

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee (FRRCC)
Meeting**

**August 1, 2012
1:00 – 2:30 p.m. EDT**

**Teleconference Meeting
Call-in: 1-866-299-3188/5647273#**

SUMMARY

Introductions and Roll Call

Alicia Kaiser, Designated Federal Officer (DFO)

Ms. Alicia Kaiser (FRRCC DFO) called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and welcomed the Committee members. She explained that the purpose of the conference call was to discuss what the FRRCC will focus on over the next couple of years. She mentioned that the teleconference had been announced in a *Federal Register* notice and that members of the public and press were present.

She stated that all comments made will be part of the meeting record and the teleconference summary will be posted on the FRRCC website once it is approved by the FRRCC Chair.

FRRCC members and other teleconference participants then introduced themselves. A list of participants is attached to this summary.

Discussion of the Structure and Function of the FRRCC

Lawrence Elworth, Agricultural Counselor to the Administrator, EPA

Mr. Lawrence Elworth (EPA) welcomed the teleconference attendees and thanked them for their participation. He noted that the current FRRCC is the third iteration of the Committee and because it is a federal advisory committee, it operates under the rules of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

Mr. Elworth stated that the previous FRRCC members deliberated on water issues and provided insightful and important recommendations to the Agency. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and Deputy Administrator Bob Perciasepe both appreciated the recommendations and were impressed by the Committee's insights.

The FRRCC membership term is 2 years. Mr. Elworth commented that during deliberations, every member's voice will be heard and all points of view will be acknowledged. While the Committee may achieve consensus on one or more issues, it is not required.

Mr. Elworth also noted that the previous FRRCC conversations and work have broadened and informed agricultural issues, particularly with regard to water.

Discussion of FRRCC's Recent Work

Dr. Steven Balling, FRRCC Chair

Dr. Steven Balling (Del Monte Foods), Chair of the FRRCC, was impressed by the number of teleconference participants and was grateful to see so many returning FRRCC members. He expressed appreciation to David Petty (Iowa River Ranch) for agreeing to serve as the Deputy Chairman of the FRRCC.

Dr. Balling explained that serving as a member of the FRRCC is a major undertaking and it is beneficial to EPA as well as the agricultural community. The FRRCC first met in September 2010, and established the Committee's objectives. Through subsequent meetings, field trips and subcommittee meetings, the FRRCC has been highly productive and fruitful.

The most recent FRRCC report was 85 pages in length and provided EPA with a sense of the diverse water issues with which the agricultural community contends. The Committee members formed three workgroups (partnerships, science, and resources) to prepare the report.

Dr. Balling recalled a comment previously made by Peggy Beltrone (Exergy Integrated Systems) that the FRRCC should remember that, when speaking of the agricultural community, they are talking about the people who feed and clothe the population of our country as well as those in many others. This sentiment is important to remember because understanding the environment in which the Committee must work is imperative to the environment, EPA and the agricultural community.

Following completion of the most recent report in December 2011, the FRRCC met with Administrator Jackson and discussed three issues: public engagement, communication with the agricultural community, and the value of refining the application of science to water quality programs.

Discussion of Next Steps/Possible Areas of Focus for the FRRCC

Dr. Balling stated that water quality and better management of the water programs was the main topic of the most recent FRRCC report, and the Chesapeake Bay was used as an example. The current Committee now should discuss ideas for the FRRCC to deliberate. These ideas should be of interest to the Committee members and be items that EPA needs to address. Dr. Balling added that although the Agency deals with many pesticide issues, particularly management and control, there is another advisory group convened to discuss and provide advice on these issues. Therefore, the FRRCC should not pursue topics related to pesticides.

Mr. Paul Martin (Spear Six Ranch) asked about EPA's response to the Science Advisory Board's report on reactive nitrogen. Mr. Elworth responded that the report had been received and is under review. The FRRCC could opt to engage EPA on that report and initiate further discussion. Due to the complicated nature of the report, EPA has not yet created an action plan. Mr. Martin agreed that excessive reactive nitrogen is an issue that must be addressed. In California, the nitrogen in the groundwater is associated with tissue damage, and there is no way to treat the water. Reactive nitrogen is related to air quality issues as well. Mr. Martin expressed interest in a collaborative process, rather than a prescriptive process, to address this issue.

Dr. Balling directed FRRCC members' attention to four questions that Ms. Kaiser and Mr. Elworth provided to stimulate the discussion:

- (1) Are there any issues related to the recommendations raised in the FRRCC's recent report on which the Committee would like to follow up?

- (2) Are there other issues that were raised in our previous discussions that the Committee would like to explore further?
- (3) Are there any new issues related to agriculture and water quality that the Committee might wish to look into (e.g., recent Science Advisory Board [SAB] report on reactive nitrogen)?
- (4) Are there issues associated with agriculture and other media (e.g., air, solid waste) that the Committee would like to consider?

