

Agriculture Workgroup (AgWG)

October 18, 2018

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

AgWG Meeting Minutes

[Meeting materials](#)

Actions and Decisions:

ACTION: Contact Loretta Collins (lcollins@chesapeakebay.net) cc: Allie Wagner (wagner.alexandra@epa.gov) with further feedback regarding updating nutrient fertility recommendations to reflect new technologies and research.

ACTION: AgWG members and interested parties willing to participate as leads or contributors on prioritization items presented by Chair Jason Keppler should contact Loretta Collins (lcollins@chesapeakebay.net) cc: Allie Wagner (wagner.alexandra@epa.gov).

ACTION: Reach out to Emily Trentacoste (trentacoste.emily@epa.gov) regarding development of the WIP Dashboard presented.

ACTION: Chis Brosch and Clint Gill will organize a meeting with interested parties from the AgWG to address questions raised by the WTWG regarding the interim BMP for Broiler Mortality Freezers. They will come back to the AgWG with an update next month.

Welcome, introductions, roll-call, review meeting minutes

Workgroup Chairs

- Roll-call of the governance body
- Roll-call of the meeting participants
- The meeting minutes from the Sept 20th Face-to-Face Meeting were approved.

Farm Bill Update (5 min)

Marel King

Marel King, CBC, provided a status update on the 2018 Farm Bill.

- Marel King: The farm bill is a 5-year legislation for most USDA programs, the largest piece is the nutrition programs otherwise known as SNAP or Food Stamps. The last farm bill expired on September 30th in 2018. The authorizations for all conservation programs other than EQIP cannot be complete until the Farm Bill is reenacted. We have a congressman from our region that is a key voice in the negotiations. Currently there is a conference committee (including Congressmen Thompson) to identify key differences between the two bills. We have communicated our priorities to the conference committee and the EC signed a letter communicating that. We are hopeful that these come through in the final bill which will be actioned upon after the election due to controversy and delay regarding differences between the two bills.
- Kristin Saacke-Blunk: Is the conversation regarding how technical assistance beyond CTA could be enhanced utilizing the Farm Bill, beyond the NRCS portion, but also including the public and private TA network progressing? I know the Commission has been an advocate of that.
 - Marel King: When we spoke with Glenn Thompson [U.S. Congressman, PA 5th District] he seemed understanding and acknowledged that local partners have an important role to

- play. We will try to find the right local folks and leverage those resources, since they know the local issues and opportunities.
 - Kristin Saacke-Blunk: One thing he seems interested in is debt forgiveness and how we get engineers and other science positions into TA positions.
 - Marel King: I don't know if that's something through the Farm Bill, but I know states, especially PA, are working on this and we could discuss how this could be addressed throughout the watershed. This was also part of the EC Directive.
- Jason Kepler: Perhaps we can have more updates in November and December if progress has been made on this topic.

Prioritization Update (5 min)

Jason Kepler

Jason Kepler, Chair, updated the Workgroup on prioritization items.

- Jason Kepler: We still have some open slots we would like to fill in, if anyone is interested we would like to hear from you. At our next meeting, we are going to introduce some speakers with barriers to implementation including Sarah Everhart from UMD Law with a conservation leasing guide for farmers.
- Barry Frantz: I like the idea of having a speaker from the Law Institute. Piggy backing on that, they also may have examples we could use for NRCS contracting.
 - Jason Kepler: In terms of contracting, it tends to be sticking point in who has responsibility for maintenance, etc.
- Frank Coale noted that hopefully next month there will be a brief soil P report.

ACTION: AgWG members and interested parties willing to participate as leads or contributors on prioritization items presented by Chair Jason Kepler should contact Loretta Collins (lcollins@chesapeakebay.net) cc: Allie Wagner (wagner.alexandra@epa.gov).

Nutrient Application Recommendation Updates (10 min)

Loretta Collins

As a follow-up to the discussion with Amy Shober on September 20th, Loretta Collins, UMD, provided a brief update regarding the discussion of a rationale for updating nutrient fertility recommendations to reflect new technologies and research.

Data & Modeling

- Loretta Collins: The NECC (Northeast Coordinating Committee on Soil Testing) is a group of land grant universities that gather to discuss soil testing. At their last meeting they discussed that there needs to be a way to relay updates and changes in soil testing between different groups. Rather than adjusting N recommendations, there should be better accounting for other N sources instead of changing the base rate.
- Greg Albrecht: Field by field yield measurement is another key data point. We are working on monitoring silage in larger farms including an end of year assessment of how much N was used. Even CAFO regulated farms in the state from voluntary surveys, they would use the base rate for N on corn. From that 1.2 times yield potential, we tracked out 60-90 lbs. of N in soil and mineralization. Higher level managers can push the envelope on finding out how to really test these soil test-based core values.
- Kristin Saacke-Blunk: I'm recently coming off of a 2-day soil health conference. At some point I wonder how we as the AgWG are going to look at nutrient application recommendations in relation to soil health. We have a robust push toward soil health in the agricultural context and

its effect on water quality and viability on farms. As long as we keep parsing it out into categories, we're not conveying this issue holistically.

