

# State FIFRA Issues Research and Evaluation Group (SFIREG) Report

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The Region 6 spring pre-SFIREG meeting was held in person in Little Rock, Arkansas on May 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024. All the states in the region (OK, AR, LA, TX, NM) as well as the Cherokee Nation and the Choctaw Nation participated.

## **State Updates:**

Arkansas-Working through complaints (only 1 dicamba complaint to date). Arkansas is still working on implementing a new online licensing database. Arkansas reports they have seen a noticeable increase in license applications. Arkansas held 3 unwanted pesticide disposal event this year collecting over 500 thousand pounds. Due to the large collections events this fall they did not hold any spring collection. As far as staffing goes, Arkansas is doing well, they have one admin assistant position and one field inspector position open.

Louisiana-LDAFF is almost fully staffed, they have 3 open positions, 2 field inspectors and 1 program administrator position. No dicamba issues. Louisiana submitted comments regarding acephate, they reported that soybean growers have been very vocal with their thoughts and concerns about this potential cancellation.

New Mexico-No dicamba concerns, fully staffed in the field but still have one position open in the office. NMDA is concerned about the BLM's directive that bans M44's on BLM managed land.

Oklahoma-ODAFF reported 24 complaints to date, no dicamba complaints. ODAFF held 2 unwanted pesticide disposals collecting over 60,000 pounds of unwanted pesticides. ODAFF is fully staffed in the field as well in the office for the first time in several years.

Texas- TDA reported 67 structural complaints this FY, mainly unlicensed applicators. TDA as well as Oklahoma has registered Kaput feral hog bait. Bot Oklahoma and Texas has registered this product as a state restricted use product. TDA will be hosting an inspector training next week focusing on structural and structural fumigation.

**Choctaw Nation**-The Choctaw Nation is continuing their pollinator outreach. The Choctaw Nation is doing a lot of work with pollinators, planting pollinator plots, replacing pollinator landscapes and circulating pollinator seed packets. They have also conducted some WPS training for tribal members as well as beekeeper trainings and roadside BMPs.

## Region 6 Discussions to Specific SFIREG Topics

### **Revised C&T Plans:**

None of the Region 6 states reported any issues with implementing the revised C&T plan to date. Fortunately, all region 6 states and their partnerships with their PSEP programs could not be stronger. All states and PSEP programs have a great working relationship and work together on many topics to train, educate, and share information with each other and to the public.

### **Dicamba:**

Region 6 states for the most part have seen no issues except for Arkansas. Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, and New Mexico have not received any complaints in FY 23 and only a few in FY24. It is understood that after this growing season the fate of OTT use of dicamba is not clear. Region 6 would advocate for continued use of this product.

### **Herbicide Strategy:**

All region 6 states are still concerned as how this will play out. This is very subjective as to what counts and what does not. As stated, before this goes beyond pesticide regulation and puts our pesticide staff in conservationist role and visa versa it puts conservation districts in a regulatory role. Where is the data that shows that all of these are measured and proven to achieve the outcome anticipated, not to mention the burden that this will put on SLA's trying to regulate this requirement.

All states appreciate EPA's willingness to take some of the comments into account, for example the low rainfall areas of the west and make changes to accommodate those areas. The biggest fear is that this has been described as a "fluid" plan, and the concern is that producer will change their practices, spend large sums of money to make modification to their practice and after a period of time, those practices be deemed not effective, or changes made to the plan that will then create a scenario where all they have done was for nothing.

### **Bulletins Live Two (BLT):**

Region 6 states agree that it is difficult to keep up with new and changing PULAs. The biggest concern is that the terminology used by EPA and USDAFW do not match. For example, a bulletin may state that the user must have a consultation. When talking with USDAFW they use the term "technical assistance", they stated a "consultation" takes months to years to complete.

**Other topics discussed:**

*EPA Workplans and Reporting*

All states had issues with FDG deleting portion of the workplan after it had been submitted. This is true for FY 23 and FY 24 workplans. This continues to be an issue, recently there was a training update, the question was asked if this issue has been resolved and the answer was no.

*Cooperative Agreements*

Region 6 discussed the issue below at the last SFIREG meeting. We have discussed this issue with our regional office, and they understand that some improvement could be made. The region has been good at communicating information better, but this still tends to be an issue.

Region 6 and states discussed the cooperative agreement process. States get plans in earlier and earlier every year but do not hear anything for months. If it is such an important task to get submitted so early, why do we not hear any comments for months. Also, states have had issues with detailed budgets and the amount of detail that is requested. States are being asked to list exact amounts of supplies or samples that will be collected and what the cost is. Sometimes these projections are being made a year in advance, exact numbers and cost are hard to project.