

WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**VERIFICATION PROTOCOL CONCEPT
COMMENTS**

CURRENT METHODOLOGY

- The WVDA is utilizing a ***voluntary approach***, beginning with one full time tracking and reporting position to collect non-cost share/expired cost share BMP information on farms in the 8 county Chesapeake Bay Watershed of West Virginia.
- The tracking and reporting program is not associated with establishing a nutrient trading baseline for a farm or safe harbor.

FARM INVENTORY

By trained federal, state, or county agency personnel and using record checks to verify installation dates.

- This is the method that closely represents what the WVDA is doing currently, however, record checks of installation dates on cost shared BMPs is not being done because we are using the farmers word that a practice was installed the year they provide.
- Currently developing a database to store the information.

FARM INVENTORY

By trained independent third party personnel.

- Concern of the protection of confidential/sensitive farm information
- Concerns as to qualifications of the third party and how that would influence reliability of the data.
- FOIA concerns
- May not be acceptable to West Virginia agricultural community

FARM INVENTORY

By trained agricultural industry personnel

- Who would cover the costs for the industry personnel to complete an assessment?
- FOIA protection issues.
- Who would cover the costs for the industry to have a database system to store the information?

FARM INVENTORY

Farmer completes self certified inventory survey and trained federal, state and/or county personnel visit site to confirm.

- Doubles the farmer's time needed to complete the assessment if they have to be visited by trained personnel.
- Maybe a training program/workshop could be conducted prior to the farmer completing the inventory survey to address the concerns of missing practices, variance in naming practices and details about reporting practices and that could decrease the amount of % spot checks needed to be conducted.
- Concerns about the verification of this method as listed in the chart. (% of checks determine acceptance of some practices)

FARM INVENTORY

Farmer completes in office self-certified inventory with trained federal, state or county agency personnel.

- Record checks do not cover the non cost share information.
- Installation dates would be those reported by the farmer not record checks unless the farmer can't remember when the practice was installed.
- Not all farms in WV participate with USDA.
- Staff may not have a working knowledge of the farm.
- NRCS and FSA do not have the staff resources to add this component to the daily duties.

FARM INVENTORY

Farmer completes self certified inventory survey.

- Would need a training program/workshop for farmers.
- Participation in the training program.
- May miss practices or function level.
- Variance in naming practices.
- Installation Date- WV would take the farmer's word of when a practice was installed and only check records if the farmer couldn't identify when the practice was installed.

OFFICE RECORDS

Review of existing office records by trained federal, state and/or county agency personnel.

- Does not account for the non cost share information which is the major reason for the tracking program.
- The verification of “trained personnel verify through knowledge of the farm or through calls made to the farmer” would not be necessary if using NRCS contracts to identify practice.
- Staffing concerns.

FARM RECORDS

Review of existing on farm records by trained federal, state, and/or county agency personnel, independent third party or industry personnel.

- Acceptance of this method among the farming community in WV not likely.
- Confidential business information, sensitive material, invasion of privacy.
- Cost to the farmer.
- Cost to the third party and who would be the third party?
- Would miss identifying the functional level of the non cost shared practice.
- Some farm records may not be as complete and organized as others so it would take time and may miss practices.

TRANSECT SURVEY

Transect completed by trained personnel on a county or watershed scale.

- Landowner permission- some may not wish to participate whereas other farmers may want to participate but aren't selected as part of the transect.
- Landowners would need to be contacted in order to determine source of funding.
- Does not collect all practices but could be a time and cost saving method.
- Plausible for re-checks.

CEAP SURVEY AND NASS SURVEY

CEAP survey conducted in person at field level with NASS trained personnel.

- Only covers a point or one field and doesn't review the entire farm so we would be missing practices.
- Surveyors would need to be trained in levels of function a practice could meet (meets specs, almost functional, etc.)
- Installation dates could be given by the farmer.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY REMOTE SENSING

Remote sensing or field visit to the points.

- Difficult to gather if the practice was installed with cost share money or not, if it meets specs and installation date.
- Issues concerning cost and who or what agency would use the technology.
- Would need to learn more about how this technology could be used.