- Matt Johnston: That's a great point that the next presentation will address on how we can look at this whole scale.
- Bill Angstadt: I saw the posted document of the N Rate Recommendation Paper with Charlie White from Penn State. The data behind that, which is not included in the paper, is quite stunning. We are in dialogue with Charlie White on this exciting topic looking at cover crops.
- Jason Kepler noted that clearly some of these priorities span across multiple categories, and soil health is one that is difficult to fit into only one category.

ACTION: Contact Loretta Collins (lcollins@chesapeakebay.net) cc: Allie Wagner (wagner.alexandra@epa.gov) with further feedback regarding updating nutrient fertility recommendations to reflect new technologies and research.

Soil Health Perspectives (30 min)

Matt Johnston

Matt Johnston, UMD, discussed ongoing conversations with jurisdictions regarding how soil health may be an effective strategy to achieving Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) goals. Jurisdictions were asked to discuss their ongoing efforts and if they think soil health will be essential in their WIPs.

Implementation

- Ken Staver: In those red circles, the soil health is showing a lot of cover crops. Is that reduction from cover crop or nutrient app rate?
 - Matt Johnston: Cover crops.
 - Ken Staver: So, the reduction is from the cover crop practice?
 - Matt Johnston: In this example, this was only from acres that did not receive manure. We didn't test the areas that would have cover crops.
- Greg Albrecht: Mechanistically we will capture that in nutrient management, and discrete practices we have in the model right now. Relating to adaptive management described earlier, it's not only for increasing, but science is discovering we could be efficient with higher rates, and additionally how we could look at a decreased rate. We are looking for more accurate rates in enhanced nutrient management. A big one for future BMPs, is what impact do practices have on soil health.
- Matt Johnston: The northeast region said to use rye, some was rye traditional with no nutrients and some with rye traditional with nutrients. On CAST, you can click on develop a plan and scroll to BMP pounds reduced by state or county. If you open this up, there is a list of every single cover crop type and pounds reduced per cover crop. You can see differences between cover crops and scroll or filter through to see the specific numbers.
- Jeremy Daubert: In your cover crop graph at the beginning, does that include cost share or does that include voluntary?
 - Matt Johnston: It's whatever the states can report to us. In some cases, that's just cost share, others also include a survey like in PA. DE I believe does the same.
- Gary Felton: In the table, you have 15% and 16% is that for state or agriculture sector?
 - Matt Johnston: I want to stress that's the total amount they needed included.
 - Jeremy Daubert: Does this include conservation tillage?
 - Matt Johnston: I would have to look, I think it did.
 - Jill Whitcomb agreed that it did include conservation tillage.

- Marel King: On the slide with non-harvested cover crop: I would like clarification if these are non-harvested, winter wheat harvested, rye that goes in silo the next year, is that not counted here?
 - Matt Johnston: Absolutely, we left that alone. We left commodity crops staying on the landscape out of it.
 - Marel King: So the 33% does not mean the balance is uncovered, it depends on how they harvested?
 - Matt Johnston: 33% of non-wintering commodity crop land that is used for silage would be clearer.
- Jason Keppler: Is some of that rye, even if not grown for harvest, green chopped as well?
 - Matt Johnston: We get a small portion for green chopped and those two land uses were avoided in this scenario.
- Gary Felton: Is there an amount we know of green chopped, cover crop land use? When you use percentages, it's important to know the available base acres.
 - Matt Johnston: Yes, and we can convene offline to discuss further if you'd like.

WIP Data Dashboard (30 min)

Emily Trentacoste

Emily Trentacoste, EPA CBPO, briefed the AgWG on development of a *Data Dashboard* to support Phase III WIP planning, implementation, and local decision-making.

Implementation

- Jason Keppler: Are these model values based on state reporting through progress runs?
 - Emily Trentacoste: Yes, it's taking values from CAST and what is reported to the CBP.
- Jason Keppler: Is there a way to look at a county and how much progress they've made so far? For example: X number of trees planted by 2025, is there a way to see how progression is going on a specific WIP goal?
 - Emily Trentacoste: We do have that capability, but it's not currently in the dashboard. There could be a section to show progress toward goals.
 - Matt Johnston: Do you think it would be useful to just pull Phase II WIP data we ran through the Phase 6 model in here?
 - Jason Keppler: Speaking for MD, it may be beneficial to wait for WIP III. I get questions all the time about how far along we are, and it would be nice to send them to a site with that information that they can find for themselves.
 - Matt Johnston: We will plan to post that information in August with Phase III WIPs.
 - Emily Trentacoste: Once we get Phase III WIPs up, we can include progress below the state level where we do have goals we can track.
- Kristin Saacke-Blunk: Under the targeting restoration efforts tab, does that mean targeting restoration in terms of resources in the model, not targeting not on the ground? This won't be done on the ground at this level, it would be at the landscape level. So, when they see these efforts, we're not talking about resources on the ground, but how resources are flowing to the areas?
 - Emily Trentacoste: We did a state level walk through today, but there is geospatial information that is meant to be used at a subcounty scale as well. The idea is that it is meant for more local partners at a conservation level. I'd be happy to have feedback on more clear ways to state that. As the Bay Program, we want to make clear we are not

being prescriptive of where practices should go but showing locations to get the most bang for your buck.

