

National Working Party for Pesticide Applications (NWPPA)

June 2017 Report

Background

The National Working Party on Pesticide Applications (NWPPA) has been working since 2010 to bring a national, coordinated technical approach to spray drift issues.

Our vision is that the regulatory system is science based and recognises the use of drift reduction technologies, better education and practice to enable the use of smaller, practical buffer zones.

Current Situation

With most of the research commissioned by the NWPPA either finished or nearing completion, and the delay in the release of the APVMA consultation paper, the Working Party reduced activities in 2016-17. However, dialogue with the APVMA and other stakeholders was maintained and operation of the TWG supported.

At a meeting with Stakeholders held in Canberra on 12 April 2017, the APVMA confirmed and acknowledged that work facilitated by the NWPPA has delivered science that has provided significant support for the proposed framework.

However, as a result of reorganisation, relocation and other business factors, the APVMA is currently prioritising activities to improve on its overall core KPIs <https://apvma.gov.au/node/26841>

Consequently, as of June 2017, the APVMA has not yet released the final spray drift draft consultation paper and although “the science has been done”, the APVMA has indicated that it does not currently have the resources to “roll out” and implement the new spray drift framework.

The Current Approach

The APVMA’s current approach for addressing the risk of spray drift was established in March 2010. Following implementation, it was found that:

- The scheme lacked flexibility and an ability to adopt DRTs
- Assessments were based on worst case scenarios
- There was little incentive to adopt best practice
- There were deterrents to including some types of applications when registering products

Consequently, in step with the NWPPA, the APVMA commenced an internal project to develop a new spray drift regulatory framework in 2013. This new approach proposed a set of on-line tools that could be made publicly available on APVMA’s website for calculating spray drift and setting buffers. A draft consultation document was sent to the NWPPA in September 2015 for review and comment. Comments were received by the APVMA and draft documentation updated in accordance with submissions made during the ground truthing exercise.

The new approach proposes to make use of a new Spray Drift Management Tool (SDMT) to generate scientifically justifiable deposit curves. This initiative would enable:

- Simplified and consistent label statements.
- Quicker assessment by APVMA through use of a Spray Drift Risk Assessment Tool, (SDRAT).
- Increased flexibility by end users (SDMT).
- Greater use of drift reducing technologies (DRTs).

Next Steps

The NPPWA's Technical Working Group (TWG) met in Canberra on 27 June 2017 to review the status of the science and technical operation of the proposed APVMA spray drift framework.

The TWG identified a range of technical activities which if completed, would assist the APVMA implement the spray drift framework and deliver a program for industry to make greater use of drift reducing technologies. These activities include the development of a graphical interface to enable stakeholder access and use of the SDMT.

These activities, if resourced, could potentially be facilitated and delivered by the NWPPA, thereby assisting APVMA implement the framework in cost effective and meaningful timeframe.

The NWPPA has formally offered to assist the APVMA with implementing the revised Spray Drift Framework.

Work Completed

For the last seven years, the NWPPA has provided an impartial technical based forum for supporting all key stakeholders in the evidenced based approach to the spray drift regulation and application of pesticides.

With multi-million-dollar funding provided by Grains and Cotton Research & Development Corporations, Wine Australia, Horticulture Innovation Australia (HIA), Aerial Application Association of Australia (AAAA) and other stakeholders, the NWPPA has facilitated a range of workshops, research studies, papers and documents designed to support regulators and applicators design and implement a science based approach to DRT assessment and adoption.

Research

Following an independent review of the domestic and international technical and regulatory environment, a range of field studies measuring the performance of spray equipment and spray drift characteristics were completed to support pesticide application in both viticulture and broad acre crops.

Comprehensive wind tunnel studies were undertaken using advanced wind tunnel facilities at the University of Queensland to accurately measure the droplet size generated by spray nozzles and adjuvants applied using both aircraft and ground boom sprayers. A major survey of horticulture growers was undertaken to determine the equipment and practices used by applicators to minimise spray drift.

Research trials in viticulture were commenced to understand the relationship between canopy coverage, pest control and optimum spray drift mitigation techniques. Other major studies have been conducted investigating the management of spray drift through inversion risk awareness.

Workshops and Meetings

The NWPPA has hosted regular meetings of National Working Party on Pesticide Applications in Canberra. These have been attended by regulators, government agencies and industry organisations and provided an opportunity for constructive APVMA and industry engagement.

International workshop for regulators

The Working Party hosted a three-day international workshop for regulators in Brisbane in 2014. Co-Chaired by the CEO of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA), the event received contributions from the Canadian Pest Management Regulatory Agency, the United Kingdom Chemicals Directorate, the UK's National Institute of Agricultural Botany (Silsoe Spray Applications Unit), and New Zealand's Environmental Protection Agency.

Delegates travelled to the University of Queensland's campus at Gatton to see first-hand modern spray drift technologies as well as hear about and see the science behind the new technologies.

Technical Working Group (TWG)

The TWG was established under the NWPPA to provide technical advice to the NWPPA Executive Committee and develop a science-based hypothesis that could (a) enable and facilitate operational and practical use of downwind no-spray buffers, where appropriate, and (b) provide mechanisms for the Australian regulatory system to recognise and support industry best management practices and the adoption of drift reduction technologies (DRTs) with potential reductions in the size of the otherwise generic no-spray buffer zones. Its membership is made up of scientists from government, academia, industry and RDCs

The TWG has met regularly during the last 5 years and has provided a series of reports to the NWPPA Executive Committee. For example, the report, *An Assessment of AGDISP™ Ground for Determining the Downwind Spray Deposition from Boom Sprayers* examines the use of international models for spray risk assessment in Australia and other papers have been used to determine if artificial and vegetative buffers can be used to quantitatively reduce spray drift.

Website

The NWPPA has maintained a website for all stakeholders that provides information on NWPPA activities, newsletters and reports, <http://nwppa.net.au/>

NWPPA Work & Executive Committee 2016-17

The Executive Committee of the NWPPA will meet early in the 2017-18 financial year to determine what actions are required in response to this current situation. The Executive Committee will develop a response and action plan as required.

2016-17 NWPPA Executive Committee

Gavan Cattanach	Independent Chair
Gerard Barbell	Nufarm
Jolyon Burnett	Australian Macadamia Society
Ross Gillies	HVP Plantations
Melanie Gengos	Adama
Keith Hayes	Australian Grape and Wine Authority
Phil Hurst	AAAA
Alastair James	CropLife Australia
Matt Kealley	Canegrowers
Joe Murrell	Australian Groundsprayers Association
Jodi Pedrana	Horticulture Innovation Australia Ltd
Trevor Ranford	Pistacho Growers Association
Colin Sharpe	Dow Agrosience
Ken Young	GRDC

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