

Agriculture Workgroup (AgWG)

May 16th, 2019

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Conference Call

Summary of Actions and Decisions:

Decision: Approval of meeting minutes from the April 18th Conference Call

Decision: The AgWG did not reach consensus to approve the recommendation report of the Cropland Irrigation Expert Panel and it will be moved up to the WQGIT.

Decision: The AgWG did not reach consensus to make a determination for continuance or removal of the interim BMP efficiency for cropland irrigation and it will be moved up to the WQGIT.

Action: Directive Commitment #1: Loretta Collins and Allie Wagner will work towards developing a synthesis of shared agricultural technical assistance needs across the watershed within the June timeframe. Care will be taken to avoid duplicating tasks already set forth in the WQGIT's current work plan.

Action: Directive Commitment #2: Loretta Collins will reach out to appropriate contacts to continue the conversation about training technicians in the field.

Action: Directive Commitment #3: The AgWG, with the help of Matt Monroe, will draft a letter piggybacking the CAC letter expressing concern and will come back to the group for approval.

Action: Directive Commitment #4: Work offline to gain clarification on the FSA announcement regarding CRP/CREP program reenrollment and new enrollment and report back to the AgWG. AgWG leadership will modify the current draft CREP letter to address new information and send out via email for review.

Action: Directive Commitment #5: Continue conversation and invite states to talk to the AgWG about what they are currently initiating to provide technical training for the growing job market at the June AgWG meeting.

Action: Directive Commitment #6: Draft and seek approval of written responses to tasks delegated to the AgWG by the Management Board at the June AgWG meeting.

Welcome, introductions, roll-call, review meeting minutes

Workgroup Chairs

- Roll-call of the governance body
- Roll-call of the meeting participants
- **Decision:** Approval of meeting minutes from the April 18th Conference Call

Workgroup Areas of Focus

Accounting & Reporting • Implementation • Innovation

Data & Modeling • CBP Assignments

Innovation

Cropland Irrigation Expert Panel Report Discussion (35 min)

Tim Sexton, VA DCR and panel chair, presented the recommendation report to the AgWG on March 21st for approval. Consensus could not be reached and the AgWG accepted a request from DE for further time to provide feedback on the Cropland Irrigation Expert Panel. Tim presented the response to the DE feedback and asked for approval of the updated recommendation report.

Links to CBP program protocols:

- [BMP Expert Panel Protocol](#)
- [WQGIT Governance Protocol](#)
- [CBP Governance Protocol](#)

Discussion:

- Chris Brosch thanked the panel for addressing the submitted comments. He noted that DE feels strongly about the comments that were rejected, therefore we will not approve this report. The Soroka report is directly applicable to the model efficiency.
- Ken Staver: The word “efficiency” is for an N loss reduction coefficient and NUE is something completely different. NUE has to take into account change in application rate. The similar language could be clarified to separate the two.
 - Chris Brosch: In the model, it’s the same thing and that’s our objection to the report. In the real world, I understand your point.
 - Ken Staver: Our model works from the field up. Simply because we do something in the Bay model, does not mean we should do it here as well. If we only used models and not field research-based estimates, we would not need expert panels.
 - Chris Brosch: There’s two pieces of evidence in the Wade Thompson and Soroka thesis showing 35 years of field research. Those NUE gains are applicable to the method the model uses to estimate how N moves through an acre of corn.
 - Ken Staver: Neither of those studies demonstrate the N loss to groundwater.
 - Chris Brosch: The N loss to groundwater is calculated by the model and that number is used to calculate it as a NUE of 78%.
 - Ken Staver: If you make that argument, you have to show fertilizer with irrigated land and fertilizer with dry land and compare the efficiencies. Then you would have to separate irrigated vs. non-irrigated land uses.
- The AgWG was asked to approve the recommendation report of the Cropland Irrigation Expert Panel.
 - DE: Stop
 - MD: Stand aside
 - NY: Agreement with reservations
 - PA: Hold
 - WV: Stand aside
 - VA: Endorsement
 - CBC: Agreement with reservations
 - EPA: Endorsement
 - Ken Staver: Endorsement
 - Paul Bredwell: Endorsement
 - Jeremy Daubert: Agreement with reservations

- Gurpal Toor: Agreement with reservations
- **Decision:** The AgWG did not reach consensus to approve the recommendation report of the Cropland Irrigation Expert Panel and it will be moved up to the WQGIT.
- The AgWG was asked to make a determination for continuance or removal of the interim BMP efficiency for cropland irrigation.
- Jason Keppler asked the group if there were objections to keeping the interim efficiency.
 - Lucinda Power: We would like to remove the interim efficiency and do not endorse keeping it.
 - Ken Staver: I think it's a distraction, to leave it in sets people up for not having to find other ways to make reductions. Prudent to be conservative and take it out.
- Each member was asked to vote "in" meaning keep the interim efficiency or "out" meaning remove the interim efficiency.
 - DE: In
 - MD: In
 - NY: In
 - PA: In
 - WV: No vote (No response on the phone)
 - VA: Out
 - CBC: In
 - EPA: Out
 - Ken Staver: Out
 - Paul Bredwell: Out
 - Jeremy Daubert: In
 - Gurpal Toor: Out
- **Decision:** The AgWG did not reach consensus to make a determination for continuance or removal of the interim BMP efficiency for cropland irrigation and it will be moved up to the WQGIT.

