



Arroyo Colorado Watershed Partnership Agricultural Issues Workgroup

Harlingen Irrigation District Pump House

Trevino Road

Harlingen, Texas

October 19, 2011 10:30 am – 12:30 pm

Meeting Minutes

- **Welcome and Introductions**
 - Ronnie Ramirez, TSSWCB

- **Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan Implementation Update**
 - Jaime Flores, TWRI
 - Jaime Flores provided an update on the Watershed Protection Plan implementation efforts.

- **Preliminary Sub-Watershed Monitoring Results**
 - Dr. Venki Uddameri, Texas A&M- Kingsville
 - The preliminary results of the sub-watershed monitoring that was performed on 4 drainage ditches within the Arroyo-Colorado watershed were presented. The results showed that the drainage ditches do provide some attenuation of pollutant loading, but more comparison with edge-of-field data is needed.

- **Implementing Educational Components of the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan Focused on Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution**
 - Donnie Valdez, AgriLife Extension
 - A presentation was made to the Agricultural Issues workgroup that will also be used across the watershed as an educational tool to provide agricultural nonpoint source knowledge to local landowners. The presentation consists of information about the Arroyo Colorado watershed, development and implementation of the Arroyo Colorado Watershed Protection Plan, as well as importance of conservation and implementation of water quality management plans. Other incentive programs are also described in the presentation.

- **Evaluating BMPs to Reduce NPS Pollution at the Field Level**
 - Dr. Juan Enciso, AgriLife Research
 - A presentation was given that showed preliminary results of his edge-of-field study. The overall objective of the study was to determine the impact of best management practices adopted by the grower to reduce nonpoint source pollution caused by agricultural runoff. The study concluded that nutrient management and irrigation management programs should be implemented to reduce the amount of nutrients applied, as well as the amount of water dispensed onto the land. Another conclusion was the need for monitoring of

irrigation waters directly out of the pump before application to the field. This would allow for comparison between the water that is going on the field and what is running off.

➤ **Landowner Involvement in Technical Assistance Programs**

- Introduction
 - Ronnie Ramirez, TSSWCB
- Presentation
 - Buck Braswell, Willacy County Landowner
 - Mr. Braswell, a Willacy County landowner and Willacy County Soil and Water Conservation District Director, has been an advocate for conservation tillage for many years. Originally from Mississippi, he brought his knowledge of farming to South Texas. He was one of the first in the area to use conservation tillage practices, and has had much success with it over the years. Mr. Braswell spoke about how important and useful it can be to change from conventional farming practices to conservation practices.
- Presentation- Conservation Tillage (Strip-Tillage) in Kleberg County
 - Ernest Bippert, Jr., Kleberg County Farmer
 - Mr. Bippert gave a short presentation on conservation tillage. His presentation included the benefits of conservation tillage, the various equipment used on his operation, as well as a multitude of pictures showing his success. Mr. Bippert also included a sheet with cost differences between conventional tillage and strip tillage, which showed an average savings of \$25/acre.

➤ **Grants Update**

- Allen Berthold, TWRI
 - One proposal was submitted to TSSWCB for the FY12 CWA§319(h) grant cycle. This proposal focuses on a bacterial source tracking study for the Arroyo Colorado watershed, but also includes an educational component.

➤ **Other Business**

- Allen Berthold, TWRI
 - Next Meeting Date- April 2012

➤ **Adjourn/Lunch**

- Lunch was provided by Mid Valley Agriculture.