Mr. Elworth clarified that the ensuing discussion will be preliminary and that no issue will be selected during the current teleconference.

Mr. Omar Garza (Texas Mexico Border Coalition) mentioned a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) and the opportunities the MOU might offer for collaboration. Such opportunities should be explored further as well as possible collaboration with Hispanic communities.

Dr. Balling said that the Committee does not have to limit its deliberations to a single focus, adding that the Committee is not required to prepare one report on one large issue. The FRRCC may decide that the Agency and Administrator Jackson would be better served with several memos or advisory information pieces on several smaller issues. This is particularly true when timely advice is needed.

Mr. George Boggs (Whatcom Conservation District) commented that he recently met with the Region 10 Administrator who approved of the Committee's recommendations and saw value in the report. Implementation of some programs was limited, however, because of insufficient resources. Mr. Boggs suggested that being more specific about how to implement the FRRCC recommendations may be useful. Dr. Balling responded that many recommendations require additional resources and asked if the next report should describe where those resources might be found. Mr. Boggs affirmed this and added that the potential for job creation, community college education, skill training and so forth should be included. Dr. Balling responded that he has also discussed the issue of having resources to implement the recommendations with staff in Region 9. Mr. Elworth said that Regional Administrators appreciate visits from the FRRCC members.

Mr. Elworth mentioned that some specific steps have been taken to implement recommendations that have been made by the Committee. For example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and EPA have worked together to more efficiently use Clean Water Act Section 319 conservation funds at the watershed level. The FRRCC may be interested in that initiative which follows up on the FRRCC's recommendation that USDA and EPA collaborate to help farmers with conservation efforts. Dr. Balling noted that the Farm Bill will impact FRRCC discussions as well as USDA funding on conservation initiatives.

Mr. Tom McDonald (JBS Five Rivers Cattle Feeding) expressed interest in the FRRCC discussing a broad set of issues. He suggested the following: (1) greenhouse gas (GHG) regulation and what authority EPA has over the agricultural community in GHG regulation; (2) how other air emissions (e.g., ammonia, dust) should be regulated by EPA; (3) the cumulative effect that all EPA regulations has on the agricultural community, including cost; and (4) EPA oversight operations and potential duplication of efforts and incongruity with the state programs. Mr. McDonald explained that the fourth suggested issue pertains to delegated programs in which states already have taken action and afterward EPA comes in and attempts further mitigation.

Mr. Martin agreed with Mr. McDonald's ideas. He added a fifth issue: cross-media (e.g., water, air, soil) interactions with different EPA regulations. What effect does one control measure have on the ability to

control other media issues? Dr. Balling mentioned that the reactive nitrogen report includes a discussion of cross-reactivity among media types.

Ms. Beltrone commented that she has been working with the 25x25 Alliance National Steering Committee and that an Adaptation Project has been initiated. This project has convened a board of agricultural representatives to make recommendations on how different stakeholder sectors should respond to the changes inherent in climate change. These recommendations are different than GHG regulations because they encompass food risk, temperatures, agricultural risk and so forth. One recommendation involved the USDA and EPA, and the FRRCC could respond to all of the recommendations that will be made available in autumn 2012. Dr. Balling liked this idea and said it will be important to be clear that the FRRCC is examining the issue *with* the agricultural community and not signaling intent to take action on them. Dr. Balling said that this idea focuses on the agricultural community's response to climate change as opposed to mitigation or arguing about its anthropogenic origins.

Senator Michael Brubaker (State Senate of Pennsylvania) commented that another area for the Committee to discuss is a better pathway to compliance for farms and non-farms as a means of achieving higher level(s) of present and future compliance. Dr. Balling agreed that this would be a major and valuable undertaking. Sen. Brubaker continued that many individuals would like to be in compliance but because there are so many EPA regulations, they do not know if they are in compliance with all of them. Dr. Balling added that combining the issues of media relationships, easier pathways to compliance, and the cumulative effects of environmental regulation on agriculture could lead to the broader issue of managing the web of EPA regulations.

Mr. Patrick Johnson (Cypress Brake Planting Company) stated that although water quality has been discussed within the FRRCC, nutrient reduction in the Mississippi River Basin and River are necessary. Nutrient management may be an important topic for discussion by the FRRCC. Dr. Balling suggested that Mr. Johnson peruse the previous FRRCC report, and any items that still need to be discussed should be mentioned to the Committee.

Mr. Robert Rynning (Rynning Farm) commented that the scientific portion of the previous FRRCC report was very well done.

