



West Coast Collaborative
Agriculture and Biofuels Sector Working Group
November 15, 2006 Teleconference Meeting Summary

The Agriculture and Biofuels Working Group met by teleconference on November 15, 2006. The purpose of this regularly scheduled meeting was to hear about programs and activities in the California Central Valley, discuss ways of building stronger connections between biofuels and agriculture, and learn about upcoming grants and events.

Welcome

Peter Murchie welcomed Beth Sweeney as the new Agriculture and Biofuels Sector Working Group Lead. Beth can be contacted at Sweeney.Elizabeth@epa.gov or (206) 553-6387.

Announcements

Peter Murchie announced that the title of this Working Group has been changed from the Agriculture Sector Working Group to the Agriculture and Biofuels Sector Working Group due to the increased importance of biofuels issues. Members did not express any concerns about this name change.

Update on California Central Valley Programs and Activities

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) California Air Quality Program

Johnnie Siliznoff, USDA NRCS Air Quality Specialist, gave an update on funding opportunities through the USDA NRCS California Air Quality Program. Currently, NRCS has a number of funding programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The purpose of EQIP is to promote conservation practices by sharing costs with landowners. EQIP includes a diesel engine program, which cost shares 50% with growers to change out existing non-certified engines. Three-hundred forty-six diesel engines have been replaced as a result of EQIP since 1998. EQIP extended the diesel engine program throughout the entire state of California this year, and anticipates continuing to fund the program in the future. EQIP also includes a road oiling program, a conservation tillage program, a disposal program, and several dairy-related programs.

Peter Murchie and Beth Sweeney will work with Johnnie to get contact information for this program.

San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) Incentive Program

Chris Acree, SJVAPCD Senior Air Quality Specialist, gave an update on the SJVAPCD Incentive Program. The Emission Reduction Incentive Program (ERIP) Office accepts applications for projects, evaluates the cost effectiveness of the proposed projects, and then issues grants based on certain thresholds. ERIP has two major programs: the Reduce Motor Vehicle Emissions (REMOVE) program and the Heavy Duty Engine program. The REMOVE program is focused on reducing emissions from light and medium-duty vehicles, while the Heavy Duty Engine program focuses on reducing emissions from on- and off-road heavy-duty vehicles. ERIP is currently looking at larger sources of funding and for partners in new areas.

To obtain an application for either program, go to www.valleyair.org and click on "Grants and Incentives" or call SJVAPCD at (559) 230-5800. For more information on SJVAPCD's programs, contact Chris Acree at chris.acree@valleyair.org or (559) 230-5829.



Discussion: How to Build Stronger Connections between Biofuels and Agriculture

The Working Group discussed ideas for ways to build stronger connections between biofuels and agriculture. Ideas included:

- Public education and outreach on biofuels on both the supply side and demand side
- Getting the word out about the inclusion of biofuels in this Working Group and exploring the possibility for making biofuels its own entity within the Collaborative
- Providing more forums for discussion
- Having a stronger presence for biofuels issues in general in the Collaborative
- Getting the California Air Resources Board, the Collaborative, local biodiesel, and possibly the USDA and the Department of Energy (DOE) together for discussions

Peter Murchie pointed out that the Collaborative could also act as a convener for applied research discussions between labs and Working Group members.

Grants and Events Report

The Working Group did not have time to discuss upcoming grants and events. Information on these grants and events is listed below and is also available on the Collaborative's website (www.westcoastcollaborative.org).

Harvesting Clean Energy Conference/Biodiesel in the Pacific Northwest Workshop – Jan 31, 2007

The University of Idaho will be hosting a full-day workshop on biodiesel feedstocks, production, co-products and marketing on January 31 in Boise, ID, immediately following the next Harvesting Clean Energy Conference. For details on both events, visit www.harvestcleanenergy.org/conference.

