



Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Agriculture Workgroup

October 2024

Agenda

1 The “Zero N” Project

**2 Planning for the Future
of the AgWG**

**3 New Business,
Announcements &
Updates**



1

The “Zero N” Project



Planning for the Future of the Agriculture Workgroup

Identifying 2025-26 AgWG Priorities

- October in-person meeting was going to be dedicated to planning
 - Instead, splitting the discussion over several months
- Goal: by spring 2025, have **2-year plan to guide AgWG monthly discussions**
 - Capture areas of interest, desired deliverables; outline allocation of time
- Why are we doing this now?
 - Changes coming to CBP: Beyond 2025; Ag Advisory Committee
 - We've heard from our members that change is desired
 - New (~1 year) AgWG leadership and support team

Proposed planning process

- Will dedicate ~half of each meeting through January to discussions related to this effort
 - This month: pitch the idea, get the group thinking; we do *not* expect to have all perfect answers right away
 - Nov – Jan: discuss external (non-AgWG) “forces” that may impact our work
 - Feb: hold in-person meeting in February of 2025 focused on prioritizing the ideas we generated Oct - Jan

October	November	December	January	February
What is the purpose and role of the AgWG moving forward?				
Brainstorm areas of interest, future deliverables	CESR Report	Beyond 2025	Agriculture Advisory Cmte and other CBP entities	Prioritization of interests, focus areas, at in-person meeting
What would you like to see the AgWG accomplish in the next two years?	How should findings presented in the CESR report influence the direction of the AgWG?	How might Beyond 2025 influence the direction of the AgWG?	How do we engage with the AAC, STAC, other workgroups, to best support our purpose and goals?	

The first step:

- This month: initiate the planning process
 - Introduce broad questions, solicit initial feedback
 - Brainstorm topics of interest, desired workgroup products/deliverables
- Before we do that, need to discuss:
 - How the AgWG fits into CBP architecture
 - Our relationship with the WQGIT
 - Our current official scope and purpose
 - What we've done in the past, and how our work has changed over time

AgWG Scope and Purpose

The charge of the Agriculture Workgroup is to provide expertise and leadership on **development and implementation of policies, programs and research** to reduce pollutant loads delivered from agricultural lands and animal operations to upstream waters and the Chesapeake Bay. The workgroup reports to the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team.

Functions include: (see next slides)

AgWG Functions

- Provide a **forum for discussion, exchange of information and evaluation** between federal, state and local agencies, conservation districts, universities, agri-business and the corporate sector on **sustainable and/or cost-effective agricultural production systems** that benefit water and air quality.
- Provide recommendations on the **prioritization of federal and state technical and financial resources** on specific practices in priority watersheds.

AgWG Functions

- Provide technical expertise and leadership to **support the development and implementation of agricultural elements within the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, Watershed Implementation Plans, two-year milestones, and tracking and reporting mechanisms** that support an adaptive management approach towards Bay restoration.
- Coordinate with WQGIT Watershed Technical Workgroup to **identify, define, quantify and incorporate pollutant reduction and conservation practices on agricultural lands and animal operations** into the Chesapeake Bay Program decision support system. **Provide data and support** for the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team and Technical and Support Services.

What have we done previously?

- ~2014-2017

- Leading up to the finalization of Phase 6 of the model, the AgWG functioned differently than it does now
- At least quarterly day-long in-person meetings
- Monthly 2-hour conference calls, with hour-long meetings in between (often 2+ meetings per month)
 - Heavy focus on BMP development for P6: expert panels
 - Guidance documents, pilot projects
 - Ag land uses, among other topics
 - Informational webinars

What have we done previously?

- ~2018-2023
 - Post P6 adoption, *temporary* shift away from model focus
 - Workgroup “areas of focus” developed in 2018
 - Resourcing/technical assistance; implementation (what works well, and what doesn’t?); soil health; STAC workshop opportunities
- Ag Modeling Team established in 2022
 - “Provide agricultural modeling assistance to support the AgWG through the development of the Phase 7 (WSM) inputs.”

Workgroup Areas of Focus

Accounting & Reporting	Implementation	Innovation	Data & Modeling	CBP Assignments
------------------------	----------------	------------	-----------------	-----------------

What have we done previously?

- Past year (Oct 2023 – Sept 2024)
 - Only decisions related to Agroforestry EPEG
 - Ongoing projects will require decisions
 - Primarily informational presentations:

Research	CBP Updates	Partner-led Projects	Data Discussions	Funding Opportunities
USGS small ag watersheds/monitoring study	Beyond 2025 overview	PADEP, VADCR accounting and data-sharing pilots	Ag Census	NFWF Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund
“Remote sensing day”	Ag Advisory Committee overview	PADEP remote sensing pilot	Poultry industry data	
Thriving Ag				

What we've heard

Interested in talking about: strategies for accelerating implementation; monitoring; “success stories”, ongoing ag-related projects/research.

There is an imbalance in understanding of past decisions among members; there is no place to go to easily figure out what the group did in the past.

Model talk is overwhelming, but there is a time and place for it.

The AgWG is too model-focused; we could be doing more.

Informational presentations should emphasize how the work being presented ties into the work of the various members of the partnership represented on the AgWG.

It's easy for us to get stuck in the weeds.

Questions for the group

- Several questions to answer in Menti
 - Not expecting final/fully formed answers yet; top-of-mind, kneejerk responses
 - Over the coming months, think more about these questions – we will check in to see how your ideas may have changed
 - Will want a finalized list of topics of interest and possible deliverables by February, which we will prioritize as a group



Menti & Discussion



New Business, Announcements & Updates



AMT Update



For Awareness:

- 2025-26 At-Large Membership
 - Terms of 6 at-large members expiring; call for nominations will be released this month
 - Submit nominations to Caroline (kleis.caroline@epa.gov) and Eric (hughes.eric@epa.gov) with nominee name, affiliation, contact information, and short resume/bio
- 2025 Meetings
 - Invites for 2025 AgWG meetings will be sent to AgWG Members, Interested Parties distribution lists this month

January 16 th	February 20 th	March 20 th	April 17 th
May 15 th	* June 12th	July 17 th	August 21 st
September 18 th	October 16 th	November 20 th	December 18 th

*June meeting will be held on the second Thursday of the month to avoid conflict with Juneteenth holiday.

Anything else?

- Send to Caroline Kleis (Kleis.Caroline@epa.gov) for inclusion in “Recap” email

Thank you!

Any questions?

You can contact me at Hughes.Eric@epa.gov



Chesapeake Bay Program

Science. Restoration. Partnership.