

State FIFRA Issues Research and Evaluation Group (SFIREG) Report

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December 9th & 10th, 2024

The Region 6 spring pre-SFIREG meeting was held in person at Region 6 headquarters in Dallas, TX on November 18th & 19th, 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- Arkansas is still working on implementing a new online licensing database. Arkansas received 223 complaints, 34 were alleged dicamba. Arkansas' unwanted pesticide disposal is still collecting tons of products, 2024, they collected over 500,000 pounds of unwanted pesticides. As far as staffing goes, Arkansas is doing well, they have one admin assistant position and one field inspector position open. Arkansas did have 1 section 18 request that was granted for Intrepid 2F for use on rice to control army worms. Arkansas has submitted their C&T plan to the legislature.

Louisiana-LDAFF is working of replacing staff that has left or retired, they have 8 open field inspector positions, LDAFF has filled their registration coordinator position. No dicamba issues. Louisiana submitted comments regarding acephate, they reported that growers have been very vocal with their thoughts and concerns about this potential cancellation. LDAFF also received a section 18 for Intrepid 2F for control of army worms on rice

New Mexico-No dicamba concerns, fully staffed in the field and just filled the one administration position which makes NMDA fully staffed. NMDA has updated their website to accept online payments for licenses and registrations. NMDA also updated website to better serve those seeking WPS information with videos and direct links to WPS information. NMDA is working with State leaders on C&T implementation.

Oklahoma-ODAFF reported 101 complaints for FFY24 of those, 62 were ag related and 32 of those were aerial complaints, no dicamba complaints reported. ODAFF held 4 unwanted pesticide disposals collecting over 130,000 pounds of unwanted pesticides. ODAFF is currently in the recertification process, with the biggest cycle to recertify before the end of the year. ODAFF will recertify over 7,000 applicators from October through December. All of ODAFF's revised C&T plan was done with rulemaking and has been approved and updated with the exception of one change to the statute, that has been submitted to the legislature and is expected to go through the process without issue.

Texas- TDA reported 60 less than normal ag complains receiving 140 complaints, the structural side reported 209 NOV's and 181 LOW's, with the largest infraction being operating without a license. TDA is working on several contracts, one for proctored exams, pesticide disposal contract and have confirmed a deal with a new pesticide container recycler. TDA is in the process of promulgating rules for the revised C&T plan, TDA was able to make all the changes with rulemaking and no statutes are required.

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. The Choctaw Nation has increased their WPS trainings for tribal members and looking to start doing more IPM outreach and trainings. They have also started the process of developing their pesticide code.

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.

New Mexico is working on manual and exam updates. All states have had their rules submitted or approved without many issues. The states are appreciative of region 6 for their help and responsiveness when needed.

Water Quality Activities:

All states use the Exchange Node to report water quality information. All region 6 states would find it useful to have a mechanism for sharing reports on water quality activities. None of the Region 6 states are capable of capturing the effectiveness of the ESA Strategy.

Web-Distributing Labeling – EPA

None of the Region 6 states have issue with the web distributed labels. All states will review and register labels that have been accepted by EPA. One state has software that they load the EPA accepted label and the label submitted to them into the program and it will do a line-by-line side by side comparison.

AEZ Rule

All states are up to speed and have reviewed the AEZ rule, however states all agree that enforcement will be difficult. The Region 6 states feel that they all do a great job covering WPS at trainings and that the label directions are adequate. All states did request more education and outreach material from EPA.

ESA Workplan and Strategy Implementation:

All region 6 states are still concerned as how this will play out as well as the burden that this will put on SLA's trying to regulate this requirement.

Region 6 states are incorporating ESA workplan and strategy into training programs for their staff in addition to the industries we regulate. The biggest concern is that applicators will look at these requirements as recommendations, enforcement, being able to identify if they are accurate on their points. All Region 6 states would like more outreach and educational material from EPA.

Pesticide Registration Decisions:

Several states are concerned about acephate, this is a widely used product in several states. Also, there is interest in this due to this being the most widely used product for fire ants. In addition to acephate, several states mentioned they were interested in the rodenticides in particular warfarin and sodium nitrate for feral hogs.

Bulletins Live Two (BLT):

Region 6 states agree that it is difficult to keep up with new and changing PULAs, all states would like to see some sort of list serve that would notify SLA's of changes made. None of the Region 6 states have made any effort to deal with internet access.

Other topics discussed:

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 24. It is understood that it looks like the earliest OTT label to come out would be the 2027 growing season. Region 6 states also have issues with a single cutoff date for the entire country. Growing seasons vary greatly, and Region 6 feels this is not being taken into consideration, all SLA's as well as many state associations have made multiple comments to EPA.