



United States Department of Agriculture

Research, Education and Economics  
Agricultural Research Service

May 8, 2009

**Subject:** Minutes of the Environmental Management System Committee Meeting on May 6, 2009

**To:** Location EMS Committee Members  
Research Leaders

**From:** Tamara Snipes, Chemist/EMS Coordinator

The EMS Committee met on May 6, 2009, at 11:00 AM in the CPMRU conference room. T. Snipes, P. Timper, T. Strickland, T. Hendricks, K. Marchant, R. Scarborough, and J. Merriman were the committee members in attendance.

Last year, the location participated in the Federal Electronics Challenge (FEC) focusing on the purchase of "green" electronics. The FEC offers awards for partners who demonstrate environmental electronic stewardship throughout the year. Our target was acquisition and procurement of electronics which would qualify the location to apply for the bronze level award. The Office of the Federal Environmental Executive announced on April 7, 2009 that the USDA/ARS Tifton Location had won the Bronze Level Award for our environmental activities in 2008. Our facility, along with the other winners, will be recognized at an award ceremony at the Federal Environmental Symposium in June.

The Tifton/Tift County E-Cycling event was held on April 11, 2009. A few days prior to the event, city workers came out and picked up all our electronics that had been stored for recycling. The recyclable electronics storage building was at full capacity, so we'll have another great year to report for our electronic recycling efforts in Tifton. However, the question was raised by the reviewer of our FEC Award package that we may not be following all the regulations concerning recycling/reuse. Also, we may not have the correct documentation for proper and safe disposal of electronic equipment. The committee will check into the company, Atlanta Recycling Solutions, which picks up the recyclable electronics from the City of Tifton. We will also review the rules concerning reuse, donation, or resale of electronics as per the FEC reviewer.

Annual EMS training was held on March 11, 2009. Earl Griffin and Beth Anderson, from the Area Office in Athens, GA, presented the training session. This year the EMS training also doubled as a makeup for annual safety training because of the safety component of the presentation. All employees, except one, have completed the required training. During their visit, Beth and Earl also conducted a safety inspection.

P. Timper expressed interest in possibly installing solar panels on some of the building roofs. This would be a great EMS project in the future. The use of solar panels could also save the location some money in the long term.

T. Hendricks spoke briefly about the surprise Georgia EPD inspection that the location received last month. The inspection mainly focused on hazardous waste. The inspector did comment on how some of the universal waste, such as fluorescent lamps and mercury devices, was being stored. Tom has ordered containers for storage as directed by the inspector to correct the problems.

The next meeting of the Location EMS Committee will be tentatively scheduled for July 2009.



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