

Draft AgWG Meeting Notes

Chesapeake Bay Program Office

Annapolis, Maryland

November 29, 2012

AgWG Notes

- Meeting convened at 9:30
- Introductions
- Minutes

There has been a delay in the meeting minutes and they will be provided as soon as available for review and approval.
- Verification Overview
 - Frank provided a brief recap of the process and discussion to date on developing an agricultural verification protocol. Highlights of the previous versions and comparisons to the current version.
 - The role of the Verification Steering Committee and the independent BMP Review Panel in the process was also reviewed.
 - Discussion on the differences between BMP verification and BMP effectiveness values- two separate evaluations

AgWG Notes

- Agricultural Verification Concept
 - Frank and Mark provided a complete review of the new concept matrix.
 - CBC noted that the purpose of the matrix and supporting documents is guidance for states developing their verification protocols, and for the Expert Panel as they review the state's protocols.
 - The CBC also suggested that individual components of the matrix may not be binding for the states or the Expert Panel, and discretion could be exercised in the development and review of protocols.
 - NGO suggested including examples of the 80% threshold in the supporting document to aid in understanding.- Will Add
 - NGO recommended that members refer to the Tt draft report which more clearly describes the aspects of statistical data confidence
 - BMP Types- complete listing of recognized agricultural BMPs categorized into annual, structural and management types.
 - NGO suggested that annual BMPs could include conservation tillage and alternative crops- will review for potential change

AgWG Notes

- Agricultural Verification Concept cont.
 - NGO recommended that the Tt draft report listing of BMPs match the matrix- the two documents are draft and will both require adjustments: it will be advised to have the Tt report reflect the separation of management between plans and practices
 - NGO recommended that scale of the verification be addressed in the protocol- the scale will be part of the state verification plan submitted to the independent BMP Verification Panel
 - Cost-Sharing information, BMP information and values of defensibility, accountability, and transparency.
 - NGO noted the value of the supporting document to understand the terminology of the matrix.
 - NGO recommended that consider segments of categories and apply set of appropriate protocols to those categories; combine the ones after the first three assessment methods.
 - PA noted that self-reported data is provided by the NPDES waste water program. – NGO commented that this is not applicable to non-permitted agricultural operations

AgWG Notes

- Agricultural Verification Concept cont.
 - Discussion on self-reporting and ways to increase the level of confidence such as training, spot checks, etc.- Need to denote potential options to increase the availability of these options to the states.
 - NGO suggested financial support to the partners could be available from the CBRAP program and other sources.- Noted by states that are hiring staff and may not be as much non-obligated.
 - PA noted that they are using a portion of the CBRAP for monitoring/inspections of NMPs and MMPs.
 - NGO put a motion on the table that the AgWG recommend this draft Version 3.4 and supporting documents as amended be provided to the VSC and the Panel for their initial comments. DE seconded.
 - MD concerned that the other sectors may be not be as robust as the AgWG. Equality between sectors is needed. –Will be addressed by the VSC and the Panel.
 - Mark requested the ability of he and Frank to make the amendments on behalf of the workgroup to submit to the VSC and the Panel.- Agreed

Agriculture Notes

- Agriculture Verification Notes
 - Motion passed in majority with several no's and abstentions .
 - NGO motion and second that we include language with the draft materials sent to the VSC and the Panel that there is “general consensus of the members present”.
 - DE questioned that could use the actual vote vs. the term.- The AgWG is not a policy group and decisions are by consensus and not a ballot vote.
 - Motion passed with majority in favor and some minority no's and abstentions.
 - NGO noted the work of Frank and Mark in developing the materials but also noted the delay in providing the documents for the workgroup's review.

AgWG Notes

- Agriculture Verification Concept cont.
 - USDA comments on the Tt report for clarification on certainty programs (safe harbor) with additions of MN , VA, LO. – Will expand the section with notes on if there is a regulatory aspect of the programs and their status of implementation.
- Verification Index Tool
 - Tt provided ppt. on the initial draft of a new index tool that is being developed to support the agricultural protocol package and implementation by the partners.
 - USDA recommended that use indicators vs. actual numbers if the tool will be a general indicator tool to prevent confusion with the 80% threshold.- Will amend the tool.

