

## **Agricultural & Environmental Safety unit — <http://www-aes.tamu.edu>**

### **TDA and SPCS** Dr. Don Renchie

As most of you know by now, in September 2007 the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) and the former Texas Structural Pest Control Board (SPCB) were merged. The TDA's Pesticide Division now consists of the "Worker Protection and Applicator Certification & Training Program and the Texas Structural Pest Control Service (SPCS)". This was mandated by the Legislature after the Structural Pest Control Board underwent "Sunset Review". By state law, each state agency undergoes this process every 12 years to determine if the agency's mission and performance are satisfactory.

**What Happened?** During the process, Sunset Commission staff conducted an internal review of the former SPCB and recommended many changes to how the agency functioned. However, during the public testimony portion of the process, many in the regulated community came forward and testified against the continuance of the agency. When all was said and done, the Legislature voted to abolish the SPCB and move their functions to the TDA.

**How will this affect structural pest control businesses?** Individuals regulated by the Texas Structural Pest Control Act will still abide by the rules and regulations. They must still obtain all required licenses, maintain proof of financial responsibility, obtain Continuing Education Units (CEUs) annually if they are licensed commercial or noncommercial applicators, complete 8 hours of verifiable training annually if they are licensed commercial or noncommercial technicians and pay the appropriate licensing fees.

**How will this affect Texas AgriLife Extension?** Nothing has changed. If you were previously licensed by the SPCB, as stated above maintain your license by adhering to the regulations and procedures. If you offer SPCS CEUs, nothing has changed. You must still submit all required forms and documentation prior to conducting the activity.

### **Noncommercial Political Subdivision Fee Waiver Removed**

The rule allowing Noncommercial Political Subdivision (NC PSD) license holders (including Extension employees) to have their license renewal fee waived has been removed by TDA effective November 12, 2007. Previously, NC PSD license holders could seek a waiver to the \$12 fee for license renewal if the request was made on their organizational letterhead. Currently, NC PSD license holders will be required to pay \$12 in order to renew their licenses. Notification of this change will be sent with renewal forms. On the positive side, NC PSD applicators will now be able to renew their licenses electronically.

### **No CEU Carryover**

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) must be acquired prior to renewal. Extra CEU credit obtained in one renewal cycle can not be forwarded and used in the next renewal cycle.

### **Recertification**

Be reminded that many TDA applicators licenses no longer expire in February of a given year (example: February 28, 2009.) As you may recall, changes to the Texas Pesticide Law and Regulations in 2005 now has license expirations and renewals coinciding with the date of issuance for agricultural applicators.

If a license was issued to a Commercial or Noncommercial applicator on March 10, 2007 it expires on March 10, 2008 and must be renewed on or before that date to avoid late fees. If a license was issued to a Private applicator on March 10, 2006 it will expire on March 10, 2011 and must be renewed on or before that date to avoid late fees. **This means we need to help our customers be more vigilant about their CEU cycles.**

### **Structural Pest Control Advisory Committee Members**

Commissioner Todd Staples announced the appointment of the inaugural members of the Structural Pest Control Advisory Committee February 11, 2008.

Tommy Kezar of Austin and Gregory Orr of Houston are the members with structural pest control application experts; Peggy Caruso of Katy, Johnny Hibbs of Carrollton and William Roberts of Plano are members representing public interest; Dr. Michael Merchant of Dallas is the member of an institution of higher education knowledgeable in the science of pests and pest control;

## The reemergence of dengue in south Texas

Mark M. Johnsen Ph.D.

Unbeknownst to most Texans a major disease, responsible for 200,000 human deaths annually, is cycling across the border in northern Mexico. This infectious disease goes by several names including break bone fever, dandy fever, and the seven day fever, but is most commonly known as dengue fever. This virus has resulted in several outbreaks in south Texas since its reemergence in 1980 with the latest occurring in Cameron County in 2005. The 2005 outbreak consisted of 24 confirmed cases of dengue fever and 1 case of dengue hemorrhagic fever in Texas (the first locally acquired case in the United States) and 1,251 cases of dengue fever and 223 cases of dengue hemorrhagic fever in northern Mexico.

Dengue is an arbovirus (arthropod-borne virus) that is transmitted between humans by the bite of an infected mosquito. The primary vectors of this virus are *Aedes aegypti* (yellow fever mosquito) and *Ae. albopictus* (Asian tiger mosquito) which both prefer artificial containers (bird baths, flower pots, etc.) for oviposition (egg laying) and larval development. These mosquito species are the primary backyard species in Texas and will actively feed during the day.

The dengue virus can manifest itself in two distinct clinical forms known as classic dengue fever and dengue hemorrhagic fever. Symptom of classic dengue fever include headache, rash, joint and muscle pain, high fever, and vomiting. Dengue hemorrhagic fever is the more severe form of the disease and is classified by fever, blotchy rash, bleeding from the mouth or nose, shock, respiratory problems, and high mortality (death) in patients suffering from this form of the disease.

There is currently no vaccine for the dengue virus and treatment is limited to treating the various secondary symptoms caused by the pathogen. The best defense against this disease is to practice the four "Ds" of mosquito control. These include:

- Drain – dump, clean, or cover all containers that can hold water for over three days
- Dusk and Dawn – avoid periods of peak mosquito activity
- Dress – wear light colored, long sleeved shirts and pants
- DEET – use mosquito repellents during outside activities

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and William Stepan of Houston is the member representing the interests of structural pest control operators. Dr. David Lakey is a member of the committee as the commissioner of state health services. The member representing the interests of consumers based on the recommendations of a consumer advocacy group or association remains to be appointed.

These members, with the exception of the commissioner of state health services, will serve staggered four-year terms. The committee will meet at least once during each calendar year and may meet on other occasions at the direction of the Commissioner of Agriculture. The initial meeting of the committee will be in March.

### Private Applicator Training DVD

Just as a reminder, the DVDs sent to you in December 2004 are DVDs and will not work well in a computer, even one equipped with a DVD player. They contain so much information they will bog down even the fastest computers. They were designed to work with a DVD player. You are encouraged to use the funds you collect over what you pay for the manuals to purchase the equipment you need to host these events.

### Last Chance Video course numbers

Listed below are the new course numbers for the Last Chance Videos.

- **Tape 1 Laws & Regs** approved for 1.5 L&R and 0.5 General is 0486556
- **Tape 2 IPM** approved for 2.0 IPM is 0486557
- **Tape 3 Drift Minimization** approved for 1.5 Drift and 0.5 General is 0486558
- **Tape 4 Safety** approved for 2.0 General is 0486559

### Section 18 Exemptions

Dr. Mark Matocha

- Prowl H2O (pendimethalin) in bermudagrass pastures and hayfields to control sandbur.
- Maverick (sulfosulfuron) in bermudagrass pastures and hayfields to control johnsongrass. Expires June 30, 2008.

Labels and other Section 18 information can be found on the TDA website: [www.agr.state.tx.us](http://www.agr.state.tx.us)

### Proposed Cancellations/Label Changes

- EPA has received a petition to cancel all registrations and revoke all tolerances for chlorpyrifos.
- Temik 15G - Cancelled uses will include alfalfa grown for seed, field-grown ornamentals, pecans, sorghum, and sugarcane. Changes to the label have been made for cotton, soybean, and peanut.
- Malathion will no longer be registered for direct animal treatments.