DSIRE

DSIRE is a comprehensive source of information on state, local, utility, and federal incentives that promote renewable energy and energy efficiency. Choose one or both databases to search:

<http://www.dsireusa.org/>

USDOE Alternative Fuels Data Center

For information, see http://www.eere.energy.gov/afdc/laws/incen_laws.html

USDA Rural Development Energy Initiatives

For information, see <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/energy/>

USDA Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Investment

USDA has announced a \$17.5 million investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency. For more information, see <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal?contentidonly=true&contentid=2006/08/0329.xml>

National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program FY 2007

This program has several elements and each has its own objectives, funding amounts, contacts for further information, submission deadlines, etc. For details, go to

http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/rfas/pdfs/07_nri.pdf.

Plant Feedstock Genomics for Bioenergy

The US DOE and the USDA request proposals for genomics-based research that will lead to the improved use of biomass and plant feedstocks for the production of fuels such as ethanol or renewable chemical feedstocks. Areas of interest include, but are not limited to, fundamental research on plants that will improve biomass characteristics, biomass yield, or that will facilitate lignocellulosic degradation. Up to \$3 million is expected to be available, and awards will range from \$100K to \$500K. Pre-applications are required and are due 11/13/06, final proposals are due 1/30/07. For more information, contact Melanie



Becker at melanie.becker@science.doe.gov or go to <http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?oppld=11165&mode=VIEW> and refer to Sol# DE-PS02-07ER07-03.

Conversion of Lignocellulosic Biomass to Ethanol

The US DOE requests proposals for the Development of Robust, Highly Efficient Fermentative Organisms for the Conversion of Lignocellulosic Biomass to Ethanol. The organism must be able to survive a wide range of environmental conditions and be genetically stable. \$17 million are expected to be available, and up to four awards are anticipated. Letters of Intent are requested but not required and are due 11/16/07. Final proposals are due on 1/4/07. For more information, contact James Damm at james.damm@go.doe.gov or go to <https://e-center.doe.gov/iips/faopor.nsf/UNID/13949F628D2B2DB68525720C00706F4E?OpenDocument>

Methane Recovery

EPA requests proposals for Activities that Advance Methane Recovery and Use as a Clean Energy Source. The goal of this initiative is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, enhance economic growth, promote energy security, and improve the environment. The Partnership targets four major methane sources: Agriculture (manure management only), landfills, underground coal mines, and oil and gas systems. EPA is particularly interested in projects that facilitate partnerships in Argentina, Brazil, China, Colombia, Ecuador, India, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and the Ukraine. \$2.5 million expected to be available, up to 20 awards are anticipated. Responses are due 12/4/06. For more info, contact Erin Birgfeld at birgfeld.erin@epa.gov or go to <http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?mode=VIEW&oppld=11145> and refer to Sol# EPA-OAR-CCD-06-08.

Center for Economic and Environmental Partnership, Inc. (CEEP)

For more information about CEEP, go to <http://www.ceepinc.org>.

The PIER Renewables Program

The PIER Renewables Program has released a grant solicitation for Biofuels Research Development and Demonstration. This is a competitive grant solicitation with the intent of accelerating research, development and demonstration of biofuel energy conversion technologies and refineries using lignocellulosic biomass (such as agricultural and forest residues, and urban waste), food waste, beverages, waste grease, purpose-grown or energy crops. The Program Opportunity Notice, and application documents are posted on <http://www.energy.ca.gov/contracts/pier.html>. The deadline to submit proposals is January 4, 2007 at 4 p.m.

Renewables – California

The Turlock Irrigation District in Turlock, CA, seeks an increased portion of its electric energy requirements from eligible renewable energy resources, and to purchase renewable energy credits. Responses are due 12/20/06. For more information, go to <http://www.tid.org/Old/Electric/greenfp.aspx>

Announcements

The USDA/EPA National Air Quality Task Force has been extended for another two years. A Working Group member will send information to Peter Murchie to be posted on the Collaborative website.

Conclusion

Peter Murchie and Beth Sweeney will set up the next Agriculture and Biofuels Sector Working Group conference call and will explore the opportunity for a biofuels focused Collaborative-wide call.