

Draft Meeting Notes

Agriculture Workgroup Meeting

July 11, 2013

CBPO

Annapolis, MD

AgWG Action Items and Decisions

ACTION: The Nutrient Management Panel will include a visual of how the previous NM options compare to current and proposed NM definitions in their panel report.

ACTION: Dana and Mark will review the draft Bay Agreement document sent out for public review to make sure it is consistent with the AgWG's previous recommendation to remove the Agriculture outcome;

ACTION: Dana and Mark will convey support of the 7/9 draft Bay Agreement to the Management Board on behalf of the AgWG and request that AgWG be informed if the agriculture outcome in Appendix A of the unabridged version is considered further.

AgWG Action Items and Decisions

ACTION: MDA will introduce a proposal regarding functional equivalence at the August meeting for AgWG approval.

DECISION AgWG approved formation of forecasting subcommittee chaired by Jim Baird and Peter Claggett.

DECISION: AgWG approved the July 11, 2013 version of the verification matrix as final

ACTION: Transparency ad hoc group will define programmatic constraints, reword 'site-specific', and clarify recommendation #2 to state that QA/QC can be internal or external

AgWG Notes

- Meeting convened at 9:30
- Welcome and introductions
- Meeting Notes
 - AgWG June meeting summary was reviewed for member approval. VA motioned to approve, second by NRCS, all yea.
 - **DECISION: Approve June AgWG minutes**

AgWG Notes

- **Expert Review Panel Updates**

- Mark Dubin, Agriculture Workgroup Coordinator, provided brief updates on each of the four expert review panels.
- Cover Crop panel is exploring the addition of new species of cover crops, and in the process of defining reduction efficiencies for N, P and sediment.
- EPA: Is cover crop data available outside the coastal plain?
 - Coordinator: Panel has been seeking additional research data, as well as USDA-NRCS modeling analysis data to supplement data in areas outside the coastal plain.
- NGO: Will there be a report for Phase 5.3.2 incremental changes presented at the September 12 AgWG meeting? Will the SB team have the technical appendix to accompany the report?
 - Coordinator: September is the panel's report goal. WQGIT considered the technical appendix option at their Monday meeting.

AgWG Notes

- **Expert Review Panel Updates**
 - NGO: Request a specific timeline for approval of these reports.
 - Coordinator: Previous timeline reviewed by the AgWG allowed two meetings to review the panel reports, possible to be reviewed at one.
 - NGO: Request a joint AgWG and WTWG meeting on September 12, with final approval by both groups on October 10, and WQGIT approval on October 14.
 - NGO: Recommend determining how much time the jurisdictions need to incorporate these changes.
 - Chair: Will request a joint meeting with the WTWG.
 - NGO: Please clarify whether the AgWG charged the panels with incremental recommendations.
 - Coordinator: AgWG approved incremental work plan recommendations previously for each of the panels.

AgWG Notes

- **Expert Review Panel Updates**

- PA: Is the cover crop panel considering commodity cover crops?
 - Coordinator: Yes; addressing commodity cover crops in the full Phase 6.0 recommendations.
- Conservation Tillage panel is developing a request to the state agencies to confirm the use of CNT. Panel is also coordinating with USDA-NRCS for RUSLE2 support.

AgWG Notes

- **Expert Review Panel Updates**
 - Nutrient Management panel developing draft final definitions for three-tier nutrient application management. Also developing “basic” nutrient application management effectiveness values based on current Phase 5.3.2 model estimates.
 - PA: Is level three Nutrient Management going to include a 4R approach?
 - Chris Brosch, Panel Chair: All levels will use the 4R approach
 - Brosch: Note that levels 2 and 3 of the new definition are new BMPs (not directly related to the existing enhanced NM/decision precision ag.)
 - CBPO: Recommend providing a visual for how the previous NM options compare to current and proposed NM definitions.
 - Brosch: Will include this visual in the panel report.
- **ACTION: NM Panel will include a visual of how the previous NM options compare to current and proposed NM definitions in their panel report.**

AgWG Notes

- **Expert Review Panel Updates**

- Poultry Litter Subcommittee completing new data templates for nutrient concentrations, seeking additional information on mass volumes, and coordinating a request to AgriStats for poultry production data.
- MDA: Will be sharing additional information received from NASS regarding their yearly data.
- NRCS: Noted earlier discussion regarding translating NASS annual production numbers to the county scale.
Recommend that the Ag Census be used to portion out the yearly NASS data.
 - Jim Glancey, Panel Chair: Will be conducting a trial run using this scaling method for Delmarva data.