ACTION: Reach out to Emily Trentacoste (trentacoste.emily@epa.gov) regarding development of the WIP Dashboard presented.

Broiler Mortality Freezers (20 min)

Loretta Collins

On July 19th, 2018 the AgWG approved an addendum to the Livestock Mortality Management interim BMP document approved by the AgWG on April 21st, 2016 that could be used for planning purposes in state WIPs. This updated interim BMP: Broiler Mortality Freezers was presented to the Watershed Technical Workgroup (WTWG) on Sept 6th, 2018. The WTWG expressed several concerns related to the interim BMP that have stalled its approval. Loretta Collins reviewed the concerns communicated by the WTWG.

Innovation

- Jeremy Hanson: We are scheduling the first meeting of the expert panel. There will be a public input meeting on Wednesday, November 28th at the USGS office in Cantonsville, MD. If interested in attending, keep your calendar. More details coming soon in the next couple weeks.
- Jason Keppler: DE was the jurisdiction interested in including this in their WIP strategy, do we have thoughts on this from DE?
 - Clint Gill: We are under the opinion that we are probably going to need this for our WIP. I'm not sure how to proceed going forward.
 - Jason Keppler: It appears we would have to address these questions before the WTWG would approve as an interim BMP. What is the consensus from the WTWG?
 - Matt Johnston: Loretta and I read and addressed these. We are in a difficult spot and at this point, we don't know the answer. We would need tremendous AgWG help to answer these questions.
 - Clint Gill: You may need to go back to the Mortality Management Poultry Subcommittee to see if these questions are addressed in there.
- Gary Felton: If I look at MD and look at the nutrient credit we are giving, our nutrient credit would be less than 0 in MD due to nutrient management regulations. We would replace with something more easily lost. This practice is compared to composting, not compared to burial.
- Jason Keppler: Is DE willing to look at that if you're interested in moving this forward?
 - Clint Gill: Yes, we will do that. The fertilizer N concept is hard to wrap you're head around. It is removing N from somewhere, unless I'm doing model runs, I don't know where that is coming from.
 - Matt Johnston: Every pound of N we would pull out with carcasses would be replaced with a pound available. It's finite through the calibration and then after, it was a decision of the AgWG to do this for N and not P. If we moved anything out of the manure pile, it would have to be replaced by inorganic N.
 - Clint Gill: When we get to those years with data, it will be finite?
 - Matt Johnston: Yes, as we have a new understanding of the past.
- Jason Keppler: Could we set up a call on this topic and send out to the AgWG to hash out these details and report back?
 - Clint Gill: I will meet with Chris Brosch and get an email out on Monday to try and address these issues.

- Mark Dubin: If you and Chris need help with this, I'd be happy to give you a hand.

ACTION: Chis Brosch and Clint Gill will organize a meeting with interested parties from the AgWG to address questions raised by the WTWG regarding the interim BMP for Broiler Mortality Freezers. They will come back to the AgWG with an update next month.

New Business (10 min)

All

- Kristin Saacke-Blunk noted that the NFWF All Bay Agriculture Network Forum is December 3-5 in Lancaster, PA and registration is open.

Next meeting: Conference Call November 15th, 2018, 10 AM - 1 PM

Meeting Participants:

Jason Keppler	MDA
Matt Monroe	WV DA
Loretta Collins	UMD
Allie Wagner	CRC
Clint Gill	DDA
Adam Lyon	MDA
Greg Albrecht	NYSDA
Amanda Barber	NYSDA
Frank Schneider	PA SCC
Jill Whitcomb	PA DEP
Cindy Shreve	WV DA
Tim Sexton	VA DCR
Bobby Long	VA DCR
Marel King	CBC
Kelly Shenk	EPA Region 3
Frank Coale	UMD
Gary Felton	UMD
Jeff Hill	LCCD
Kristen Saacke-Blunk	Headwaters, LLC
Jeremy Daubert	VT
Ken Staver	UMD
Jennifer Shuler	Bell and Evans Poultry
Barry Frantz	USDA NRCS
Jeremy Hanson	VT
Mark Dubin	UMD
Jeff Sweeney	EPA CBPO
Emily Trentacoste	EPA CBPO
Bill Angstadt	DMAA
Matt Johnston	UMD