

Meeting Minutes – April 8, 2014

Illinois Structural Pest Control Advisory Council (SPCAC)

General Meeting Information

A meeting of the Illinois Structural Pest Control Advisory Council was held on April 8, 2014. The meeting was held at the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), 525 W. Jefferson, in Springfield, Illinois.

Participants and SPCAC Members Present

Subcommittee Members Present:

- Scott Beckerman, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Michael Boyle, Grundy County Health Department
- Warren Goetsch, Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA)
- Chris Haggerty, American Pest Control
- Gary Pietrucha, Envirosafe Pest Management Inc.
- Dr. Susan Ratcliffe, North Central IPM Center
- Eric Ruesken, Arab Termite & Pest Control

Subcommittee Members Not Present:

- Joe Kath, Illinois Department of Natural Resources

IDPH Representatives Present:

- Dr. Curt Colwell, Division of Environmental Health
- Joe Mitchell, Division of Environmental Health

Guests Present:

- Ruth Kerzee, Midwest Pesticide Action Center (MPAC)
- Don Kaufman, Greater Chicago Pest Management Association (GCPMA)
- Cindy Stricker, ADM Corn Processing

SPCAC Meeting Summary

- Dr. Curt Colwell, acting as Chairman designee for Ken McCann, called the meeting to order after determining a quorum was present. Attendees introduced themselves.
- Approval was sought for the Minutes of the Council's meeting of September 17, 2013. Gary Pietrucha so motioned and Warren Goetsch seconded. The Minutes were thus approved.
- Gary Pietrucha led a discussion of the Chicago Bed Bug Ordinance. He mentioned his meeting with Dr. Cortland Lohff of the Chicago Department of Public Health, regarding issues with the Ordinance, and that Dr. Lohff was to communicate his thoughts on those issues via email, but had not yet done so. Pietrucha added that Dr. Lohff would appear at a Greater Chicago Pest Management Association meeting in June, and that their discussion of Ordinance issues would continue at that event. Pietrucha said he felt there was little that could be done at this time to amend the Ordinance. He referred to the Advisory Council's 2011 bed bug report to the legislature, as being more precise and workable in its definitions of bed bug problems and penalties.
- Ruth Kerzee stated that her organization (MPAC) also had questions about the Ordinance, and that it would be gathering data from the Chicago City Services hotline regarding problems the Ordinance might encounter as it is implemented. Kerzee added that MPAC had trained personnel of the Chicago Department of Building who, per the Ordinance, are charged with enforcing it, but despite that Department's show of confidence, its staff would probably require additional training to provide adequate enforcement. She said that MPAC would also be training staff who would be involved in hearings resulting Ordinance enforcement.
- Don Kaufman of the GCPMA and Orkin, along with members of the Council, expressed concern about the safety and effectiveness of landlords attempting to do their own pest control in bed bug-infested rental properties. Kaufman cited a case in which a landlord issued aerosol pesticides to tenants for use in treating their own units. Gary Pietrucha suggested that the first test of the Ordinance would come when a major lawsuit occurred, and/or when the media became involved. Susan Ratcliffe anticipated that low-income rental properties that could not afford professional bed bug treatment as specified by the Ordinance, might be closed as a result, leaving numbers of renters without living quarters. The group agreed this could be a significant problem.
- Discussion moved to the creation of a new bird management manual for study by individuals intending to take the Illinois bird control sub-category examination. Curt Colwell reported that the Department had contracted with wildlife experts at the University of Nebraska to excerpt and develop bird-appropriate sections from their national wildlife control manual. He added that Scott Beckerman had been instrumental in securing this arrangement, and that Beckerman, as a bird management specialist himself, would also be reviewing a draft of the manual. Dr. Colwell said the

manual would be ready for use by the end of the year, and that a new exam would be written based on it. He asked if other members of the Council would like to see the draft and make comments. The members said they would, but did not want to delay the process, suggesting that the draft be sent to them and that they would individually return comments, rather than wait for a review of the draft at the next Council meeting. Colwell went on to offer a special review session of the new bird control examination, when written, of which the group was in favor.

