

Agricultural Air Quality Task Force (AAQTF or The Task Force) FY2013 Annual Report

Background and History:

The Agricultural Air Quality Task Force (AAQTF) was created in accordance with Section 391 of the Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on issues related to agricultural air quality. In 1996, Congress found that various studies alleged that agriculture is a source of Particulate Matter (PM) emissions and that many of these studies have often been based on erroneous data. Congress also cited ongoing research by USDA and declared that Federal policy in regard to air pollution be based on sound scientific findings that are subject to adequate peer review and take into account economic feasibility. The Task Force's mandate is to strengthen and coordinate USDA's air quality research effort and identify cost effective ways for the agriculture industry to improve air quality and meet Federal and local air quality emissions requirements. The Chief of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service chairs the AAQTF. The AAQTF membership consists of leaders in farming, industry, health, and science. The Task Force also includes representatives from USDA's Forest Service, Agricultural Research Service, and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

FY2013 AAQTF Activities and Recommendations

The AAQTF held no meetings in FY13. The Charter for the AAQTF ended on December 20, 2012. A new two-year charter was approved on April 15, 2013, and will be valid until April 15, 2015. FY13 efforts centered on recruiting and selecting the new AAQTF. New members for 2013-2015 were announced by Secretary Vilsack on August 21, 2013. There are 27 members in the AAQTF. Seven are new to the Task Force. It is anticipated that the first meeting will be held December 4-5, 2013 in Beltsville MD.

For additional information on the AAQTF please contact Dr. Greg Johnson, AAQTF Designated Federal Official at greg.johnson@por.usda.gov; 503.273.2424. Recommendations and minutes from previous meetings and presentations made before the Task Force can be found at the AAQTF web site: <http://www.airquality.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/air/taskforce>