Meeting opened by Jay Brunner.

ATTENDEES:

Frank Alvarez
Ofelio Borges
Jay Brunner
Leo Garcia
Dave Gleason
Ellen Gray
Sandy Halstead
Jim Hazen
Kevin Knight
Olin Knutson
Cynthia Lopez (via telephone)
Bryon McDougall
Keith Matthews
Karen Lewis
Jim McFerson
Lisa Pelly
Charlie Pomianek
José Ramirez
Alberto Roman
Travis Shoenwald
Doug Walsh
Mike Willett
Steve Zedicker
Nick Stephens

Jim Hazen gave a brief history of the Pest Management Transition Project (PMTP). Its original intent was to create an educational and implementation program to support the Washington apple industry’s transition from azinphosmethyl (AZM = Guthion) to alternative technologies. Several industry groups collaborated to obtain support and funding from the State Legislature. An allocation of $550,000 over the 07-08 biennium was provided via the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). The Washington Tree Fruit Research Commission (WTRFC) has completed an inter-agency agreement with the WSDA and will serve as the project’s fiscal manager. The allocation was one-time funding, but there is hope that with success there will be additional funds to complete the project, which is projected to take an additional 2-3 years. The project goal is to facilitate meeting federal regulations phasing out the use of AZM, to provide educational programming for producers and the work force of the Washington tree fruit industry, and to create more awareness of overall integrated Pest Management (IPM) efforts among various agricultural, environmental, regulatory, and work force communities.

Round the table introductions were made.

Karen Lewis described Wild Horse Project facility. This new, well-equipped facility is especially interested in providing a venue for non-profit organizations. There is currently no cost for rental. All not-for-profits are urged to consider utilizing the facility.

Jay Brunner discussed how the Advisory Committee was assembled. The intent was to select from various key agriculture and environmental communities to help the PMTP understand and address issues facing a broad cross-section of stakeholders. He went on to describe briefly the objectives of the project and how the project is organized. General time-line milestones have been identified. The next major effort will be to hire staff and contact the fruit industry to establish Implementation Units. Go to the PMTP web site (http://pmtp.wsu.edu) to view the explanation of the Implementation Units and to review the goals and objectives of the project.

Jay Brunner went on to stress that the PMTP is not a research project. Thanks to years of research by scientists at Washington State University and the USDA Agricultural Research Service sufficient research-based information already exists on IPM programs that do not rely on regular applications of AZM. The primary outreach to the fruit industry will be education on how to use existing alternative materials and how to most effectively implement their use in apple orchards. Although there are good alternatives to organophosphate insecticides like AZM for most apple pests, some exceptions occur, which must be addressed as part of the PMTP. Notable exceptions will be addressed in the projects education. A proposed organizational structure for the PMTP was shared and discussed. Major elements of PMTP are:
There is a strong commitment to the “Assessment” element. Other than just documenting what changes in terms of IPM practices, we need to also understand how and why behaviors change, the reasons for adoption or non-adoption of new technologies, and the most effective communication tools to use with diverse audiences. We have a responsibility to manage this project successfully and communicate effectively to the Legislature on a regular basis.

Mike Willett (Northwest Horticulture Council) clarified some issues on the phase-out of AZM. Pesticide use data does not exist for tree fruit or other specialty crops if the National Agriculture Statistics Service does not; as is currently the plan, continue national surveys. An EPA/USDA national transition working group exists on the AZM phase-out. Mike Willett and Jay Brunner are on this working group. It provides a national forum for discussion surrounding AZM alternatives and challenges in making the transition to these products.

Jim Hazen provided background on the Ag Pilots Project and it offers opportunity for additional funding. This is Governor Gregoire’s initiative to fund innovative projects that support both environmental and agricultural goals. The project submitted by PMTP was one of four selected out of over 80 considered and has received funding of $149,500 over two years. Focus of this component is to add the social science component to the “Assessment and Documentation” element of PMTP.

Q AND A SESSION.