CBP Assignments

Moving Forward: Ag TA and Conservation Practice Implementation (50 min)

All

A continuing discussion regarding next steps in regards to the Oct 18th, 2018 charge to the AgWG from the CBP Management Board regarding the CBP Executive Council's [*Directive in Support of Agricultural Technical Assistance and Conservation Practice Implementation*](#). A formal response to the charge will be finalized at the June Face-to-Face meeting.

Directive 1

- Jill Whitcomb: Is this related to the management strategy and workplan of the WQGIT or a separate exercise?
 - Lucinda Power: It can be integrated into the management strategy, but this is a separate directive from the Management Board.
 - Jill Whitcomb: I'm not sure if this is worthwhile before the WIPs are finalized.
- Marel King: This was taking shape at last year's EC meeting. The EC was interested in getting this information specifically to answer specific questions related to technical assistance.
 - Jill Whitcomb: It seems to be a conflict of interest for jurisdictions to lead this project from my perspective.

- **Action:** Loretta Collins and Allie Wagner will work towards developing a synthesis of shared agricultural technical assistance needs across the watershed within the June timeframe. Care will be taken to avoid duplicating tasks already set forth in the WQGIT's current work plan.

Directive 2

- Greg Albrecht: it would be great if Barry Frantz could touch base with all of the programs mentioned at the last meeting.
- **Action:** Loretta Collins will reach out to appropriate contacts to continue the conversation about training technicians in the field.

Directive 3

- Loretta Collins: CAC had a meeting where they discussed issues on this topic. They released a letter that describes many issues that jurisdictions had expressed on our last call. The letter is available in the meeting materials.
 - Matt Monroe: The letter clearly spelled out the issues and was sent to the right people. I'm looking forward to seeing how these issues will be addressed.
- Loretta Collins: Is there interest from the AgWG to express our concerns in a similar nature?
 - Matt Monroe: I'm very willing to help with that and believe it would be worthwhile.
- Amanda Barber: We would like our state to continue to be the point of contact for gathering data in NY. Resolving the 1619 agreement issue is important so we can count and continue to verify practices.
 - Loretta Collins: We aren't intending to propose new ways or requirements for how states track report and verify, but to provide a better working relationship with the federal side.
- **Action:** The AgWG, with the help of Matt Monroe, will draft a letter piggybacking the CAC letter expressing concern and will come back to the group for approval.

Directive 4

- Loretta Collins: Yesterday, FSA announced CRP/CREP re-enrollment will be open again and there will be a one-year extension to existing contracts.
- Ken Staver: Does this open the door for new enrollments? Or just re-enrollments?
 - Tim Sexton: My understanding is opening both new sign-ups and extensions on expiring contracts. A letter saying that we are delighted would be appreciated.
 - Marel King: I think "agreements" refers to state agreements since "contracts" is the language that refers to the farmers.
 - Loretta Collins: It sounds like there may still be some delay in tangible enrollments for new farmers.
- **Action:** Work offline to gain clarification on the FSA announcement regarding CRP/CREP program reenrollment and new enrollment and report back to the AgWG. AgWG leadership will modify the current draft CREP letter to address new information and send out via email for review.

Directive 5

- Kristen Saacke-Blunk: I thought this pertained more to large gaps around engineers that are causing NRCS to redesign. There are clear standards, but not clear division of roles. It varies

between engineering, planning, and boots on the ground folks. The state, federal, NGO, and private sectors all require the same skillsets. I would like to hear more discussion about that.

- **Action:** Continue conversation and invite states to talk to the AgWG about what they are currently initiating to provide technical training for the growing job market at the June AgWG meeting.

Directive 6

- **Action:** Draft and seek approval of written responses to tasks delegated to the AgWG by the Management Board at the June AgWG meeting.

New Business & Announcements (20 min)

- June 19 & 20 Face-to-Face in Rockingham County VA in collaboration with NFWF
- NFWF Regional Ag Networking Forum June 18 & 19
- Expert Panel Update: Agricultural Ditch Management
 - The panel is hoping to finish up end of June.
- Guidance for addressing requests to the CBP for evaluation of new technologies
 - Discussion in June on how the partnership should address new technologies and questions that arise. It was recommended that we have a protocol in place instead of seeking individuals to clarify.
- FY2019 GIT funding project ideas due to the WQGIT by COB May 31

Next meeting:

Face-to-Face Meeting on Wednesday, June 19 & Thursday, June 20

- June 19: The Granary at Valley Pike Farmer’s Market
3494 Lee Hwy, Weyers Cave, VA 24486
- June 20: Virginia Department of Agriculture
261 Mt Clinton Pike, Harrisonburg, VA 22802

Meeting Participants:

Jason Keppler	MDA
Matt Monroe	WV DA
Loretta Collins	UMD
Allie Wagner	CRC
Chris Brosch	DDA
Clint Gill	DDA
Greg Albrecht	NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets
Amanda Barber	Cortland Co. SWCD
Frank Schneider	PA State Conservation Commission
Tim Sexton	VA DCR
Seth Mullins	VA DCR
Marel King	CBC
Lucinda Power for Kelly Shenk	EPA
Jill Whitcomb	PA DEP

Cindy Shreve	WV DA
Adam Lyon	MDA
Elizabeth Hoffman	MDA
Kristen Saacke-Blunk	Headwaters, LLC
Paul Bredwell	U.S Poultry and Egg
Jeremy Daubert	VT
Dr. Gurpal Toor	UMD
Ken Staver	UMD
Jeremy Hanson	VT
Mark Dubin	UMD
Jeff Sweeney	EPA

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