Biomass Utilization Committee

JULY 17, 2001

PROJECT PRIORITIES

The Committee approves and prioritizes project proposals as follows:


2. Compost Protocols.

   Current information needs confirmation and correction. An entire industry could be decimated by the new regulations that prohibit movement of SOD-infected material. Perhaps the only means of effectively killing the Phytophthora and getting usable product is through composting, yet the project, though previously accepted, has not received priority or funding.

   The process will use contained infected material in commercial composting processes to see the time, temperature and conditions necessary to render the Phytophthora non-viable. Tools are needed, and Sonoma County has agreed to help to staff the project.

   Cost: $30,000.
   Time: 12 weeks

3. Product Matrix/Siting Locations

   Two parts of the same problem are covered in this project. The first (A) will develop the possibilities, constraints, and feasibility of the potential product development/biomass utilization within the eight county infested area. By detailing the current facilities, and assessing the biological, political, and economic realities, the possible can be meshed with practical to develop answers which work in infected counties.

   The second part (B) is to determine the characteristics necessary for developing a concentration yard for SOD-infected material. Location, through-put, constraints on storage and processing, regulations, land-use and environmental restrictions, and economic viability and feasibility must be assessed.

   (A) Cost: $10,000.
       Time: 6 weeks
   (B) Cost: $30,000.
       Time 12 weeks
4. Expand Inventory Project to All Infected Counties.

The project currently funded through the Forest Products Lab need expansion to the rest of the counties. Where counties have already begun the task, coordination is necessary to make sure that results mesh and can speak to each other.

Cost: $30,000 per County (Santa Cruz, Sonoma)
Time: 3 months

ACTION PLANS

Transport Of Suspected Material

In addition to the projects above-described, the committee developed wording to allow transport of material within an area of infestation. It is critical to the development of products to be able to move the material, so in the absence of such wording by any other entity within the Task Force, we offer:

“Within an infested area, it must be assumed that all the known host material is in fact infected with the Phytophthora. Transport of host material within an infested area may be done using enclosed trucks or tightly-tarped loads that do not allow the blowing or leaking of vegetative material.”

Transport is now being done illegally and it makes sense to give some guidelines on how to do it appropriately. This fits with the top priority Educational Materials project.

Informational Gaps

The informational gaps are significant for biomass operations and it is difficult to proceed without answers to basic biological/operational questions. Therefore the Biomass Utilization Committee is hereby asking the Research Committee to develop answers through so that we might know the survivability of the fungus given burial, burning, chipping, drying, grinding, heating. We also need to know the survival of fungus in the leachate, smoke, or other effluent of projected processes.

White Paper

The Biomass Utilization Committee would still like a response to the material sent to the Task Force via the Management Committee on February 1, 2001. This Committee feels a sense of urgency on these matters, and is gratified that a Zone of Infestation has been declared and that a full time coordinator has been hired.
However, the question of transport (addressed above), Certification of phytophthora-free mechanisms, and development of central facilities has not been acted upon, except as noted in the above project proposals.

**Rain Maker**

Evidently money is available and being offered from a variety of sources. This needs to be organized and channeled in ways that recognize the priorities of the Task Force (and the Biomass Utilization Committee). Hiring a money-getter should be a high priority that should easily pay for itself.