AgWG Notes

- **Expert Review Panel Updates**
 - NGO: Note that some model assumptions may need to be adjusted along with updating the poultry numbers. Will the SB team or NM expert panel be addressing these related assumptions?
 - CBPO: Will move forward with the population recommendations from the PLS ; will be addressing the related SB issues over time and for Phase 6.0
 - NGO: Recommend running SB trials once data is in place to see what the consequences are.
 - Coordinator clarified that preliminary model runs will be part of the panel recommendations.

AgWG Notes

- **Expert Review Panel Updates**

- What is addressed in the data template?
 - Coordinator: Panel considering mass volume on an annual basis, and nutrient concentrations in the litter.
- PA: Will PLS recommendations be ready for 2013 progress? How will the recommendations apply across the watershed?
 - Coordinator: Recommendations intended to be in place for 2013. Data will be applied to the region where it came from. PA will continue to use current modeling analysis until their own data set is available.
 - PA: Recommend that data be applied uniformly across the jurisdictions.
 - Glancey: Note that the panel found significant differences across the regions of WV, VA and Delmarva.
 - MD: Uniform rules do not apply for poultry.
 - Coordinator: PA may benefit from population data collected by the panel. If there is an absence of data sources for nutrient concentrations and volumes in PA, will need to incorporate it in the future.

AgWG Notes

- **2015 Agricultural Projection Update**
- Mark provided an update on the workgroup's recommendation to the Milestone Workgroup and the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT) for the 2015 projection on agricultural land use and production. The partnership's previously proposed schedule would have omitted developing the 2015 projections for the 2-Year Milestone goals with the benefit of the 2012 USDA Agricultural Census, due to be released in early 2014. The Milestone Workgroup recommended, and the WQGIT voted on July 8th, to recommend the revision of new draft 2-Year Milestones based on a new 2015 projection in early 2014 using the 2012 Census data.

AgWG Notes

- **Tetra Tech Technical Assistance Contract**
 - Mark provided an update on the new EPA-CBPO technical assistance contract in relation to the workgroup and associated review panels.
 - Hours for TetraTech are being shared between the other workgroups; request for hours has been submitted to EPA.

AgWG Notes

- **Draft Chesapeake Bay Agreement**

- Mark provided an update on the agricultural outcome proposed for the draft Chesapeake Bay Agreement under development by the Management Board. The language was adapted from the Chesapeake Bay Executive Order, and committed to implementing new conservation practices on 4 million high priority agricultural acres by 2025. The Workgroup previously recommended to delete the proposed language.
- Further comments or suggestions on the draft are welcome.

AgWG Notes

- **Draft Chesapeake Bay Agreement**

- NGO moved, VA second to comment to the Management Board that the current 7/9 draft Bay Agreement distributed for public comment is supported by the AgWG. AgWG requests that if the agriculture outcome listed in appendix A of the unabridged version is considered further, the AgWG be informed. All in favor of the motion.

ACTION: Dana and Mark will review the draft Bay Agreement document sent out for public review to make sure it is consistent with the AgWG's previous recommendation to remove the Agriculture outcome;

ACTION: Dana and Mark will convey support of the 7/9 draft Bay Agreement to the Management Board on behalf of the AgWG and request that AgWG be informed if the agriculture outcome in Appendix A of the unabridged version is considered further.

- NGO: Note that toxic contaminants are also being considered in Appendix A.

AgWG Notes

- **Maryland Agricultural BMP Assessment**
 - Dana York, Green Earth Connection, LLC, presented the Maryland Department of Agriculture's Non Cost-Shared BMP Verification Procedures Manual as part of a discussion on functional equivalent BMP data collection, reporting and verification. Functional equivalent BMPs are typically farmer implemented and do not meet USDA-NRCS standards, but may provide similar effectiveness values.

AgWG Notes

- **Maryland Agricultural BMP Assessment**
 - Coordinator clarified that functional equivalence could be part of AgWG's recommendations on the verification protocol.
 - MDA: AgWG comments requested on whether functional equivalence should receive the same effectiveness rating.
 - NGO: Note that in some instances functional equivalent practices may be better than NRCS standard practices.
 - Coordinator: AgWG will begin updating previous BMP panel reports, as an addendum, to crosswalk to current NRCS standards.
 - CBPO: These crosswalks will now be considered every year.

