

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION		Number: 1042-126
SUBJECT: Agricultural Air Quality Task Force	DATE: September 17, 2004	
	OPI: Natural Resources Conservation Service	

1 PURPOSE

This regulation renews the Agricultural Air Quality Task Force. It is being renewed consistent with the requirements of Section 391 of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform (FAIR) Act which directs the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to establish a task force to address agricultural air quality issues. The Chief of NRCS is responsible for preparing the following charter under Section 9(c) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, amended December 21, 1982.

2 BACKGROUND

The 1990 Clean Air Act requires the monitoring and controlling of particulates of size 10 micrometers in diameter and smaller. Many areas, particularly in the Western United States, experience concentrations of these particulates which exceed the 1987 Federal health standards. In addition, other potential air emissions from agriculture, such as those associated with animal production or the application of pesticides, are increasingly becoming subject to regulation.

The Fair Act of 1996 addresses Agricultural Air Quality Research. In Section 391 of the Act, the United States Congress reports that:

- a A number of studies have alleged that agriculture is a source of PM-10 emissions;
- b Many of these studies have often been based on erroneous data;
- c Federal research activities are currently being conducted by the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to determine the true extent to which agricultural activities contribute to air pollution and to determine cost-effective ways in which the agricultural industry can reduce air pollution; and,

- d Any policy recommendations that may be issued by any Federal agency to address air pollution problems related to agriculture or any other industrial activity, should be based on sound scientific findings that are subject to adequate peer review and should take into account economic feasibility.

The FAIR Act directs the Chief of NRCS to establish a task force to oversee and review research in agricultural air quality issues in order to ensure intergovernmental cooperation in research activities.

3 SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS/CANCELLATIONS

- a The name of this committee is the Agricultural Air Quality Task Force.
- b The Task Force will be terminated two years from the date of renewal by the Chief of NRCS unless renewed.
- c This regulation will expire two years from the date of filing. Departmental Regulation 1042-126, dated August 26, 2002, is superseded by this regulation.

4 OFFICERS AND MEMBERSHIP

- a The Chief of NRCS will serve as chair of the Task Force. The Task Force will report to the Chief of NRCS, who will present Task Force recommendations to the Secretary of Agriculture.
- b Equal opportunity practices, consistent with USDA policies, will be followed in all appointments to the Task Force. To ensure that the recommendations of the Committee have taken into account the needs of the diverse groups served by the Department, membership should include, to the extent practicable, individuals with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women, and persons with disabilities.

5 DUTIES

The Task Force shall advise the Secretary of Agriculture regarding the scientific basis of the impact of agriculture on air quality. The intent of this effort will be to:

- a Strengthen vital research efforts related to agricultural air quality;

- b Determine the extent to which agricultural activities contribute to air pollution;
- c Determine cost-effective ways in which the agricultural industry can improve air quality;
- d Coordinate research on agricultural air quality issues to avoid duplication and insure data quality and sound interpretation of data.

6 ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISION

- a Members shall serve without compensation, but may receive reimbursement for travel expenses and per diem in accordance with USDA travel regulations for attendance at board functions.
- b Estimated annual operating cost of the Task Force is not expected to exceed \$75,000 and 1.00 staff years of support.

7 NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

The Task Force is estimated to meet four times annually.

8 REPORT/STAFF SUPPORT

- a The Task Force shall advise the Secretary of Agriculture with respect to the role of the Secretary for providing oversight and coordination related to agriculture and its relation to air quality.
- b NRCS will provide the necessary support for the Task Force, and designate a federal official to provide committee management as outlined in Department regulation 1041-1, and required under sections 10(e) and 10(f) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

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