

Agriculture Workgroup (AgWG)

April 19th, 2018

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

AgWG Call Summary

Meeting materials: http://www.chesapeakebay.net/groups/group/agriculture_workgroup

Summary of Actions and Decisions:

Decision: The AgWG approved the draft March Meeting Minutes.

Decision: The AgWG approved the nomination of Kelly O'Neill, CBF, as the alternate for At-Large AgWG member Bill Chain (CBF).

Decision: The AgWG approved the CBPO recommended interim BMP definition and effectiveness value for denitrifying bioreactors in tile-drained agricultural ditches for future planning purposes only, with changes to the title of the document for clarification. The title of the document will change to "Interim BMP: Denitrifying Ditch Bioreactors".

Action: The AgWG coordinator will work offline to ensure that timelines for providing fertilizer sales data and data input deadlines are consistent among projects.

Action: AgWG members should submit ideas for projects, topics and discussion at the June AgWG face-to-face meeting to Loretta Collins and prior to the May 19th AgWG conference call.

Action: Information about the June Face-to-Face meeting will be distributed to the AgWG membership as it becomes available. Currently, the meeting is proposed to be held over June 20 – 21 at the Lancaster County Soil Conservation Office in PA.

Action: If any information presented for connections between loads and trends is inconsistent with knowledge of AgWG membership, please contact Jeni Keisman via email (jkeisman@usgs.gov). AgWG members are also encouraged to contact Jeni Keisman with any citable materials for additional agricultural practice information.

10:00 Welcome, introductions, roll-call, review meeting minutes

Workgroup Chairs

- Roll-call of the governance body
- Roll-call of the meeting participants
- Approval of meeting minutes from the March 15th Conference Call
- Jeremy Hanson announced the RFP availability for nominations to the mortality management BMP expert panel, due June 18.
- Bill Chain has requested an alternate: Kelly O'Neill
 - Frank Schneider nominated Kelly for approval as the alternate member for at-large AgWG member Bill Chain (CBF)
 - Chris Brosch seconded the nomination.

Decision: The AgWG approved the nomination of Kelly O'Neill, CBF, as the alternate for At-Large AgWG member Bill Chain.

Decision: The AgWG approved the draft March Meeting Minutes.

10:05 Interim BMPs Approval

Loretta Collins

Following a request from jurisdictional members at the February Face-to-Face Meeting, an interim definition and effectiveness value for denitrifying bioreactors in tile-drained agricultural ditches was presented to the Workgroup on the March 15th call. This interim BMP would be available for planning purposes in Phase III WIP development until final recommendations from the Expert Panel on agricultural ditch management practice are reviewed and approved by the partnership.

Discussion:

- Kristen Saacke-Blunk: On agricultural ditch management, the name of the document is different than the BMP name at the top. Which is the correct name, and is there a reason to not have ag ditch management there as a BMP?
 - Loretta Collins: The BMP name will be Denitrifying Ditch Bioreactors. Ditch Management is a suite of interim BMPs for associated with agricultural ditches. Several BMPs fall under that category as distinct practices for eventual use in the model.
 - Saacke-Blunk: We are only approving the ditch denitrifying BMP today, and not the rest of the BMPs in that group?
 - Collins: Yes, and I can revise the title of this document to be clearer for what we are approving today.
 - Saacke-Blunk: Is the whole suite operating on an interim basis?
 - Collins: There is currently [in Phase 6.0] an approved BMP for water control structures, and an interim BMP for sorbing materials. The water control structures BMP carried over from Phase 5, and the expert panel is reviewing water control structures in addition to several other associated BMPs. But that is the only approved BMP available right now. Any other practices would be interim, for planning purposes only, until the Expert Panel recommendations are approved by the Partnership.
 - Saacke-Blunk: The interim BMP is specific to the denitrifying bioreactors then, and not the whole suite of ditch BMPs?
 - Collins: Yes. I will revise the wording for clarity on that.
- Move to approve, Chris Brosch seconded.

Decision: AgWG approval of the CBPO recommended interim BMP definition and effectiveness value for denitrifying bioreactors in tile-drained agricultural ditches for future planning purposes only, with changes to the title of the document for clarification. The title of the document will change to "Interim BMP: Denitrifying Ditch Bioreactors".

10:20 Resources and Technical Support Summary

Lucinda Power

Lucinda Power, EPA, discussed the funding resources and technical support available to advance the objectives of the Agriculture Workgroup. This included a discussion of staffing at the Chesapeake Bay Program office and contractual technical support that is available. Additionally,

available sources of funding, and the process through which the funding is allocated were discussed.