AgWG Notes

- **Maryland Agricultural BMP Assessment**
 - Coordinator: The annual reduction value is the same for standard or FE, however the lifespan may be shorter. If the reduction value is less than a standard, will have to approve through a BMP panel.
 - CBPO: Recommend approving the reduction values through a panel.
 - Chair: If a trained expert has inspected a practice and determined whether a practice is functionally equivalent, it should receive the same reduction.
 - EPA: Maryland FE has potential for other jurisdictions to adopt. Recommend endorsement from NRCS that the FEs are in fact equivalent.

AgWG Notes

- Maryland Agricultural BMP Assessment
 - Chair requested a formal proposal from MDA at the next meeting in order to get AgWG approval.

ACTION: MDA will introduce a proposal regarding functional equivalence at the August meeting for AgWG approval.

AgWG Notes

- **Agricultural Forecasting Workshop**
 - Jim Baird, American Farm Trust's Mid-Atlantic Director, and Peter Claggett, USGS-CBPO, summarized participant feedback and practical outcomes from the Agricultural Forecasting Track of the "Building A Better Bay Model" workshop. Future forecasting is a critical tool for the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) Partners. Short-term forecasts are used to inform the development of 2-year milestones and measure progress. Long-term “future scenarios” can be used to assess the nutrient and sediment reducing potential of new and innovative practices and technologies beyond those currently considered in the suite of Bay models.

AgWG Notes

- **Agricultural Forecasting Workshop**
 - Claggett: Workshop participants recommended downscaling national economic forecasts by market share to the watershed. Additional recommendations were to understand trends in feed conversion ratios and the effect of new management technologies.
 - NGO: Recommend using the Ag Census trends in a straight line projection.
 - Claggett: One option is to explore various scenarios. A proposal from the workshop recommendations is to form a small steering committee of academics and industry reps to develop ag future trend and market scenarios for 2025.
 - Coordinator recommend taking Bill's recommendation for Phase 1 and compare the straight line trend against other scenarios.
 - Claggett: That is the intention.
 - MD: Recommend incorporating the poultry panel recommendations.

AgWG Notes

- **Agricultural Forecasting Workshop**
 - Chair recommend support for the forecasting subcommittee to continue to inform the AgWG.
 - NGO motion, VA second to move forward with formation of forecasting subcommittee chaired by Jim Baird and Peter Claggett.

DECISION: AgWG approved formation of forecasting subcommittee chaired by Jim Baird and Peter Claggett.

AgWG Notes

- **Break for Lunch**

AgWG Notes

- **Building a Better Bay Model Matrix**
 - Mark presented an initial draft matrix of the recommendations collected as a result of the Building a Better Bay Model workshop. The draft matrix is based on the suggestions provided during the June meeting of the workgroup.
 - NGO: Recommend involving workshop participants in the process of developing the task list and accomplishing the tasks on the list.
 - CBPO: The Ag modeling subcommittee will be using this list to develop their priorities.
 - NGO: Request that the task list be posted for participants to review and comment on.

AgWG Notes

- **Building a Better Bay Model Matrix**
 - NGO: Recommend prioritizing the list by short, medium and long term tasks.
 - NGO: Recommend that AMS present at AgWG regarding the standards of data that are needed to complete these tasks.
 - CBPO: Is it helpful to provide stakeholders with prescriptive data request?
 - NGO: Yes, guidance helpful.
 - Coordinator: Recommend a discussion with industry reps and modelers to discuss the data standards and methods to share data.
 - NGO: This discussion should be one of the first steps.

AgWG Notes

- **Agricultural BMP Verification Matrix**
 - Frank led a partnership discussion on continuing the development of the draft agricultural BMP verification matrix based on the guidance received from the BMP Verification Committee, the Transparency Subgroup, and the work of an ad hoc subgroup.
 - AgWG had until July 3 to provide comments on this version of the draft. No comments were received.
 - VA motioned to approve the matrix.
 - NGO: Request that background document that accompanies the matrix be available before approval.

AgWG Notes

- **Agricultural BMP Verification Matrix**
 - Chair clarified that AgWG is being asked to approve this version of the matrix as a final, not approving the full verification package until other components are available.
 - NGO seconded , all approved

DECISION: AgWG approved the July 11, 2013 version of the verification matrix as final.

AgWG Notes

- **Partner Updates**

- VA: GIS based Nutrient Management plan being implemented over the next three years in VA.
- The Ag certainty advisory group in MD had their first meeting.
- PA: Was anyone else impacted by EPA/CBF CAFO settlement?

AgWG Notes

- Adjourned at 2:00pm
- Next meeting August 8, 9:30-3:30 at USDA Log Lodge