

MEETING MINUTES
Sept 17, 2020
10:00 AM-12:00 PM
AgWG Conference Call

Conference Call Information

Zoom Link*: <https://zoom.us/j/553329453>

Conference Line: 929 205 6099

Meeting ID: 553 329 453

Password: 2494

Participant ID: available through Zoom link

*To enter the webinar, please open the webinar link first. After opening the webinar, either elect to join via computer audio or via phone call. If you select phone, **please ensure you enter the participant ID.**

Summary of Actions & Decisions

- **DECISION:** The AgWG approved the July meeting minutes.
- **ACTION:** Interested parties please reach out to Mark Nardi (mrnardi@usgs.gov) and Diann Prosser (dprosser@usgs.gov), USGS, with additional feedback regarding their presentation on current modeling effort related to avian influenza transmission risk.
- **ACTION:** Interested parties please reach out to Dave Montali (dave.montali@tetrattech.com), Tetra Tech, with any insights on the increases related to “summer fallow” and “idle” crop acres indicated in the 2017 Census of Agriculture data reports.
- **ACTION:** The Ad Hoc Cast Concerns group will discuss and prioritize CAST concerns raised in addition to the current “[CAST-21 Workplan](#)” and bring recommendations back to the AgWG.
- **ACTION:** Ken Staver, UMD, will review the partnership-approved recommendations of the [Chesapeake Bay Phase 6.0 Cover Crops Expert Review Panel](#) on an upcoming AgWG conference call, in light of recent concerns raised by NY and PA regarding commodity cover crops and general stakeholder interest in how cover crop BMPs are credited in the watershed model.
- **ACTION:** Several CBP partners are expected to attend fall meetings of the AgWG to discuss CAST-21 Workplan items, beginning in October with Peter Claggett, USGS, and Olivia Devereux, Devereux Consulting.

Welcome, introductions, roll-call, review meeting minutes

Workgroup Chair

- Roll-call of the governance body
- Roll-call of the meeting participants
- Approval of meeting minutes from the July 16th Conference Call

Announcement: Barry Frantz is retiring and Denise Coleman will be carrying his position out as the NRCS representative for the AgWG. Thank you, Barry for all of your support and guidance over the last couple of years.

Innovation

10:10 Avian Influenza: Modeling Transmission Risk (30 min)

Mark Nardi & Diann Prosser

While avian influenza presents a global threat, the mechanisms for transmission across the wild bird – domestic poultry interface differ based upon region, agricultural practices, wild bird distributions, species susceptibility, and other risk factors. Due to the importance of the poultry industry to the Chesapeake Bay region, understanding the spatio-temporal patterns of avian influenza transmission risk could be very useful in concentrating disease monitoring efforts and planning biosecurity tactics. Mark Nardi & Diann Prosser, USGS, discussed an upcoming modeling effort and are seeking insights from the AgWG on how such work may benefit poultry growers and stakeholders.

ACTION: Interested parties please reach out to Mark Nardi (mrnardi@usgs.gov) and Diann Prosser (dprosser@usgs.gov), USGS, with additional feedback regarding their presentation on current modeling effort related to avian influenza transmission risk.

Data & Modeling

Crop acres Fallow and Idle (15 min)

Loretta Collins & Dave Montali

Loretta Collins, UMD and Dave Montali, Tetra Tech, briefly described a data concern related to the 2017 Ag Census reported acres for “Cropland in cultivated summer fallow” and “Cropland idle or used for cover crops or soil improvement but not harvested and not pastured or grazed” and attempts made to determine if reported increases are reflective of on-the-ground change. This is one of several CAST-21 Workplan “Key Actions” to be discussed at greater length after the break.

Summary of Discussion:

- **Dave Montali:** When you look at this you say okay it’s not a big deal because the loading rate isn’t that high, and it does not get fertilized. In WV, the only thing that really feeds other agronomic crops is this idle-land use and crop types. The effect of having more of them, in the end, takes from forest. When you have a lot more acres to accommodate because the census says there is more of them. You are looking at a land use that delivers 10 lbs/acre/year as to the natural land use that it replaces that is only 2-5lbs./acre/year. It does matter in terms of load when these things go up.
- **Loretta Collins:** It is hard to have a simple conversation about this because there are a lot of complexities to it and how we combine the land cover data we have with the ag census [data].
- **Ken Staver:** Where is the idle and fallow land coming from? This had to be converted from something. Are we taking away forested land in the landcover data to put in the idle and cover crop land? That seems like a strange way to get acres.
- **Loretta Collins:** I am going to cut this conversation short because we need to have the right people on the call to have this conversation and we will have those people in October. What I really wanted to highlight here is Dave’s concern with WV’s % change increase to fallow land because it is a really big increase. We [CBPO and Dave Montali] have been having conversations with NASS and they have not really figured out what is going on here.
- **Dave Montali:** These increases are happening across other states as well to other degrees and when you look at the history of the ag census through 2012 they are much smaller amounts and much more stable. When we saw this huge increase we wanted to understand if there was something wrong or nuanced in the ag census.