Discussion:

- Collins: Please let us know if you have any questions about the roles that Mark and I have, and support capabilities in the AgWG.
 - Mark Dubin concurred.

10:40 **Manure Generation Data in the Phase 6.0 Model**

Curt Dell

Curt Dell, ARS, discussed how new population and nutrient analysis data can and cannot be integrated with the NASS data currently in-use in the Phase 6.0 watershed model.

Discussion:

- Collins: Should there be a correction for slide 4—this slide says that the census data would distribute 100 cattle evenly among the counties in the watershed for a given state. However, the distribution is not always even, correct? Aren't there county-specific ratios to use?
 - Dell: You're right, that assumption is not quite correct. We would distribute based on the data provided directly from the census of agriculture, regardless of whether the states have better information.
- Dubin: I also want to note that for the NASS data, the previous ag census would be used to do that distribution.
 - Dell: That's the default, but states would still have an opportunity to change that distribution by providing updated data, correct?
 - Dubin: That's correct.
 - Dell: The states are encouraged to update those distribution numbers if they have more accurate information.

10:55 **Collection of Alternative Data**

Mark Dubin

Mark Dubin, UMD discussed the mechanics of collecting new agricultural data and how it can be beneficial to the goals of the Workgroup and the agriculture sector at-large.

Discussion:

- Keppler: In light of Lucinda's presentation, you have a deep involvement in these topics. If the workgroup has questions about this process and data collection efforts, can the members call on you for assistance?
 - Dubin: Yes, and we are doing some of that now to help members update their data and comply with data collection needs and requirements. Whether it's an agency, NGO, any partner.
- Alisha Mulkey: Are you working on a project on poultry litter updates? Can we get an update on that project?
 - Dubin: I presented that as a proposal a couple months ago and it is still a draft proposal. We will have Paul Bredwell come back for the next meeting and brief the workgroup on that work.

- Chris Brosch: I wonder what independent oversight is being set up for these projects. If there is input that the AgWG can provide to make the process more transparent, that's something I think we should talk more about.
 - Dubin: There are a lot of moving parts here, and determining who is an independent third party for this work will be an important piece, and we would want AgWG, Bay jurisdictions, and the Partnership to provide feedback on that. We also need to make sure we are working with companies and growers in this sector, and we can bring this back to the AgWG for input.
 - Brosch: Will that discussion happen at the next AgWG meeting? Will this include some discussion of integrators?
 - Dubin: We anticipate that discussion to be part of this discussion next month. We will discuss how the AgWG would like to be involved in oversight for this process.
 - Brosch: The poultry litter subcommittee was a bottom up approach that came up from the jurisdictions, and I am concerned that this approach is too opaque and we don't have a chance to talk to the companies about this approach. DE requests for this conversation to be more transparent.
 - Mark Dubin agreed: We will try to get some company representatives to join us for upcoming conversations and have a dialogue on what's possible and where. This process really got started at University of Delaware and was expanded by the AgWG into a regional Partnership project rather than just a UD project. We will work to be consistent with processes that have been used in the past and we will bring this discussion back at the May meeting.
- Jill Whitcomb: I wasn't directly involved in the poultry litter subcommittee, so I would appreciate more discussion about this in the workgroup to ensure that new members have opportunities to provide input. It's important to bring these kind of decision discussions back to the workgroup. This might be a next step identified in a report for further research. I request that these kinds of discussions always be brought back to the workgroup for continued review and recommendation from the workgroup on next steps.
 - Dubin: Yes, and we will be sure to brief new members and returning members as well. We want to make sure that these data changes reflect not only model updates but also reflect actual on-the-ground BMP implementation. We want to make sure the AgWG has input every step of the way, and while we don't have decisions yet, we will be bringing this for AgWG input next month. No contracts have been signed or funds allocated at this point, we are just doing exploratory discussions right now.
- Jason Keppler asked for clarification of the decisions to be requested at the May conference call.
 - Dubin: We will talk about the opportunities to work with the poultry industry in collection and use of this data. We could discuss other opportunities to work across source sectors. We also have a charge from the Management Board to continue work on soil phosphorus levels. Those items are all potential topics of discussion for our May conference call and our June meeting.
 - Keppler: Thanks, that's helpful, and this will also help to set up the agenda for our June Face-to-Face meeting in terms of what our priorities will be for the next couple years. The poultry update next month could also include updates to those other projects you mentioned, and we will call for the workgroup members to suggest projects that they are working on or would like to, and we can discuss what's on the table for our PA meeting in June.