AgWG Notes

- Verification Index Tool cont.
 - NGO noted the MD score including a high value.- Scoring based on records check and compliance spot checks.
 - Matt noted that this tool is for a planning tool (quick and dirty assessment) upfront and that the statistical confidence level will have to be determined for approval separately.
 - NGO recommended that the tool should be reviewed by others before finalizing.- This is a draft tool and will be revised and reviewed moving forward.
 - NGO recommended that this tool be shared with the VSC at this time. – Frank did not recommend it at this time.
 - Lunch

AgWG Notes

- Poultry Litter Subcommittee Update
 - Bobby Long with VADCR presented the initial VA poultry litter data and graphs
 - USDA question on the need to document management types such as house ventilation, etc.- The PLS analysis is looking at the end product; the litter nutrient concentrations and volumes being produced every year across the watershed
 - NGO questioned volumetric data need.- Yes, the PLS is developing a data set on volumes to calculate the mass volumes of litter for the model
 - DE started analysis based on the volume question originally.

AgWG Notes

- MPA
 - Mark described how the AgWG MPA priorities were considered by the WQGIT and incorporated into the decisions of that group. The AgWG priorities were shared by other sectors and are now represented in the WQGIT recommendations.
 - The highest priority of the WQGIT was the question of land uses in the next model. Mark described opportunities to consider changes to the existing land uses; both removals and additions.
 - The highest priority of the AgWG was baseline data and assumptions which also received high votes from the WQGIT. The PLS work is a good example of this work for the model improvements.

AgWG Notes

- MPA Phase 6
 - Gary discussed the interest to use the PQUAL simulation method vs. AgChem, and compared their benefits and requirements
 - Possible reconfiguration of the modeling tools in using PQUAL.
 - Addressed the transparency priority of the partnership by using the PQUAL method. Enables a continual cycle of model version with partnership review.
 - Can develop separate elements of the models with the PQUAL method as decisions are made and information is available.

AgWG Notes

- MPA Phase 6 cont.
 - NGO recognized the workload with developing sensitivities for the PQUAL method and concerned with the time required. – Gary noted that sensitivities and relationships are already existing in the models.
 - NGO concerned that the existing sensitivities are not correct.- The existing ones are the starting point for consideration for changes.
 - USDA agreed that this will require work and that expert panels may be needed.- Gary noted that most of the workgroup interest may be in SB vs. the Watershed Model
 - NGO noted that this is a considerable workload and is concerned in how the workgroup will handle the work with the other work taking place in the time discussed.

AgWG Notes

- MPA Phase 6
 - NGO suggested that a separate workshop be held between the workgroup and the modeling team.-Gary and Matt are agreeable to participate.
 - The AgWG decided to organize an ad hoc planning group to plan and organize a modeling workshop. Mark will be sending out a notice for volunteers to sign up for the group. Workshop dates will be for early next year. Separate times for livestock vs. cropland for example in the workshop.
- Land Uses
 - Peter Claggett provided a brief overview of the land uses and available datasets for the models
 - The use of the NASS National Cropland Data Layer can assist in the graph representation of land uses.

AgWG Notes

- Land Uses cont.
 - NGO commented that the use of these new data sets would provide more clarity to the models.
 - NGO asked where sod production is represented.- Peter noted is currently under the low density urban but would need additional data to designate those areas for ag.
 - NGO asked how crop rotations would be represented with the data.- Could use the annual data to capture the changes or typical crop rotations.
 - NGO asked what are the next steps to address this item.- Peter and Mark noted that this was designed as an introduction and that this will be an ongoing discussion over the coming year. Mark suggested the ad hoc group may wish to recommend a plan.

AgWG Notes

- USDA/EPA Plan
 - Lee provided an overview of CEAP
 - EPA asked when CEAP report will be available. –Initial report expected in late winter/early spring.
 - MD asked on subsets for the CEAP. –Will not know until the data is complete as to what level, only four sub-segments at this time.
 - MD asked what was the verification used. – The interviewers asked detailed questions but they can not contact the operators directly for collaboration.
 - Gary and Kelly reviewed the joint agreement.
 - MD asked if the NASS CEAP data would met the verification. –The NASS procedures are a part of the matrix and they have a QA/QC procedure in place.

AgWG Notes

- USDA/EPA Plan cont.
 - Gary addressed additional tasks of the agreement that the AgWG and its panel will be involved with moving forward.
- Urban NM
 - Tom provided a brief overview of the panel recommendations.
 - MD asked what the verification process for UNM. – This is still on the table for panel and equity with agriculture.
 - AgWG is invited to the 12/12/12 meeting of the USWG to discuss the final draft recommendations.
 - The AgWG will wish to keep the lines of communication open as there are remaining questions on the panel recommendations.

AgWG Notes

- Conclusions

- Due to the time, the meeting notes will be posted and members provided one week to send suggested revisions or comments prior to finalizing them.
- The regular workgroup meeting scheduled for December 13th will be cancelled based on the approved decisions made today.
- The meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM.