

Meeting Minutes
November 18, 2021
10:00 AM-12:00 PM
AgWG Conference Call
Materials: [Link](#)

Summary of Actions and Decisions

Decision: The AgWG approved the [October meeting minutes](#).

Action: Jackie Pickford, CRC staffer, will distribute additional information about the call for at-large member nominations.

Action: Official outcomes of the WQGIT October Phase 7 meeting are pending and will be distributed to the AgWG once finalized. Prioritization of AgWG tasks will occur in the coming months. Timeline and charge to address ag modeling concerns forthcoming.

Action: AgWG members will be surveyed via email to provide input on their positions regarding alternative sources of agricultural data and the incorporation of the Hillandale data into future versions of CAST.

Action: Jackie Pickford, CRC staffer, will distribute an update on the BMP Verification Ad-Hoc Action Team (BMPVAHAT). AgWG members are encouraged to participate in the [December BMPVAHAT meeting](#) to ask questions and learn more about the topic of partial credit.

Introduction

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

- Roll-call of the governance body
- Roll-call of the meeting participants- *Please enter name and affiliation under "Participants" or in "Chat" box*
- **Decision:** The AgWG approved the [October meeting minutes](#).
- **Action:** Jackie Pickford, Staffer, will distribute additional information about the call for at-large member nominations.
- A moment of silence to acknowledge the unexpected passing of [Jack Meisinger](#), research scientist and significant contributor to the CBP partnership's understanding of nitrogen dynamics in agricultural landscapes, amongst his many accomplishments.

CBP Assignments

10:05 **Towards Phase 7: Ag Data Concerns (25 min)** Loretta Collins
Loretta Collins, AgWG coordinator, reviewed outcomes of the two-day Water Quality Goal Implementation (WQGIT) in October and discussed items related to prioritizing ag data concerns for future versions of CAST and Phase 7 in the coming months. Changes to the nutrient application calculations for ag was an area of high interest amongst the WQGIT members.

Action: Official outcomes of the WQGIT October Phase 7 meeting are pending and will be distributed to the AgWG once finalized. Prioritization of AgWG tasks will occur in the coming months. Timeline and charge to address ag modeling concerns forthcoming.

Data & Modeling

10:30 Incorporating Industry Animal Population Data into the CBP Modeling Tools (25 min)

Vanessa Van Note, EPA-CBPO, continued the discussion regarding the unresolved item from the CAST-21 Workplan: *Accommodate with CAST21 QA/QC'd historic and current layer population data for Hillandale Farms, Spring Grove, PA*. The October AgWG presentation is [here](#) and draft minutes of the October discussion are [here](#) for reference. The AgWG will need to make a decision on inclusion of the Hillandale data in CAST-23 and in the Phase 7 watershed model at a future meeting(s).

11:00 Previous CBP Uses of Alternative Data Sources (20 min)

Mark Dubin

In follow-up to the October discussion on using alternative sources of agricultural data, Mark Dubin, UMD, provided examples of how the partnership and the CBPO have previously utilized alternative data sources and the associated QA/QC that allowed for incorporation of that data into the Phase 6 Watershed Model (CAST).

11:20 Open Discussion (30 min)

Leon Tillman (in chat): So is this indicating that Hillandale was completely neglected from the Ag Census count?

Frank Schneider (in chat): No, I believe the Census accounts for the numbers by averaging them throughout all Pa counties, thus not giving a trade secret away, since its such a large outlier.

Loretta Collins (in chat): @ Leon. An analysis of population numbers at the county and state level in PA indicates that the Hillandale facilities in question are not included in the 2017 Ag Census totals. This is the driver for this discussion. We are missing millions of layers in CAST because they are not accounted for in the 5-year Ag Census.

Leon Tillman (in chat): @Loretta So based on the discrepancy in the numbers it is a belief that none of the Hillandale layers were accounted for in the census? Has there been any discussion with anyone with NASS related to this concern?

