

AGWG Minutes 3.8.12

<http://www.chesapeakebay.net/calendar/event/18040/>

AgWG Meeting Minutes- Coale

- Sexton- motion to approve
- Samadani- seconds motion
- All in favor, minutes approved

ChesapeakeStat- Vetter

See stat.chesapeakebay.net

- We have the county level data info on BMPs but it is not yet represented
- Currently can see how you stack up against goals but only at the state level
- Dubin- is there a value added to include the county level information?
- Vetter- some practices are combined practices, this may not be most useful presentation at county level, might need further breakdown
- Coale- I think we need to include, this is info a lot of people will be looking for, want to focus on
- York- Goals are at county level, representing data we have at this level will show where work is getting done
- Marquart- will not be able to present practices by watershed; it is not reported that way and cannot be drawn out this way. Also note that CBP Practice definitions may not line up w national NRCS definitions
- There have been data adjustments that are not highlighted, these numbers are in flux
- Comparing 2009 and 2010 is interesting because of the use of NEIEN in 2010
- Be sure to explain all differences and nuances, but otherwise a very useful set of information
- Its good to have these questions asked now, we will continue to work w workgroup to make this as useful for you as we can

Evaluation of Nutrient Management Practices- Dubin/Smolen

See Presentation

- Nutrient Management is management of application. This name can be misleading, and will be discussed by group
- Looking to have efficiency values for this practice in whatever breakout the group decides
- Based on Mid-Atlantic process, but we have revised the process and added to it as needed since the last run around

Evaluation of Conservation Tillage Practices- Dubin/Sievers

- Filling gaps, confirming membership right now
- Will be sending out survey to group soon
- Looking to have first call in the next week or two
- Raub- what is the schedule for review of remaining practices?

- Dubin- We will be having conference call this afternoon to discuss steps forward, resources. Four panels seems to be the max at any given time, so as one wraps we will get another rolling
- Zygmunt- how many practices remain?
- Dubin- there were about 20 practices total, so there are at least 15 remaining. This list is open to constant revisions/additions as well, so may be adding more in the near future
- A lot of the same people are acting on a number of different panels, we need to respect their time and be realistic about time commitments

Water Stewardship Verification Process- Brosch/Korsack

See Presentation

- Pattison- How long does it take to complete this process?
- With all prior information available and about a 3 hour farm tour, you are looking at about a day to review and write a plan
- Juengst- It's going to take time to revise paperwork to capture the information you are looking for.
- Simpson- the farmer signs to have Nutrient Management Plans released, we use electronic version. Reduces time in collecting info
- Is it realistic to apply this data set across the watershed? Do you feel you are sampling an even distribution?
- Right now the program is voluntary, may be getting more of the environmentally concerned farmers. But once you get one farmer, they all start rolling in. If you look at the set we do have some good guys and also some trouble spots
- What is the baseline used?
- This project started in 2009, currently drawing comparison to old tributary strategies
- When we see deficiencies, we give them the info they need to contact the agency that can assist in correcting the issue
- Taglang- is this being offered as what should be done widespread?
- Dubin- no, we are offering this as an example of something that can be considered.

Howard County Verification Project- York/Enzor

See Presentation

- Instead of using the term trading, farmers respond better to 'bridge loan'- polluters don't pollute forever, they simply borrow the benefit of farmers conservation until they are able to put permanent fix in place
- Rhoderick- MD is starting to expand this to other counties
- One giving credit for practices implemented after 2006. These are not included in calibration and therefore can be counted once we know we are not double counting
- Is the conservation in Howard Co something you would expect to see throughout?
- No but it was a great place to try the program and learn
- Taglang- and when violations are found?
- Enzor- they are brought back to me and as Conservation District, we work through it

- Tracking functionally equivalent- can you speak on that?
- Using questions we are getting information on practices they weren't aware of. Buffers are a big one; finding 10, 20 foot buffers along almost all fields
- This work has a limited season- winter to early spring, cant interfere w planting/harvest
- Working w operators is much more efficient than landowners, can usually get access to a number of farmers at once.
- Cost per acre, once we have team trained is approx. \$2-4
- Seeing very few farmers that have responded to Ag Census
- Goodlander- What type of reception are you seeing from the letter sent to farmers informing then someone would be coming out?
- Didn't see much response to letter, got more response to phone calls. Ninety percent agreed to participate at that point. Having the district staff contact is vital
- Status and respect for conservation district has risen through process, peer pressure through farmers has increased as well
- Plan to focus on 11 urban counties of the Western Shore next. Looking to get cost share w county because of the offset benefit

