

November 28, 2012

To Agriculture Workgroup Members and Interested Parties,

In preparation for the Agriculture Workgroup (AgWG) meeting scheduled for November 29, 2012 at the Chesapeake Bay Program Office (CBPO), Frank Coale and I wish to provide you with the newest version of the **“Agricultural Verification Protocol Concept”** document and a new supporting document which represents the latest considerations of the workgroup discussions this year. We wish to fully acknowledge that these two latest verification documents have been delayed in reaching you; however, doing so has allowed us to develop the important new supporting document that will be discussed further below.

The new **“Agricultural Verification Protocol Concept Version 3.4”** matrix includes some significant additions such as the representation of federal and state regulatory programs as a separate assessment verification method, the identification of appropriate BMP categories by assessment method, and the addition of three new columns describing scientific defensibility, accountability, and transparency. These new elements were included in the Version 3.4 per the workgroup member’s recommendations.

The newest verification document provided is entitled **“Agricultural Data Verification Protocol for the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership”**. This represents the first draft of a much more complete support documentation that will be included in the final agricultural verification protocol package, which is expected to come before the workgroup early next year for approval. This initial document provides an overview of the process the workgroup has taken to arrive at the current Version 3.4 concept matrix, and includes a brief comparison of the pros and cons of each of the previous versions with the current one. An important section included in the document is a step-by-step description of the Version 3.4 concept matrix header and columns is provided by number with layman level information and real world examples for illustration. Where appropriate, the background basis for attributing values in the matrix is discussed, including what the statistical data confidence threshold level is based on.

In reviewing the documents, it is our recommendation that members should read the new Word supporting document first and refer to the matrix as needed. We believe the new document will considerably assist members in understanding the elements of the Version 3.4 concept matrix and allow a balanced cross-comparison with previous versions. As always, please contact either myself or Frank should you have any questions, and we look forward to a constructive discussion on November 29th. Thanks!

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