- **Chris Brosch:** Maybe WV can investigate conservation easements from FSA and NRCS programs, unlikely to explain all the acres.
- **Dave Graybill (chat):** Is the historical data you are comparing to only the last couple of censuses or are we talking increases vs. the last 50-years?
- **Loretta Collins:** What we are talking about is the difference between 2012 and 2017 at this point because the states are relying on the trends analysis to help them plan over time
- **Chris Brosch:** I wonder if crop categories like this should be tossed out before measured acres of forest. Perhaps there are other ag census categories that are ambiguous land categories that we should not treat with the same relevance as corn/soybean acres.
- **Dave Montali:** Maybe but that has to be a Phase 7 issue, but I don't think we could muck around with it in Phase 6.
- **Gary Felton:** I think at this point we have identified a question and we need to set about figuring out if this is a problem or just a question and if there is a resolution to it.
- **Dave Montali:** I would like if the experts on this group could think about why these two things are increasing across the whole bay watershed. It would be very interesting to me to understand what is going on out there that would cause increase in the fallow land uses. Not in the model but in the ag census.
- **Dave Montali:** We are mixing things here the whole true-up process in the end is a whole separate matter.
- **Loretta Collins:** In light of time, this will be an action item. Peter Claggett will be on the October call to discuss the methods we use as well.
- **Dave Montali:** The bottom line is we reached out to NASS and they don't think they have a systemic issue going on. We are bound by using the ag census through all of our protocols and it is still an issue with a question mark. It is not only WV but it is happening everywhere and is a land increase everywhere.

ACTION: Interested parties please reach out to Dave Montali (dave.montali@tetratech.com), Tetra Tech, with any insights on the increases related to "summer fallow" and "idle" crop acres indicated in the 2017 Census of Agriculture data reports.

BREAK (3 min)

Review of CAST Concerns (40 min)

Loretta Collins

On its July call, the AgWG agreed to form an ad hoc group to discuss concerns raised by states regarding CAST-19 (i.e. the most recent update to the Phase 6 watershed model). On Sept 8th, the ad hoc group had its initial meeting to discuss issues that the CBP partnership has made a commitment to address before the next watershed model update (CAST-21) in September 2021, known as the "CAST-21 Workplan," as well as additional concerns that were solicited from the AgWG's jurisdictional membership following the July AgWG call. Loretta summarized the issues and outcomes from that initial meeting. Frequent updates and discussion to follow.

Summary of Discussion:

- **Loretta Collins:** I hope you are hearing from me that we are not letting any of these drop and that we are going to address them. You will get more information as time goes on.
- **Bill Angstadt:** I think on the BMP effectiveness, there is still some disagreement in the Ad Hoc. For an example, in dairy precision feeding that is not really changing the BMP

efficiencies or effectiveness [Referring to] Denise [Coleman], the NRCS 100% of recommended feeding standard is what is in that BMP and that is still a proper number. So, what PA is looking for is being able to collect data from researchers at Penn State and NRCS that demonstrates a high-level of those efficiencies in PA. So, it will not be a need for an expert panel and change the BMP efficiencies, it just becomes a reporting or tracking issue.

- **Loretta Collins:** Yeah, and I kind of on the last slide lumped it all together but I see that as a tracking a reporting issue as well. Does anyone have thoughts on how we go about prioritizing, particularly those BMP reporting and effectiveness issues? Is anyone opposed to for these specific issues sending out an email to the governance body (including at large membership) and polling for feedback on where you think the most priority should be? Because, regardless of what it is, even if relatively simple, it is still time on all of us to do these things right and will due-diligence and transparency.
- **Bill Angstadt:** I would like to see you wait until after the second ad hoc committee meeting because we will be able to narrow in on what we actually need to implement these proposals and who would be responsible for them and that makes a big difference.
- **Loretta Collins:** I agree that would work. I just want to make sure that no one in the AgWG feels uncomfortable with this.
- **Chris Brosch:** Seeing as most concerns are attributed to PA, I would like to understand their thoughts first before polling all voting members.
- **Loretta Collins:** Why don't we go with what I have here, and have the Ad Hoc group can discuss further and then bring it back to the next meeting and give PA a chance to talk about their concerns. Does that make sense?
- **Chris Brosch:** Yeah, I think so.

