



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM OFFICE
410 Severn Avenue, Suite 109
Annapolis, Maryland

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Dr. Frank J. Coale, Professor
Chair, CBP Agricultural Workgroup
Environmental Science and Technology
1439 Animal Science/Ag. Engineering Bldg.
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20742

Dear Frank:

Thanks to you and Mark Dubin for your leadership efforts over the past year, working with the Partnership's Agricultural Workgroup and the larger agricultural community on developing a comprehensive set of conservation practice verification protocols. I know that investment of time by the workgroup has taken away from other important issues and challenges facing the workgroup.

As we prepare for taking the entire basinwide BMP verification framework up through the Partnership's independent BMP Verification Review Panel this fall and eventually to the Principals' Staff Committee in the early winter timeframe, we need Agricultural Workgroup to complete its work on its verification protocols by this summer. I know you are focused right now on getting the feedback requested from the Transparency Subgroup, formed by the BMP Verification Committee at its March meeting, in order to move forward with the workgroup's protocols.

There is a growing confidence and comfort level with the overall approach the Agricultural Workgroup is taking to ensuring verification for the numerous and diverse suite of conservation practices implemented by producers. There is a standing request from the BMP Verification Review Panel and the Committee to develop some working examples of application of the 80% threshold. The work underway with the Forestry Workgroup on such a working example will benefit all of the partners and their understanding of exactly what is being proposed by the Agricultural Workgroup.

The one specific set of verification protocols which members of the BMP Verification Committee have continued to express the need for further development are those within the "Management BMPs: Plans" category. I believe most of the Committee members can see the Agricultural Workgroup's recommended path forward for the annual practices, structural practices, and the management BMPs: practices categories as outlined within the Workgroup's evolving matrix. The exact path forward for verification of the management BMPs which take the form of plans is not as clear at this time.

As work proceeds forward with both developing working examples of application of the 80% threshold and further developing the supporting tools and narrative documentation, I am asking the Agricultural Workgroup to put emphasis on further thinking through verification of the category of agricultural management BMPs which take the form of plans. I recognize you need to redirect the Agricultural Workgroup's attention to a host of other priority topics and tasks, long put on hold to move the development of the verification protocols forward. Thus, could you consider forming a small group of recognized experts, drawn both from within the Agricultural Workgroup and the larger agricultural community, which would further develop verification protocols for this category of practices. If convening such a group of experts requires some resources—staff, travel support, other—please let me know so I can work to help provide such resources.

The BMP Verification Committee specifically requested the Partnership's Management Board for additional time in the BMP verification schedule, in part, to ensure the Agricultural Workgroup had the time it needed to complete its work on its verification protocols. Please use that time extension over the course of the remainder of the spring and into the summer to complete work on the full suite of verification protocols for all four categories of agricultural conservation practices.

Again, thank you for your leadership and efforts to further enhance the level of partnership confidence in the implementation and continued pollutant reduction effectiveness of agricultural conservation practices being put in place and maintained by the Bay region's thousands of producers.

Sincerely,



Richard Batiuk
CBP Partnership BMP Verification
Committee Chair

Ec: Chesapeake Bay Program BMP Verification Committee Members
Nick DiPasquale, Chesapeake Bay Program Management Board Chair