- Colwell also reported that about 100 persons had thus far taken the recently and completely revised General Standards Examination which Council members had previously reviewed. He related that only 27 percent of examinees had passed the new exam. The group attributed this to examinees not being aware the exam had changed, or even that the new manual on which it was based was available for download from the Department's Structural Pest Control webpage. Colwell said that recommendations to study the new manual had been posted on the webpage for 2 or 3 months before the new exam was administered. Colwell and the group agreed that the new exam's passing percentage would increase over time as awareness of the new exam and manual increased. He added that the most frequently missed questions were from the Label and Regulations sections of the exam, but that virtually all of the answers to those questions could be found in the new manual. Gary Pietrucha said there is no excuse for examinees not being able to read a pesticide label, and that the review committee had removed questions thought to be ambiguous, so those that failed the exam would just have to take it again.
- Warren Goetsch asked if Colwell was able to compare exam passing rates with those of other states, adding that the Department of Agriculture's General Standards Exam passing rate was about 89 percent. Colwell remarked that the IDA's testing procedure was different in that examinees were required to retake an exam every three years whereas those taking Illinois Department of Public Health exams need only pass an exam once. Additionally, study sessions were provided prior to some IDA exams, provided primarily by specialists from the University of Illinois Extension. Colwell stated that Extension should be offering study sessions for IDPH exams as well, suggesting Extension groups are obligated to do so per the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. Chris Haggerty said he believed that having such seminars before exams would make a huge difference in passing rate.
- Haggerty spoke also about the proposed revision of the Department's fumigation sub-category examination. He had contacted a number of persons to compose a list of fumigation specialists that might be able to recommend study materials for a revised version of the exam. Colwell said his first step would be to contact such persons for advice on finding study material that was specific to structural fumigation.
- Colwell moved the discussion to New Business. He commented that the Council's two prospective members, Ruth Kerzee and Cindy Stricker, were still being considered for appointment by the Governor's Office – after many months – and that

unfortunately there was no indication that they would be appointed any time soon. Next he mentioned a proposed amendment to the Illinois Pesticide Act, namely Senate Bill 3565. The Bill would allow approximately a dozen Cook County municipalities to essentially enact their own pesticide laws, just as the City of Chicago has been enabled to do. Warren Goetsch remarked that the Bill was drafted with an error that in fact would take away Cook County's authority to enact its own pesticide-related laws. He said the Bill would have to be amended to do what it was intended to do, and that it was not presently under consideration by the Legislature. Ruth Kerzee added that Oak Park and perhaps other Cook municipalities were interested only in outdoor pesticide application with regard to the Bill, i.e., in banning certain pesticide uses, e.g., for algicide use. She said that some municipalities don't like the idea of being told they cannot make pesticide-related laws, and view the Bill as a means to "take back our rights," although she was not aware of any law they were interested in enacting at present. Curt Colwell asked that since the City of Chicago had had that power for some time, had the City exercised that power to enact any pesticide laws. Kerzee and Warren Goetsch said the City had not done much in that regard, Goetsch adding that in one case Chicago had asked the IDA to actually relax one of the Act's existing regulations. Chris Haggerty warned against individual municipalities enacting numbers of laws that would make it virtually impossible for pest control operators, who frequently worked across municipality borders, to know and follow all such laws. He said municipal laws would essentially make criminals out of people whose intentions were to do the right thing.

- Dr. Colwell interjected his plan to write new rules to amend the Structural Pest Control Code, in an attempt to clarify certain Code sections and to better define the Department's authority to enforce the Code. He added that the Council would be privy to any proposed revisions, and further that Council members were welcome to suggest additional Code language they thought might be beneficial. He cautioned that the process might take two years before such amendments could be enacted.
- Colwell went on to advise that, while reciprocity had been established between Illinois and all border states except Kentucky, regarding the certification of pest management professionals, only with Indiana could Illinois offer reciprocity for General Standards ("minimal") certification. This was because the other states either did not have a General Standards certification category or did not require a closed-book examination to obtain that certification.
- Finally, Dr. Susan Ratcliffe was asked to share her thoughts on "the past and future of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) seminars." Dr. Ratcliffe first referred to comments from attendees of 2013 IPM seminars. She related that several had said the seminar was too long and/or redundant. Ratcliffe said her idea was to counter this by holding future seminars at schools in which the last session of the day might be used to do an actual IPM inspection of the premises, which would help maintain attendee interest. Ruth Kerzee brought up the newly formed "I-IPM" (Illinois-IPM) association and progress being made to get schools more involved in IPM. Dr.

Ratliffe, a founding member of I-IPM, said she wanted to find schools with pest problems and use them to host IPM seminars this year. Mentioned as possible locations were schools in Gurnee, Chicago and downstate Chatham. Colwell said that in lieu of doing the seminars in schools, that school IPM inspections could be done and videotaped for playback during IPM seminars hosted elsewhere. Ruth Kerzee said that Regional Offices of Education might be utilized as hosts, and she agreed to try to find a suitable school in the City of Chicago to host one of the seminars. Colwell agreed to contact a school in Chatham, and Eric Ruesken, recalling a previous IPM seminar conducted at Rend Lake College, said he would look into finding a suitable school in southern Illinois.

- When there were no further comments regarding New Business, Dr. Colwell advised the next Council meeting would probably take place in fall of 2014, and that he would send queries to ascertain a mutually acceptable date. The meeting was then adjourned.