ACTION: The Ad Hoc Cast Concerns group will discuss and prioritize CAST concerns raised in addition to the current "[CAST-21 Workplan](#)" and bring recommendations back to the AgWG.

ACTION: Ken Staver, UMD, will review the partnership-approved recommendations of the [Chesapeake Bay Phase 6.0 Cover Crops Expert Review Panel](#) on an upcoming AgWG conference call, in light of recent concerns raised by NY and PA regarding commodity cover crops and general stakeholder interest in how cover crop BMPs are credited in the watershed model.

ACTION: Several CBP partners are expected to attend fall meetings of the AgWG to discuss CAST-21 Workplan items, beginning in October with Peter Claggett, USGS, and Olivia Devereux, Devereux Consulting.

Implementation/ Accounting & Reporting

Updates on Impacts of COVID-19 (10 min)

All

The current international health crisis is having impacts across every aspect of society. Time is allotted here to provide CBP partners the opportunity to share their recent experiences and what the short-term and potential long-term impacts of stay-at-home orders and critical response efforts will be on the agricultural community and conservation efforts. Below is a non-exhaustive list of possible areas of discourse:

- Technical Assistance Capacity
- Outreach and Education

- Health, Safety, Wellness
- Industry Impacts
- Ag Markets Outlook
- Federal and State Agencies
- Non-Governmental Organizations/ Non-Profits
- Tracking, Reporting, & Verification Challenges
- Adaptative Strategies

New Business & Announcements (5 min)

- BMP Verification Ad Hoc Action Team
 - The Management Board charged the WQGIT with convening an [Ad-Hoc action team](#) to address multiple BMP verification concerns. The 2nd meeting occurred on September 9th.
- Non-Urban Stream Restoration EPEG
- Animal Mortality Expert Panel Report
- [Chesapeake Bay Stewardship 2020 Grants](#)
 - The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Chesapeake Bay Program, recently announced the 2020 round of funding for Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund projects. Fifty-six restoration and water quality improvement grants totaling \$18.06 million were awarded, leveraging \$18.9 million in match from the grantees to generate a total conservation impact of \$36.97 million.
- Improving Climate Resilience in Crops
 - The [Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research](#) (FFAR) will be accepting applications for the new Improving Climate Resilience in Crops program starting September 16, 2020. This grant opportunity is through the [Next Generation Crops](#) Challenge Area to increase a crop's tolerance for higher temperatures. Full application criteria and eligibility requirements will be available on FFAR's [Open Opportunities](#) webpage on September 16, 2020.
- Other Announcements?

Adjourn Meeting

Next Meeting:

Thursday, October 15, 10AM-12PM: Conference Call

Participants

Whitney Ashead, CRC
 Loretta Collins, UMD CBPO
 Gary Felton, UMD
 Mark Dubin, UMD
 Seth Mullins, VA DCR
 Diann Prosser, USGS
 Mark Nardi, USGS
 Dave Montali, Tetra Tech

Chris Brosh, DDA
Matt Monroe, WV Dept of Ag
Cindy Shreve, WVCA
Clint Gill, DDA
Elliott Kellner, WVU
Kristen Saacke Blunk, Headwaters LLC
Ben Collier, WV
Jason Bladow, NRCS
Jennifer Nelson, Resoure Smart LLC
Tyler Groh, Penn State
Emily Dekar, Upper Susquehanna Coalition
Steve Levitsky, Perdue
Jeff Sullivan
Jeremy Hanson, VT
Jeremy Ours, WV Dept of Ag
Ron Ohrel, Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association
Jason Keppler, MDA
Evan Fitzpatrick, Country View Family Farms
Denise Coleman, NRCS
Kathy Boomer, Foundation for Food and Agriculture, STAC
Lindsay Thompson, Thompson Ag Consulting
Elizabeth Hoffman, MDA
Bill Angstadt, Angstadt Consulting
Jeremy Daubert, VT
Marel King, CBC
Ted Tessler, PA DEP
Frank Schneider, PA State Conservation Commission
Patrick Thompson, EnergyWorks Group
Evin Fitzpatrick, County View Family Farm
Ken Staver, UMD
Matt Kowalski, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Barry Frantz, USDA NRCS
Dr. Grupal Toor, UMD
Scott Phillips, USGS
Dave Graybill, PA Farm Bureau & Dairy Farmer
Ruth Cassilly, UMD
Amanda Barber, NY
Erika Alt, WVDA