but the agency doesn't know who the results belong to so that we can educate the farmers and help find a solution. The farmer has information on the crop type and the history so he can analyze the data and adjust where needed. Many dairymen would like to do the right thing, but they are afraid of no protection.

Nitrate levels depend on the soil type, how far it's pushed into the soil with irrigation, how much irrigating is being done, how long they are irrigating and at what times.

We need to look at the BMPs, do they correlate?

One solution could be to switch to a sprinkler system rather than irrigation. Pivots use less water and cannot water as deep.

The Trust Water Right Program will help protect people's water rights. Currently some people may feel that they will lose their water rights so they over water to keep their rights. This pertains only to the off irrigated district farming only. There are some misconceptions because the irrigation districts believe they may lose water rights as well. People need to have more education.

Resources Requested

None at this time.

Recommendations for GWAC

None at this time.

Deliverables/Products Status

None at this time.

Proposed Next Steps

Complete with the Irrigated Ag group to set up a meeting to discuss each groups focus

Identify desired outcome of the deep soil sampling study, this will determine what type of sampling is needed and how much it will cost.