Olivia Devereux (in chat): @Leon, Vanessa and I spoke with NASS several times. I will send you the summary of the discussions we had.

Chris Brosch: What are the sources of those data elements collected?

Mark Dubin: In general VA DCR maintains an extensive database and provides cost-share analysis that we had access to. Some data was from Virginia Tech and Penn State. We also had a survey process to talk with growers about their facilities and then compared that to documentation from various receipts. We also developed data sharing agreements with companies operating in these areas which were treated as private research data. We coded growers so we didn't use their names and had lots of security of the information. In short, it was a combination of product data, grower information, and company data.

Chris Brosch: Sounds like the analysis came from labs and integrators for placement population, both of which have documentation/receipts. But we struggle with documentation of the tonnage information. Was all of the information collected used interchangeably?

Mark Dubin: We looked at obtaining truck scale receipts or at least estimates on the tonnage. We looked at a lot of different data sources. If the grower didn't have a litter nutrient analysis report in the past 12 months, we would take a sample ourselves. Project staff were trained and consistent in collecting samples using the ASTM methods.

Gregorio Sandi: Did any of those previous projects confirm NASS data sets for Turkeys and Swine were consistent or inconsistent with the data we use in the model?

Mark Dubin: In the land grant university publications, we found for the swine information that NASS reported 6% more population in their annual survey than we did. For the turkey

information, the NASS annual production data was around 20% higher than what we found in the field.

Gregorio Sandi: What did we use for turkey and swine populations in the model?

Mark Dubin: In Phase 6 we used the NASS population data, but we replaced the ASABE nutrient concentration data. So the commercial [population] data was being used in those projects to develop those estimates [of manure nutrient concentration], it's not directly [in the model/CAST] there but it's baked into the estimates.

Ken Staver: Yes but the Hillandale problem is about missing birds. If we're using the population data as the driver of loads, then the foundation of that is getting the numbers correct.

Mark Dubin: I agree. As a result of those pilot projects, we've continued to develop additional data on poultry and livestock species in VA and WV, looking at a multiyear timeframe and including the NASS five-year census data. So that would allow us to do these comparisons with statewide and county level comparisons but it's still in development.

Leon Tillman: As it pertains to accounting, if that data is part of the state aggregated data, would it be captured in the model at that level?

Mark Dubin: For the layer population in Adams and York, we found the same missing data for both the county and state perspective.

Dave Graybill: I wonder if the NASS data can be regionally broken up across states? You won't be able to find that particular information in the NASS data, it's confidential due to competition in the marketplace.

Gregorio Sandi: How are those other layer operations represented in the model?

Mark Dubin: Right now, we're using NASS data at the county scale for all species of animals.

Leon Tillman: If the ag facility is large enough, it is not accounted for in the NASS data at all?

Loretta Collins: Typically, they would still be accounted for, but they would be aggregated up to the state scale. Right now, we're finding that even the aggregated state numbers don't seem to account for the layer population in Adams and York counties, and therefore are not being accounted for in CAST. That's the problem we're currently up against.

Leon Tillman: Because that data is being aggregated up to a higher level, at some point it is being accounted for. Correct?

Loretta Collins: That's what we're trying to figure out because we can't get a straight answer from NASS [due to data privacy], but the published data indicates that these layers are not accounted for. We need partnership approval on the data sources that we use and there needs to be consistency in our data/data sources. This exemplifies a problem that may or may not be isolated to these counties. So, the two driving forces of this conversation are a) do we want to use industry data to create a change product [to represent the Hillandale] layer population data and b) how do we address the larger issue at hand, and are there data sources we aren't using that could help mitigate this type of issue in the model?

Ken Staver: Maybe we ought to look at what is affected by this inability to count birds, such as the fertilizer data, so it's isolated to the county where the issue is located.

Chris Brosch (in chat): How was the UMD/CBPO data project commissioned? Is this a new project being presented to the AGWG?