Mr. Petty added that covering a variety of issues in the next FRRCC report is reasonable; however, there should be some focal point so that it is not overly broad. Dr. Balling agreed. Mr. Elworth and Dr. Balling commented that a lengthy report is unnecessary and that a letter to Administrator Jackson suggesting three or four recommendations from the Committee would be effective.

Mr. Elworth stressed that it is valuable for EPA staff members to meet with the FRRCC working groups to discuss the recommendations. Dr. Balling agreed and expressed his gratitude that EPA staff members had been responsive after FRRCC working groups met with them to discuss the recommendations.

Mr. McDonald said that the first FRRCC addressed several issues and produced five to six letters with recommendations that were submitted to the EPA Administrator.

Mr. Boggs suggested that the multimedia multiplicity of regulations could serve as a framework for how individual farms can reconcile what they are told to do regarding soil, water, air and so forth with other important goals. He expressed the importance of these issues regarding the debate(s) on drought and feed corn, and air quality concerns. If the FRRCC deals solely with energy and renewable energy, then different policies are not given due consideration regarding profitability of farms, land use and so forth.

Lawrence E. Clark (Farm Pilot Project Coordination) said that the role of economic markets can be incorporated into many of the ideas presented. Trading can give producers options for how to become more involved and gain traction in environmental improvements.

Dr. Balling thanked the Committee for identifying 10 or 11 potential items for the FRRCC to discuss. He and Mr. Elworth will compile the list and send it via email to the members. These items will be discussed further at a future teleconference. Mr. Elworth added that FRRCC members should send additional ideas to him via email.

Public Comments

Ms. Kaiser called for public comments.

Andrea Guajardo (Conejos County Clean Water, Inc.) expressed her appreciation for the work of the FRRCC. She commented that she is from an agrarian community that faces surface water augmentation laws and environmental regulations. She suggested that the FRRCC expand on sustainability to include the cumulative impacts of regulatory compliance (e.g., agricultural community renewable energy, economic viability). Ms. Kaiser thanked her for her comments and added that her suggestion will be included in the teleconference summary.

General Discussion

Mr. McDonald asked if there were any plans for a face-to-face FRRCC meeting, and Mr. Elworth replied that the Committee must await budget information. Ms. Kaiser commented that the FRRCC will not meet prior to September 30, 2012.

Referring to an earlier comment regarding the usefulness of FRRCC members' visits to EPA regional offices, Dr. Janis McFarland (Syngenta Crop Protection) said that any feedback obtained by FRRCC members during these visits could be useful in guiding the Committee in its current work.

Ms. Kaiser and Dr. Balling thanked the participants for their participation and input.

Adjournment

Ms. Kaiser adjourned the meeting at 2:20 p.m. EDT.

Full Committee Action Items

- ✧ Committee members should send via email to Dr. Balling and Mr. Elworth any additional ideas for future topics to be addressed by the FRRCC in the coming years.
- ✧ Dr. Balling and Mr. Elworth will compile the ideas discussed at this teleconference and obtained via email into one document that will be distributed to the Committee via email.
- ✧ The list of suggested ideas for the FRRCC's future deliberations will be open to further discussion by the Committee.

**Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee (FRRCC)
August 1, 2012 Teleconference Meeting Participants**

Committee Chair:

Steven S. Balling, Ph.D.
Del Monte Foods
Walnut Creek, CA

Tom McDonald
JBS Five Rivers Cattle Feeding
Dalhart, TX

Janis McFarland, Ph.D.
Syngenta Crop Protection
Greensboro, NC

Members:

Peggy Beltrone
Exergy Integrated Systems
Great Falls, MT

David D. Petty
Iowa River Ranch
Eldora, IA

George J. Boggs
Whatcom Conservation District
Lynden, WA

Jennie Popp, Ph.D.
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR

Senator Michael Brubaker
State Senate of Pennsylvania
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Anusuya Rangarajan, Ph.D.
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Robert Carlson
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Texas Mexico Border Coalition
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Ann Sorenson, Ph.D.
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DeKalb, IL

Patrick Johnson
Cypress Brake Planting Company
Tunica, MS

Donn Teske
Donn Teske Farm
McPherson, KS

Philip Korson
Cherry Marketing Institute
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Designated Federal Officer:

Paul Martin
Spear Six Ranch
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Alicia Kaiser
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EPA Participants:

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 10

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 9

Lawrence Elworth

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
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Kristina Heinemann

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 2

Rebecca Perrin

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 8

Kelly Shenk

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 3

Andrea Szylvian

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Region 1

Eugene Thilsted, Ph.D.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 6

Other Participants:

Steven K. Ford

USDA Farm Service Agency

Andrea Guajardo

Conejos County Clean Water, Inc.

Alan Hahn

Environmental Consulting Firm

David LaRoss

Inside EPA

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