Minutes of NTPEP Geosynthetics TC Conference Call

1 PM - 2:45 PM

8/9/16

Welcome and Roll Call

Attendees:

- AASHTO Staff and Contractors - Katheryn Malusky, Vince Glick, Bill Real, Joel Sprague
- Industry - Terry McElfresh, Kelli Davis, Doug Brown, Jonathan Curry, Greg Baryluk, Brian Whitaker, Keith Gardner
- DOTs - John Schuler, Rodrigo Herrera, John Rublein, Tom Burnett, Tony Allen, Scott Hughes, Mark Lindemann, Kevin Palmer, Brett Jennings (sp?)
- New Members – Kelli Davis, Tom Burnett

Action Items from the Annual Meeting:

1. List Doug Brown as Tensar TC member. (NTPEP – June 2016.)
   - This has been done. Doug also represents the GMA.
2. Per an issue raised by John Schuler at meeting’s end, TC, NTPEP, and TRI work together to see what can be done about heavy metals in foreign-made fabrics. (TC, Katheryn Malusky, Joel Sprague – by next TC quarterly conference call.)
   - Rodrigo has not heard of metals in fabric being an issue in FL. Keith G. said all plastic sources for U.S. manufacture are not using metals. He will check on history and any environmental or other requirements on this. Joel to follow up with manufacturers also. Discuss at next call based on findings.
3. TC continue discussion on grid product marking. (TC – Jan 2017.)
   - Doug said REGEO Work Plan currently requires marking, but allows flexibility when grid area is very small. Tensar is examining laser printing, coextruded stripe, or a mark tied by index to man’f origin. Tony said color coding must be very clear. Doug said some other grid man’f with more area are capable of laser printing on product, the small area issue seems to be isolated to punched and drawn or extruded grids. Jon will pull Geogrid Focus Group together to address topic in future. Kevin asked about tagging, Doug said was examined, Joel said is wide open to figure out, Tony said anything that can be removed will be objectionable by some states. Keith G. said Europe tags grids. Keith/Doug will survey Europe, Doug recalls they required marking but it was largely ignored.
4. Implement full audits for REGEO (TC, NTPEP, TRI – throughout 2017.)
   - Industry provided input for a Jan 2018 start for full audits, but other TC members wanted full audits to start throughout 2017. Rodrigo mentioned Annual Meeting discussion was to start in 2017 with all of 2017 being a grace period till Jan 2018. Also Industry had inventory issues that would make 2017 inconvenient for inflexible full audit requirements. Will go to full audits in 2017 with some flexibility. Katheryn agreed, asked about REGEO products already in test, would allow them as part of 2017 audit.
Application window for REGEO audits Sep 15 – Nov 1, current registered DataMine users will receive notification.

5. Re-examine letter agreements in DataMine for need, wording, and contract issues. (TC, NTPEP – by next quarterly conference call.)
   - To alleviate inconsistencies in Private Label agreements and Converter agreements found in 2013-15 cycles, NTPEP will go with standardized templates and will set up a Webinar for Industry to launch an SOP on submitting source verification forms. NTPEP has gathered 900 or so connections of man’f and downstream partners in DataMine initially for clarification. Webinar will be held early Sep. Industry and NTPEP testing labs had input into this process at the beginning. We need to get everyone on board with same terminology. Webinar will be for Industry only, with a smaller pilot beforehand to ensure process is working prior to Webinar. Jonathan to work with Vince on that. For States the process is transparent so no webinar needed for DOTs, but states will receive a guide on the States Only section of NTPEP website where a directory is provided for source traceability.

6. Send notice of changes to Converter portion of the program to all participants. Phase-In plan (NTPEP – by next quarterly conference call.)
   - At end of CY 2016, Katheryn and Joel will make the annual memo of observations of audits. Have done 4 converter audits so far, are doing what will be doing with REGEO. Jon would distribute this memo out to full GMA membership, Brian and Doug agreed; Joel to get language to Jon to include in newsletter to members this month. Joel asked also if newsletter could mention compliant labeling reminder, GMA was OK with that. Joel said labeling issues are happening at every location he audits.