Mark Dubin: This effort was not commissioned/contracted, it was done by myself as part of my role at the partnership.

Gregorio Sandi: Are you guys proposing to replicate this process over the entire watershed or is this a one and done kind of project?

Mark Dubin: If the partnership wants to use alternate data to supplement what is available, then they can request to replicate this process, but it is up to the partnership.

Leon Tillman: Has there been a discussion for establishing a threshold for reevaluating the data from NASS and the private industry? For example, if there was a 9% difference, then it's negligible, but if there's a 25% difference then something needs to be done.

Mark Dubin: Not yet, but I think it should be part of the discussion moving forward.

Paul Bredwell: I understand the need for privacy for farmers, but as time goes on if we don't meet the goals in 2025, these nuances in regard to privacy are going to get lost. The poultry industry wants to see the best dataset out there. If we have a mechanism in place to QA/QC and keep the data private, like the project Mark went over today, I think we need to utilize that process to get the best numbers.

Chris Brosch: On a separate note, can I request that the AgWG get an update on the BMP Verification Ad-Hoc Action Team issues? Need to know what is being voted on at the Ad-Hoc so we can get the AgWG vote accurately represented.

Action: AgWG members will be surveyed via email to provide input on their positions regarding alternative sources of agricultural data and the incorporation of the Hillandale data into future versions of CAST.

Action: Jackie Pickford, CRC staffer, will distribute an update on the BMP Verification Ad-Hoc Action Team (BMPVAHAT). AgWG members are encouraged to participate in the [December BMPVAHAT meeting](#) to ask questions and learn more about the topic of partial credit.

11:50 **New Business & Announcements**

- **Animal Mortality Expert Panel Technical Appendix** will be reviewed at the December 2nd Watershed Technical Workgroup (WTWG) meeting, with a request for approval.
 - Contact Jeremy Hanson (hansonj@chesapeake.org) with questions.
- **Nov 29th, National Fish and Wildlife (NFWF) Applications for Proposals Due**
 - NFWF is soliciting proposals under the **2022 Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants (INSR)** program to accelerate the rate and scale of water quality improvements specifically through the coordinated and collaborative efforts of sustainable, regional-scale partnerships in implementing proven water quality improvement practices more cost-effectively.
 - Final Proposal Due Date: Nov 29th, 2021.
 - Read more [here](#). Contact: Jake Reilly at jake.reilly@nfwf.org
- **Other Announcements?** - send to Jackie Pickford (Pickford.Jacqueline@epa.gov) for inclusion in "Recap" email

11:55 **Review of Action and Decision Items**

12:00 **Adjourn**

Next Meeting:

Thursday, December 16: 10AM-12PM Conference Call

Meeting Chat

From Me to Everyone: 10:10 AM

AgWG Membership:

[https://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/26542/agwg_at_large_membership_\(as_of_6.22.21\).pdf](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/26542/agwg_at_large_membership_(as_of_6.22.21).pdf)

Link to Nov calendar page:

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/event/agriculture_workgroup_conference_call_november_2021

From Greg Albrecht-NYSAGM to Everyone: 10:11 AM

Oh, no. Thank you for the update. Full respect to Jack.

From Chris Brosch to Everyone: 10:11 AM

Tremendous man. Thanks for sharing.

From Me to Everyone: 10:13 AM

AgWG Homepage: https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/group/agriculture_workgroup

From Kristen Saacke Blunk to Everyone: 10:15 AM

I had to pull over on the road listening to this mtg given the sad news of Jack Meisinger's passing. His presence with the AgWG and all aspects of ensuring that solid science was guiding us has profoundly impacted the Bay, all things agriculture in positive ways. He brought an uncanny capacity to cut through the noise to provide sound science based guidance. Plus, he had a beautiful sense of humor and a sparkle that lit up the room.

