

# NACD Chesapeake Bay Meeting

## May 1, 2012 – PURPOSE

- **Summarize state approaches** for crediting non-cost shared practices.
- **Share** approaches and lessons learned.
- **Inform Ag Workgroup** efforts to develop verification principles and protocols for CBP.
- **Identify issues/questions** to resolve.

# GREAT TURN-OUT!

- **DE:** DNREC, NRCS
- **PA:** PADEP, PASCC, NRCS
- **MD:** MDA, MACD, Howard & Baltimore Cty SCD
- **VA:** VADCR, VACD, NRCS
- **WV:** WVDA
- **Federal:** USGS, EPA, NRCS
- **NACD** (CEO, Executive Board)
- **CEAP** – NRCS, NASS
- **Green Earth Connection, LLC**
- **Ag Workgroup** Chair and Coordinator

## Summary of State Approaches - BASELINE

- On-Farm Assessments (MD, VA, WV)

Products from Pilots (MD, VA, WV): questionnaires/surveys, assessment tools, worksheets, on-farm inventory tool, picture books, marketing brochures for farmers

- Surveys

RC&D conservation tillage transect survey (PA)

CEAP

- Remote Sensing – cover crops (MD, others?)

- Juice worth the Squeeze Approach (DE)

DE feels that they are capturing most practices. Big hitters aren't implemented without cost share (cover crops, manure transport).

## Summary of State Approaches – POST BASELINE

---

- Spot checks by trained professionals similar to cost share programs
- Farmer self certification (WV, Howard County trial with spot checks)

# Summary of State Approaches - PRACTICES

- All practices

Howard County pilot, WV, VA reported the subset that could be credited in model).

- 15 practices credited in Model (MD)

- Short list of priority practices (PA)

- Findings:

Agronomic management practices (crop, hay, pasture)

Riparian buffers, stream exclusion, livestock watering facilities

Very few structural practices

## FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENTS

---

- Track functional equivalents (MD, WV, VA)
  - FE worksheets, cross referenced by NRCS practice code, with photos (MD)
  - Reference book (WV)
- Track practices below standards (WV, VA pilots, Howard County MD pilots)
  - Work with landowner to get practices up to standards (MD,VA)

## Preliminary Costs

---

- On-farm assessments

\$1.25/acre: Baltimore County (with existing trained staff)

\$4.00/acre: Howard County (training new staff, tracking all practices, conducting trading assessment)

2 hours – 1 day: WV

TBD: VA

- Conservation tillage surveys

\$0.045/acre: PA RC&D transect survey

- CEAP

Not publicly available.

- Data collection systems

Costs may be driven lower due to advances in data collection technologies (iPAD/ANDROID, web-based mobile tracking systems) and streamlining efforts (NRCS).

## Personnel Approaches

---

- Conservation Districts  
build into workplans (VA, PA)
- Outside of CDs  
train new technical team (MD)
- Ag Agency staff through CBRAP (WV)
- “Arm’s Length” verifier (MD)



## NON-COST SHARE DATA CONFIDENTIALITY

---

- Protected: MD, VA, DE, CEAP data
- No FOIA Protection: WV, PA (if state data)

## Outstanding Issues/Questions

- Need **cost-effective approach** to verifying non-cost share data.
- Need to **market** this data sharing effort to CDs and farmers to get support.
- Need guidance on when **surveys** are appropriate (baseline, out years).
- Need consistent approach for determining **functionally equivalent**.
- Need clear guidance on how to address **practices below standards**.
- Need clear guidance on frequency of **confirming baseline practices in out years**.
- Need clear expectations on methods for addressing **duplicate records, expired practices, historic data clean up**.
- Need to address **data confidentiality** as possible impediment to farmer support.
- Need better link between CBP Watershed Model practices and NRCS practices.

## “Principles”

---

- **Uniform expectations across sectors.**
- **Cost effective** (money, staff time, farmer time)
- **Clear expectations** of what will be counted.
- Allow for **innovation** and evolving approaches.
- Need **qualified professionals** so that work won't be questioned.
- **Realistic approach** that gets support from states, CDs, farmers.
- Verification **approaches may vary by type of practice** (structural versus annual management BMPs)
- Make this a **valuable** endeavor beyond bean counting.

## Value of Effort

- **Credits farmers** for all that they do.
- **Builds accurate accounting** of agricultural actions and loads.
- Counts towards **TMDL progress** (practices from 2006 and later).
- Identifies areas and practices to **target funding and staff** for greatest nutrient/sediment reductions.
- Can **help farmers know how they are doing** with respect to TMDL.
- Can **help farmer identify trading opportunities**.