Noted by Joel Sprague of TRI after the meeting:

7. TC to discuss adding products between audit applications (TC – next quarterly conference call.)
   - This would be unique to the GTX program among NTPEP programs. Programs are built around annual application to expand product line or just do audit, but found this past year 3 or 4 times man’f wanted to get product in, and we have been doing that ad hoc, Joel needs administrative guidance on how to accomplish this. Vince said DM 3.0 goes to product level so should be able to be done administratively. GMA needs to let us know how serious this is, otherwise stick with annual submission only, which has the effect of penalizing new entrants. Suggested to make note in GMA newsletter this month to let Industry know that there is only one submission cycle per year. Jonathan will do that. If deemed to be a necessity, administrative options will be explored.

8. TC to discuss additional sampling of 1 product per REGEO facility annually to double check index properties. (TC – next quarterly conference call.)
   - Part of audit programs but not clear in Work Plan. We probably should do a comparison sample on a product or two in each audit, probably for basic and relatively inexpensive index tests like tensile strength and geometries. Joel said random sampling and testing is always an important part of a QA program. Rodrigo said sampling one product per facility is good idea but what about cost. Joel gave preliminary guess of about $250/yr to accomplish this. We will get out to TC to review.

9. TC to discuss Private Labeler and Converter requirements of Work Plan and need for any changes or how to track in DataMine. 3.0 you can click on a PL/Conv/Man’f combo and it will display test data.
Vince covered this in discussing DataMine 3.0 in Item 7 above. Limitations on number of sources, etc., will not be addressed through NTPEP, that can only be done at the state level for states who might want it.

10. Add process flowchart to Work Plan.
   Send out with minutes, await feedback from Industry, then decide to ballot or not.

11. Make the following changes to the REGEO Work Plan (for balloting in November 2016):
   - Section 3.3.2 to read “geosynthetic converter” vice “geotextile converter”.
   - Add production date and “NTPEP-listed” to label requirements.
   - Include “manufacturing plant identification or manufacturing code” as required marking on REGEO products. Already in document.
   - Possible changes to wording of changes in published MARVs/minimums constituting a product change. Two scenarios can play out, either redesign product or improve QC system. Joel will get wording changes for ballot.
   All agreed. Joel and John to work up language to ballot.

Items arising since Annual Meeting:

12. Fabric structures being improperly reported in DataMine.
   Example: Man’f will have submittal from 2013 saying SF-W, next time shows up as C-W. Circular woven is a man’f process not a structure. Joel said best way to handle structure is to ensure compliance with M288, so if req’t we need to check, if not don’t check? Issue is Private Labeler may get different structures from diff source man’f. PL just relying on passing tests, not structure, perhaps the program is asking for too much detail with structure? Keith G. said only a few 288 items but customers want every product to be NTPEP, even those not in M 288. More discussion needed. Get industry feedback. It was agreed thought that different structures should have different style numbers.

13. Cost of REGEO program. Specific items:
   - Call for revising testing to take more account of good history of Manufacturer QC data.
     a. The audit of manufacturing and in-house testing would determine if any third party testing would be required due to a change in the manufacturer’s processes.
       • Tony asked about this, John said he suggested it, admitted we only do testing in year 3 and 6 now. Nothing determined on how to make use of QC data more so than how the program already does. We can continue to discuss in future.
     b. AASHTO Auditors would perform the audits while testing is performed by the contracted lab (TRI)
   - Reconsider performing low-load creep stiffness tests
     a. Most states probably don’t use this as the test method is not yet adopted. Currently for use in 1 state.
     b. This is a $6,000 test.
       • Tony said foregoing low creep stiffness should only be a temporary hiatus if at all, but will be at least a couple of years before AASHTO adopts. LC stiffness test already getting into Canadian design specs. Could leave off 6k test. Would not affect process flow in DataMine, is really more of a WP change. Move to optional in WP; Joel asked if need archived material from actual evaluation cycle, Tony said pick up at point in time when needed.
14. Should TC put on a webinar to explain the program and benefits? Maybe survey TC members first. Re-surveying states for interest – What can AASHTO/NTPEP ask to find out how states are making use of the data.

- Rodrigo said FL does use NTPEP REGEO test and audit results, but indirectly. FL does not require NTPEP to be on APL, but is a huge step forward to getting there. Doug said they are aware of states who use NTPEP, go to map before bid project, about ⅓ states use it. Keith said sell almost exclusively through distribution, deal with states independently, out of 20 or so states using NTPEP, but about half also say they do additional items. John thinks there is a lot of confusion among DOTs about how to make use of NTPEP data, others did not think so, and without NTPEP man’f might have to do tests for each state.

