



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

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INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

FROM: Pearlle S. Reed
Chief
Natural Resources Conservation Service

SUBJECT: Agricultural Air Quality Memorandum of Understanding with EPA

ISSUE:

A brief summary of the history and salient features of the Air Quality MOU between USDA and EPA would be helpful in briefing key departmental officials in both agencies.

DISCUSSION:

One of the initial recommendations made by the Agricultural Air Quality Task Force concerned the need for a Memorandum of Understanding between USDA and EPA to formalize the working relationship of the two agencies relative to air quality. Such an MOU was prepared and signed (by the Secretary on January 14, 1998 and by Carol Browner on February 25, 1998). The MOU set forth the specific and joint responsibilities of each agency relative to providing a process for involving both the agricultural and the environmental regulation communities in agricultural air quality matters. It provided considerable assurance to the agricultural "industry" that exchange of air quality information, the review of research, and the design of implementation measures will be jointly coordinated. It also provided assurance that when measures are taken in agriculture to improve air quality they are both technologically and economically feasible for individual landowners and users and are based on sound science. A copy of the MOU is attached.

SUMMARY: The MOU set forth individual and joint responsibilities of both agencies in addressing agricultural air quality issues. It provided assurance that sound science will be used in application of air quality measures and that such measures are technologically and economically feasible. A copy of the MOU is attached.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN THE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND THE
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to establish a formal working relationship between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) relative to agriculture air quality. In the spirit of cooperation, this will include advice from the Agricultural Air Quality Task Force (AAQTF).

AUTHORITY

- Section 391 of the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act.
- The Clean Air Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C., 7401 et seq.

GOAL

The goal of this MOU is to provide a thoughtful process for involving the agricultural community (for example, crops, animal husbandry, silviculture, etc.) and the environmental regulation community relative to agriculture air quality.

OBJECTIVE

Our objective is to provide a healthy environment with clean air in harmony with a strong agriculturally productive nation.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP

JOINTLY USDA AND EPA WILL--

- Share information relative to natural resource conditions and technical knowledge necessary to complete the purpose of this MOU.

- Seek to acquire needed research and demonstration field studies to improve the understanding of agricultural related activities impacting air quality and the impact of air quality regulation on agriculture.
- Disseminate information to the public and agricultural communities on the need for effective conservation practices that address air quality issues where such practices are determined necessary (where the problem exists).
- Confer on other air quality matters of mutual importance and concern.

USDA WILL--

- Provide EPA, as appropriate, with information and advice received from AAQTF.
- Encourage local conservation districts to seek consultation with other USDA agencies, agricultural universities, research and extension agricultural associations and others that have knowledge necessary to support the development of State/tribal implementation plans.
- Expand national conservation planning guidance to include more completely air quality issues in multi-resource systems planning for areas that require agricultural solutions.
- Cooperate with EPA or States/tribes to provide appropriate site-specific expertise for development of resource system strategies to evaluate agricultural air quality emissions.
- Provide status reports on research being conducted on agricultural emission estimates, wind erosion estimates, agricultural burning emissions, model development, sinks and resource management system demonstration projects relative to agriculture and its impact on air quality or air quality impacts on agriculture.

EPA WILL--

- Seek the advice on agricultural air quality issues from USDA.
- Encourage States/tribes to work cooperatively with local conservation districts to utilize local district expertise to determine if the resource conservation plans represent appropriate practices to support the State/tribal implementation plan.

- Cooperate with USDA in developing national policy and guidance documents regarding agriculture's role in State/tribal implementation planning efforts.
- Promote the use of Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) multi-resource conservation planning to identify farming practices that are based on appropriate scientific study and that can be used as a control strategy for agriculture on private lands in State/tribal implementation plans.
- Provide status reports on research being conducted on agricultural emission estimates, wind erosion estimates, agricultural burning emissions, model development, sinks and resource management system demonstration projects relative to agriculture and its impact on air quality or air quality impacts on agriculture.

PERIOD

This MOU will become effective upon the signature of both approving officials of the respective agencies. This MOU will remain in effect until termination by a 30-day advance written notice by either agency.

MODIFICATION PROVISION

This MOU may be modified or amended by mutual consent of the responsible parties listed below.

FUNDING

This MOU defines in general terms the basis on which the signatory agencies will cooperate. It is neither a fiscal nor a funds obligation document. Expenditure of funds, human resources, equipment, supplies, facilities, training, public information, and expertise will be provided for by each signatory agency to the extent that their participation is required and resources are available. Any endeavor involving reimbursement or contribution of funds between the parties to this MOU will be handled in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures. Such endeavors will be outlined in separate agreements that shall be made in writing by duly authorized representatives of the parties and shall be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

The responsible parties are the Chief of NRCS, USDA, and the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Air and Radiation, EPA. The responsible parties shall carry out this

agreement by all appropriate means, including correspondence, consultation and convening of AAQTF meetings.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



DAN GLICKMAN

Secretary of Agriculture

JAN 14 1998

DATE

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY



CAROL BROWNER

Administrator

FEB 25 1998

DATE