USDA/USGS NEIEN Data Project- Hively

See Presentation

- Pattison- FSA data can be a problem. Reports in past included everything they supplied funding for. Given a 10 yr contract, it would be reported each yr for 10 years. Need to deduct previous years contracts still in place
- Have you had a chance to compare this to what the states are reporting? No but plan to
- This project was started to ease the states resource demand and efforts, it can save workload if used correctly
- How difficult is it for states to get info sharing agreements?
- First time is a bear, but each time after that is much easier. Consider who really needs to have access, not as many as originally thought
- Ristow- NY has an agreement in place

Evaluation of Poultry Litter Management- Glancey

- Within the next month we will be able to share all data w panel
- Have info as far back as 1995
- Should have product for workgroup late this spring
- In addition to data, hooked up w manure transporter on Delmarva
- Discrepancies between wet ton and dry ton conversions. Should be considered by the panel

NACD Recommended Measurement Protocols- Duesterhaus

See Paper

- Draft, feel free to contribute as you see fit

- Taglang- what are your thoughts on processes like transect surveys?
- It has been refined, needs to be transparent so people can believe it. There is a place for it
- Zygmunt- Observations- seems to be trend to identify cost effective way to go farm to farm. Reliance on CEAP I and II, recognize these surveys are general and may fall short of capturing detail
- Sweeney- what is the frequency of the survey?
- Probably only every 5 years, this is likely often enough to capture significant changes
- It's a balancing act when using resources. Need to recognize that programs that may work for most of the country are not good enough for us

BMP Verification Process- Coale

- Angstandt- lot of discussion of structural practices but want to be sure that NM is still included
- Sexton- VA has talked about online farmer verification and I cant buy it. Without an audit, you are wasting your time and trying to fool everyone
- Ensor- we have been contacted by folks looking to become verifiers, asking what they would have to do. Maybe something like if they take a class, pass a test they can be certified
- If all verifiers come through a common portal (environmental groups and conservation districts alike) then we all know what it takes
- Spoke of gold standard, set this standard and count the number of farmers that have met, challenging others to get to the same level
- Without verification, BMPs are not very reliable. Not saying all farms need to be inspected but there are other ways to choose who to evaluate
- Set benchmark of who could qualify to be verified and then choose from this list. i.e. large scale farms, certain practices raise flags
- Talk to professionals on data collection, there is a place for it
- Hoe Howard County, we feel confident that after initial inspection we could give them materials and training needed to self verify. Inspect 15% of these self verification- word will get out and others will comply to avoid violations
- Simpson- had 5 step protocol similar to industrial pollution correction, this is how we developed initial program
- Zygmunt- prioritize farms to be inspected, think CAFO regulations or Spill Prevention Plan Program- larger farms, farms w set BMPs have to have plan in place
- Cropper- some practices require more than 1 visit. Conservation tillage requires spring and fall inspection
- Targeting makes sense to public, based on geography, practices in place
- Bring other sectors and public with you
- Other sectors are looking to ag to lead the way
- Taglang- the idea is that we have limited resources- on site inspections cannot be the only option.

Review of AgWG Recommendations- Dubin

See Presentation

Meeting Adjourned- 3:30 PM

Participants-

Fred Samandani

Chris Brosch

Frank Coale

Mark Dubin

Sally Sedaski

Glynn Carpenter

Bob Ensor

Dana York

Susan Marquart

Tim Sexton

Andy Fitch

Megan Thyne

Doreen Vetter

Blaine Delaney

Jason Dalrymple

Les Vough

Barry Evans

Tom Juengst

Doug Goodlander

Ted Tessler

Steve Taglang

Aaron Ristow

Kelly Shenk

Rich McEntee

James Cropper

Marel Raub

Ann Marsh

Mike Smolen

Mark Sievers

Hank Zygmunt

Greg Albrecht

Rich Batiuk