15. DataMine 3.0 Update.
- Covered in Item 7 above.

16. NHI TC3 Course on Geosynthetics.
- John said it has been created and advertised, will be available soon for viewing.

17. Base Course Work Plan needed?
- Doug would love to see this stay on as an agenda item, GMA focus group looking at it, properties pertinent for REGEO not pertinent for roadway grid. Joel said AASHTO is talking about adding this to M288, Joel feels important for fabrics, but Doug sees important for grids as well. Perhaps if we re-survey states we can ask again about this, but probably first best just to survey TC states.

- Katheryn has standard language and will send to John.

19. Silt fence converting issues; changes needed to Work Plan?
- John mentioned some TC members were on a call yesterday to discuss issues on silt fence conversion that came up in recent audits, and that language will be balloted in the Work Plan specific to silt fence, namely:
  - That for silt fence only 2 labels will be required on outside of sub-rolls, 1 toward trailing edge and 1 on leading edge and that labels, at least for silt fence, must be weatherproof.
  - That for silt fence, puncture strength will not be required for Table 1 and 2 testing but permittivity will be. No change to mass/area testing.
  - Will allow sub-roll suffixes to list a range, pertaining to palletized material only.
  - Converter labels must state “NTPEP-compliant”.
  - Converters must do QA testing on material if relabel it with their name or a different style than that of prime man’f; a Category 1 Converter with no QA testing may not relabel/re-style the rolls.

Action Items (Sep 30 deadline for most items is to allow time to get ballot language into draft Work Plan to get to AASHTO/states by Nov 1):

- Follow up with Industry on need to check for metals in fabrics and history of its discontinuation in the U.S. Keith to find document disallowing this practice in the U.S. (Keith Gardner and Joel, Sep 30)
- Document use of tags on grids in Europe, and use of markings or why they are not used. (Keith Gardner and Doug, Sep 30)
- Full audits with some flexibility to start on all REGEO applicants submitting this fall for 2017 audits.
- Webinar for Industry on how to report connections (for purposes of AASHTO/states being able to trace sources) between manufacturers and converters and private labelers to be given by NTPEP. Directory for states use will be posted on DataMine website. (Vince, early Sep)
- Significant audit findings for this year to be assembled in a memo in December by Katheryn and Joel. GMA will include those in newsletter at that time. In next issue of newsletter, GMA will include inserts from Joel on proper labeling and significant audit findings so far this year. (Katheryn, Joel, Dec 31; Joel and Jonathan, Aug 22)
- GMA to note in next issue of newsletter that next submission cycle is coming up and no in-between product applications will be allowed after that. GMA to follow up with industry on need to allow this. (Jonathan, Aug 22; Jonathan, Sep 30.)
- Draft ballot language and cost estimate for annual audit split sampling. (Joel, Sep 30)
- Send draft flow chart out with minutes, get Industry feedback. (John; Jonathan to get feedback in by Sep 30)
- Work up ballot language in Item 11 above. (John and Joel, Sep 30)
- GMA to get Industry input on whether or not structure reporting of fabric is necessary, at least in non-M288 required cases. (Jonathan, due Sep 30)
- Put on agenda for next call any new considerations for use of manufacturer QC data.
- Draft language to ballot to make low creep stiffness test optional in REGEO Work Plan. (Rodrigo, Sep 30)
- Put on agenda for next call discussion for a webinar for DOTs on implementation of NTPEP.
- Survey TC for need for Base Reinforcement audit and evaluation program. (John, input by Sep 30)
- Add standard safety language to ballot work plan (Katheryn and John, Sep 30)
- Add ballot language for silt fence issues (Joel and John, Sep 30)
Sale to Contractor

Independent Distributors & Reps

PM-X1  PM-X2  PM-X3  PM-X4  PM-X5

Prime Manufacturers

Private Label Distributors

Converters (also qualify as Private Label Distributors)

DOT Project

IDR

Printing of Mfr Code on Fabric

Rolls sold EXACTLY as received from Prime Mfr. Compliant labels placed by Prime Mfr ONLY. No replacement of labels (may use additional labels). No cutting of rolls.

Printing of Mfr Code on Fabric Remains

Labels include Original Mfr Code, Production Date, Converter Code, Style, Roll No.*, Conversion Date. 4 labels each unit: 2 each end on wrap; 2 each end in core.

QA Testing Req'd (except if rolls are only cut without unwrapping).

* Converter roll number will be the manufacturer's assigned roll number with a suffix designating the sequentially derived roll/package from the original roll, a.k.a. parent-child identification.