Q: Will we be able to expend funding within time allotted?
A: That is the concept. Our goal is to do what we are funded to do well, giving us a basis to return to Legislature as well as seek additional leveraged funding from other sources (e.g. Ag Pilots, USDA, RMCA, foundations, etc).

Q: Who is going to pay for all of this? EQIP cannot cover it.
A: The cost burden of transition will be borne by the industry. PMTP funding is for the administration, education, implementation, assessment and documentation of this project only.
The PMTP provides no subsidies and will not do monitoring. There will be a huge in-kind contribution from the industry that we need to document. NHC has estimated it costs $200/A to transition to new IPM technologies.

BREAKOUT SESSION

There were four breakout sessions facilitated by the PMTP Executive Committee members present (Brunner, Hazen, Lewis, McFerson). The breakout groups were asked to address six questions.

1. Are the goals/objectives of the PMTP appropriate given the issues being faced with loss of old insecticide tools and introduction of new ones? If not, what additional ones would you suggest?

DISCUSSION SUMMARY
- Need to better articulate goals and objectives, especially to specific groups.
- Articulate that the program is focused towards growers not currently making the transition.
- Enhance understanding of options and adoption will follow.
- Acknowledge that the project is a transition not an end game.
- This is not a static process – need to keep current.

2. How does your stakeholder group obtain information about new insecticide technologies? What information sources do you trust and why?

DISCUSSION SUMMARY
- There were multiple sources identified.
- The fruit industry gets information from:
  - Other growers;
  - Trial and error experiences;
  - Field consultants;
  - Educational and informal meetings;
  - WSU scientists and WSU spray guide.
- Other stakeholders get information from:
  - Regulatory agencies – product registration databases;
  - Environmental organizations – (e.g. Tilth);
  - Third party verification entities – (e.g. Food Alliance);
  - Health care providers.

3. What are the best ways to get new information to your stakeholder group concerning new pest management technologies?

DISCUSSION SUMMARY
- Work closely with professional field consultants.
- Offer to speak at warehouse meetings.
- Have meetings specific to this topic.
- Editorialize in the spray guide.
- Use many tactics to get the message and information across.
- Use experiential techniques including field tours and peer-to-peer sharing.

4. What are the barriers the apple industry faces when transitioning to new insecticide technology?

DISCUSSION SUMMARY
- Economic costs, real or perceived.
- Expected initial increase in costs but long-term benefits could mitigate higher costs.
• Not enough tools, or effective tools, to make the transition.
• New products carry ramifications that are not all understood, including pest flare-ups.
• There will need to be an expansion of pheromone mating disruption. Can add to costs.
• Need to have new thresholds for new products because of the way they act.
• Capture momentum already in place through federal and state regulatory actions but realize that some people will not be motivated until too late.
• If field consultants do not buy in there will be significant acreage not participating.

5. There has been a request to open the AC meetings to the public. Do you believe this would be a good idea or not? If the AC meetings were open to the public, would this keep you from openly sharing your ideas?

DISCUSSION SUMMARY
• There was a mixed response to opening AC meetings to the public – some had no problem; others thought it could inhibit open discussion and sharing of ideas.
• Concern over how press might interpret comments and publish results of meeting.
• There was no problem voiced about listing members of the AC on the web site or in other public documents.
• Web site and regular newsletters will provide consistent, updated information on structure and ongoing activities.
• Avoid providing contact information for AC members.

6. What would be the best time for the next AC meeting? What would be the best location for this meeting?

DISCUSSION SUMMARY
• The best times for AC meetings would be winter and spring – maybe a summer tour.
• The next meeting would be best if it was scheduled in late February.
• Open to WECN (video conferencing) to help increase participation.
• The AC members liked the site but it was not easy to find.

The next Advisory Committee meeting will be held in the Ellensburg area on February 28, 2008 from 10 am to 3 pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 2 pm.

Notes by Jim McFerson with review by the PMTP Executive Committee.