Quarterly Report 8 - Covering the fourth quarter of calendar 2006 (October through December)

I. PHASE I PROGRESS

Ongoing tasks for Phase 1 include:

- Monitoring the progress of volunteers. The table below summarizes the progress of the Phase 1 (third-party assessment/certification in Stearns and Winona counties) volunteers. Yellow highlights indicate activity for the reporting period (Fall 06). The low level of activity in the fall can be attributed to the press of harvest and winter preparation. Also, the majority of volunteers have received assistance. Some have already been certified; the remainder are working on improvements in order to raise scores to certifiable levels.

		Initial Assessment	Baseline Inspection	Assistance	Certification Walkthrough	Final Project Assessment	Final Inspection
	Stearns County						
1.	3032	8-03-05	08-13-04	Winter 06			
2.	3043	8-30-05	8-19-05	Winter 06			
3.	3044	11-17-05	09-13-04				
4.	3045*	5-13-05					
5.	3046*	5-13-05	05-04-05	Summer 06 (2x)	Aug 06	NA	
6.	3049	8-26-05	8-04-05	Winter 06/Fall 06			
7.	3056	11-23-05	04-13-05				
8.	3057	11-21-05	12-21-04	Aug 06-1 hr	Aug 06	NA	
9.	3058	11-23-05	06-01-05				
10.	3059	11-28-05	02-03-06				
11.	3060	11-21-05	11-21-05				
12.	3061**	07-12-06					
13.	3062**	08-02-06					
14.	3063	11-28-05					
15.	3064	12-09-05		Aug 06-3 hrs	Aug 06	NA	
16.	3065	8-03-05	06-08-05	Winter 06/Fall 06			
17.	3066*	5-25-05		Summer 06 (3x)	Aug 06	NA	
18.	3067	12-10-05		Aug 06-20 hrs			
19.	3068	9-14-05	8-29-05	Winter 06			
20.	3069	8-26-05	8-04-05	Winter 06			
21.	3070	8-03-05	06-09-05	Winter 06			
22.	3071	8-30-05	8-23-05	Winter 06			
23.	3072	9-14-05	8-24-05	Winter 06			
24.	3073	9-14-05	8-23-05	Winter 06			
25.	3074	9-14-05	8-19-05	Winter 06			
26.	3075	9-14-05	8-24-05	Winter 06			
27.	3076	9-14-05	8-29-05	Winter 06			
28.	3077	9-14-05	9-24-05	Winter 06			
29.	3079	10-11-05	03-08-05	Winter 06			
	Winona County						
30.	6027	8-17-05	9-07-05	Aug 06-1.5 hrs			
31.	6029	8-16-05	9-07-05		8-16-05	NA	8-16-05
32.	6030	8-17-05	5-13-05	May 06-0.75 hrs	July 06	NA	July 06
33.	6031	10-06-05	6-05-02	May 06-0.50 hrs			
34.	6032	9-19-05	9-15-05		Summer 06	NA	
35.	6033*	2-15-06	3-05-03	May 06-0.75 hrs	Aug 06	NA	8-16-06
36.	6034	8-18-05	5-20-05	May 06-0.75 hrs			
37.	6035	8-18-05	5-24-05	April 06-2 hrs			
38.	6036*	8-15-05	No data		8-15-05	NA	8-15-05
39.	6037	9-19-05	9-15-05	May 06/Fall 06			
40.	6039	10-06-05	10-06-05				

* May or may not be included in main group

Ongoing tasks continued:

- Collecting inspection forms from County Feedlot Officers (CFOs) to fill in missing baselines where possible, and for final inspections during Certification Walkthroughs or Final Project Assessments;
- Collecting data from Minnesota Milk Producers Association (MMPA) technicians on findings of Certification Walkthroughs and Final Project Assessments;
- Observing the MMPA's audit process for dairies already certified and in the program.

Tasks completed during the reporting period:

- Planning the deployment of MMPA technicians and regulatory inspectors (whether CFOs or MPCA feedlot staff) to conduct Certification Walkthroughs and Final Project Assessments for those volunteers requiring them. Here is the plan:

  For the volunteers, we are aiming to get one EQA Tech site visit per volunteer by September 1, 2007 so that Minnesota Milk Producers Association staff can wrap up their project grant by its end date of September 30. We're hoping EQA Technicians and County Feedlot Officers (CFOs) can visit at the same time, but if that doesn't work, CFOs should complete all inspections of volunteers by November 30, 2007. MPCA will then process all project data to submit to EPA before that cooperative agreement expires.