From Greg Albrecht-NYSAGM to Everyone: 10:18 AM

Well said, Kristen. <https://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/23041774/john-joseph-jack-meisinger>

From Chris Brosch to Everyone: 10:30 AM

Can you confirm: That count of farms was all farms, not layer farms in those counties?

From frank schneider, SCC to Everyone: 10:31 AM

Just layer farms, have over a 1,000 total farm in each county

From Leon Tillman, Natural Resources Conservation Service to Everyone: 10:32 AM

So is this indicating that Hillandale was completely neglected from the Ag Census count?

From frank schneider, SCC to Everyone: 10:34 AM

No, I believe the Census accounts for the numbers by averaging them throughout all Pa counties, thus not giving a trade secret away, since its such a large outlier

From Loretta Collins to Everyone: 10:38 AM

@ Leon. An analysis of population numbers at the county and state level in PA indicates that the Hillandale facilities in questions are not included in the 2017 Ag Census totals. This is the driver for this discussion. We are missing millions of layers in CAST because they are not accounted for in the 5-year Ag Census.

From Leon Tillman, Natural Resources Conservation Service to Everyone: 10:44 AM

@Loretta So based on the discrepancy in the numbers it is a belief that none of the Hillandale layers were accounted in the census? Has there been any discussion with anyone with NASS related to this concern?

From Olivia Devereux to Everyone: 10:44 AM

@Leon, Vanessa and I spoke with NASS several times. I will send you the summary of the discussions we had.

From Leon Tillman, Natural Resources Conservation Service to Everyone: 10:45 AM

@Olivia Thanks

From Chris Brosch to Everyone: 10:55 AM

What are the sources of those data elements collected?

From Gregorio Sandi - MDE to Everyone: 10:57 AM

Did any of those previous projects confirm NASS data sets for Turkeys and Swine were consistent or inconsistent with the data we use in the model?

From Dave Graybill to Everyone: 11:00 AM

Mark, you are using two terms I need you to define. Private small operations and commercial operations

From Chris Brosch to Everyone: 11:02 AM

How was this project commissioned? Is this a new project being presented to the AGWG?

From Dave Graybill to Everyone: 11:19 AM

Do we define tonnage as dry matter vs the actual truck weight with the moisture in the litter as part of the tonnage

From Gregorio Sandi - MDE to Everyone: 11:24 AM

That's not me mark BTW

From Kenneth W. Staver Jr to Everyone: 12:01 PM

I am with Paul. Have to figure out a way to get as close to reality as possible with consideration given to required effort.

Participants

Jackie Pickford, CRC
Loretta Collins, UMD
Jeremy Daubert, VT
Chris Brosch, DDA
Elizabeth Hoffman, MDA
Greg Albrecht, NY Dept of Ag & Markets
Frank Schneider, PA SCC
Cindy Shreve, WVCA
Marel King, CBC
Leon Tillman, NRCS
Dave Graybill, Farm Bureau
Matt Kowalski, CBF
Ken Staver, UMD
Paul Bredwell, US Poultry & Egg Association
RO Britt, Smithfield Foods
Emily Dekar, Upper Susquehanna Coalition
Tim Rosen, ShoreRivers
Gurpal Toor, UMD
Kate Bresaw, PA DEP

Kristen Saacke Blunk, Headwaters LLC
Arianna Johns, VA DEQ
Mark Dubin, UME/CBPO
Olivia Devereux, Devereux Consulting Inc.
Amanda Barber, NY
Bill Tharpe, MDA
Jessica Rigelman, J7 LLC
Jenna Schueler, CBF
Jack Murphy, NRCS
Clint Gill, DDA
Matt Royer, Penn State
Karl Blankenship, Bay Journal
Greg Sandi, MDE
Pat Thompson, EnergyWorks Group
Pierre Glynn, USGS and ASU/CSPO
Jeff Sweeney, EPA
Katie Walker, CC
Vanessa Van Note, EPA/CBPO