Agriculture BMP Verification Successes and Challenges

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- As expected, every State has a unique approach to verification. There is no one size fits all approach

- Percentage of practices that can be verified in each State VARIES GREATLY

- Verification is significantly different in States with Regulatory Programs vs. Voluntary Programs

Verification is Resource Intensive

"The same people that are verifying old practices are the same people that could be implementing new practices."

"Time spent verifying old practices is time that could be spent implementing new practices."

- States are still having a fairly difficult time capturing "voluntary" or non cost-share practices

- States are having difficulty in reporting transect survey data and extrapolating from statistical sampling

- Difficulty with random vs. available or "biased" sampling

1619 / Data Sharing Difficulties:

- In some States appears that 1619 agreement is still working, especially for those where work is being done by Conservation Districts

- Some States relying on verification only and not able to use annual NRCS/USGS aggregated data

- Some States with a 1619 agreement in place that worked well for years are finding that the agreement is no longer honored leaving some States with no access to detailed BMP data

- Some States were never able to get a 1619 Agreement in place

- Two USDA branches (NRCS, FSA) have entirely different approaches to data sharing

- CREP Partnership approach used in some States is very successful

- Some NRCS data sharing that was once in place has now ceased

One of the biggest unanswered questions

What is the **impact** of not being able to verify certain agricultural BMPs?

- States are currently losing credit for many practices that are still on the landscape

- Impact of practices lost is being trivialized

- There is a danger of removing a significant number of BMPs from the model and then trying to make sense of related water quality

- Theoretically in 5, 10, or 15 years all practices that cannot be verified could be deleted

Moving Forward

- Challenges with Verification are REAL and they are SIGNIFICANT. We must use an Adaptive Management Approach to resolve

- There is interest in re-forming a Verification Committee