  Volunteers can be broken into 3 groups:

  1. Already had their Certification Walkthrough (4 in Stearns; 5 in Winona):
     - Where CFOs were not along for the Certification Walkthrough, we're asking that CFOs drop in to check their compliance status and get us inspection forms on those farms by November 30, 2007.
     - We will get the CFOs a list of those sites.

  2. Calling for their Certification Walkthroughs before July 1, 2007:
     - Wherever possible, we'd like the EQA Techs to try to get the CFOs scheduled so they can accompany the Techs on the Certification Walkthrough.
     - We're asking that CFOs provide a standard inspection and documentation, but there is no need for the CFO to stay the entire time the Tech is on site.
     - Where concurrent visits just won't work, EQA Techs will be required to confer with the CFOs prior to conducting the Certification Walkthrough. Then we ask that the CFOs inspect the farm separately as near as possible to the time of the Certification Walkthrough.
     - In Stearns County, MPCA will have a central contact who will figure out which CFO can cover the inspection (it will not always be the central contact).

  3. Have not asked for their Certification Walkthrough by July 1, 2007.
     - We will try to conduct a Final Project Assessment between July 1 and September 1, 2007 at these remaining farms. The EQA Techs should complete these walkthroughs and submit data to MMPA staff by September 1.
     - CFO inspections should be complete by November 30, 2007 although we're hoping they will happen earlier - as close as possible to the day the EQA Techs are on-site.
     - This will involve the Techs doing an Initial Assessment update and the CFOs conducting and documenting inspections.
     - At July 1, we will review the total workload remaining, and check in with the CFOs to identify any gaps we'll need to fill with MPCA inspectors.
     - The procedure for EQA Techs contacting and scheduling with the CFOs will be the same as under #2 above.

  EQA Techs will send documentation to MMPA staff. CFOs should send their documentation to MPCA project staff.

II. PHASE 2 PROGRESS

Following is a summary of progress on Phase 2 deliverables scheduled for the October-December 2006 timeframe.

1. Phase 2 workplan – was in flux during the reporting period. The target for distribution of the self-assessments remained the same (February 28, 2007), and development of self-assessments and other materials proceeded on that schedule. However, we continued to develop the inspection plan with assistance from Mike Crow and Art Lubin of Region 5, and

to assemble the staff and other resources necessary to cover those inspections. As of the end of December, the statistical methodology and Quality Assurance Project Plan were still not complete.

2. Volunteer group – after correcting the facility universe in the previous quarter, we discovered a set of additional dairies that would be potential volunteers. We conducted outreach to them during the reporting period and signed up 3 more volunteers. The final geographical and herd size distribution of volunteers is given in the following table:

Herd	1-10		11-50		51-100		101-300		301-700		>700		All dairies	Total volunteers
County	all	vol	all	vol	all	vol	all	vol	all	vol	all	vol		
Pine	4	0	26	2	28	3	37	2	1	0	3	0	99/15.7%	7/15.6%
Carlton	4	1	16	0	7	1	8	1	2	0	0	0	37/5.9%	3/6.7%
Kanabec	1	0	13	1	21	2	11	0	2	1	0	0	48/7.6%	4/8.9%
Ottertail	19	2	102	5	142	10	167	13	12	1	3	0	445/70.7%	31/68.9%
Total	28	3	157	8	198	16	223	16	17	2	5	0	629	45

3. Core compliance and performance indicators – field-tested and redrafted in December
4. Progress of other documents during the reporting period:
   - Inspector checklist – 3 test inspections completed and the checklist redrafted to near-final
   - Self-assessment and response form – the 3 test inspections also caused redrafting of these forms, since (with a few exceptions) the inspection and self-assessment now cover the same questions.
   - Return-to-compliance form
   - Self-certification form

   Within the reporting period, project staff identified a handful of dairies which we solicited as "test-run" sites, where the farmers will work through the package of draft forms above (except for the inspection checklist) and provide face-to-face feedback on the understandability of the questions and the workability of the procedure. This will be the last source of feedback leading to the final drafts of the documents.
5. Inspector routine – field testing in October, November, and December – routine is final and ready to be presented as training to new inspectors in March/April of 2007. Inspectors became quicker, more confident, or more bought-in as the test-runs progressed.
6. Control group – final generation of the control group will be completed around March 2007 when the final team of inspectors is assembled.
7. Certification mailing and inspections – still on track for the end of February 2007
8. Guidebook development – still in redrafting and review

III. LEVEL OF EXPENDITURES

Financial Information removed by EPA as confidential business information.

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