- Keppler: If the jurisdictions have project ideas to discuss in June, please let Loretta and myself know.
- Chris Brosch asked where universities fit in the partner categories.
 - Dubin: We think the universities and academic institutions fall into that third-party category.

Action: AgWG members should submit project ideas for discussion at the June AgWG Face-to-Face meeting to Loretta Collins prior to the May 19 AgWG conference call.

11:40 **Data Input Deadlines**

Loretta Collins

Loretta Collins provided updated and partnership-approved deadlines for model data inputs for future years of milestone planning and progress updates.

Discussion:

- Mulkey: You have April 30, 2019 for fertilizer input data, but Curt said that we wouldn't have that data until Oct 2019.
 - Collins: We will have to work offline to make sure all these plans and timelines are consistent.

Action: The AgWG coordinator will work offline to ensure that timelines for providing fertilizer sales data and data input deadlines are consistent among projects.

11:45 **Understanding BMP- Load Trend Connection**

Jeni Keisman

Jeni Keisman, USGS, discussed the on-going effort to understand the changes in riverine and estuarine water quality over time using quantitative information on changing nutrient sources in contributing watersheds. Temporal and spatial patterns in nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P) inputs from manure and fertilizer were evaluated for the period 1950 to 2012 to better understand trends in water quality in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and estuary. The expected effect of agricultural best management practices (BMPs) on agricultural nutrient inputs was also explored for the 1985 to 2012 time period. This information supports ongoing efforts to explain observed changes in N and P loads to rivers throughout the watershed, as well as spatial and temporal variability in water-quality indicators and water-quality standards attainment in Chesapeake Bay itself.

Discussion:

- Keisman: All of the data that we have used here is from outside, independently generated sources, so if anything presented here is inconsistent with what you know as practitioners, please let me know. If you'd like assistance with accessing the datasets we used for this analysis, I can also help with that.
- Chris Brosch: On slide 5, this map is from Phase 5, correct?
 - Keisman: Yes. This data is from a 2013 journal article done on Phase 5.
- Jim Cropper: The corn silage sites would be heavily fertilized with manure in most cases. That is fertilized each year they plant corn. I know of one farm in central PA where they have been growing corn silage in the same area for 20 years, and they fertilize with manure every year as far as I know.
 - Keisman: Thank you, that's really helpful information. Are there documents available that we could cite for that? If you know of any, please let me know via email. We don't need to cite traditional peer reviewed journal articles—we can cite

anything like a bulletin, news article, or other less formal piece of written information.

- Keisman: If there is anything in this presentation that you know is inconsistent with your knowledge, please let me know via email.

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12:05 Review of Action and Decision Items

Loretta Collins

Loretta Collins reviewed the action and decision items from the meeting.

Action: Information about the June Face-to-Face meeting will be distributed to the AgWG membership as it becomes available. Currently, the meeting is proposed to be held over June 20 – 21 at the Lancaster County Soil Conservation Office in PA.

12:10 Adjourned

Next meeting: Thursday, May 17th, 2018: Conference Call

Call Participants:

Jason Keppler, MDA
Matt Monroe, WV DA
Mark Dubin, UMD
Loretta Collins, UMD
Michelle Williams, CRC
Chris Brosch, DNREC
Clint Gill, DNREC
Greg Albrecht, NYS DEC
Frank Schneider, PA SCC
Cindy Shreve, WV DEP
Jerry Ours, WV DEP
Kelly Shenk, EPA R3
Alisha Mulkey, MDA
Adam Lyon, MDA
Tim Sexton, VA DCR
Bobby Long, VA DCR
Emily Dekar, USC
Gary Flory, VA DEQ
Paul Bredwell, US Poultry and Egg Association
Peter Hughes, Red Barn Consulting, Inc.
Frank Coale, UMD
Gary Felton, UMD
Jennifer Reed-Harry, Penn Ag Industries Assoc.
Jeff Hill, LCCD

Kristin Saacke-Blunk, Headwaters, LLC
Jenn Schuler, Bell & Evans Poultry
Dave Graybill, PA Farm Bureau
Barry Frantz, NRCS
Bill Angstadt, Angstadt Consulting
Greg Sandi, MDE
Ken Staver, UMD
Steve Levitsky, Purdue Farms
Ron Ohrel, ADANE
Jeremy Daubert, VT
Jim Cropper, Northeast Pasture Consortium
Alana Hartman, WV DEP
Lucinda Power, EPA
Jeni Keisman, USGS
Jeremy Hanson, VT
Jill Whitcomb, PA DEP
Curt Dell, ARS
Dean Hively, USGS

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