

Agriculture Workgroup (AgWG)

August 16th, 2018

10:00 AM – 11:00 PM

AgWG Conference Call

Meeting materials: https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/group/agriculture_workgroup

Actions and Decisions:

DECISION: The AgWG meeting minutes from the July 19th Face-to-Face Meeting were approved.

ACTION: The AgWG would like updates on the progress of Agricultural Technical Assistance Directive and the Farm Bill at future meetings.

ACTION: The AgWG is asked to send any specific comments on the updated CBPO Draft Data Input Deadlines as soon as possible to Loretta Collins (lcollins@chesapeakebay.net) or Lucinda Power (power.lucinda@epa.gov).

DECISION: The AgWG approved the Animal Mortality Management Expert Panel Statement of Work and membership to move forward.

Welcome, introductions, roll-call, review meeting minutes

Workgroup Chairs

DECISION: The AgWG minutes from the July 19th face-to-face meeting were approved.

Directive Supporting Ag Technical Assistance

Rachel Felver

Rachel Felver, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, provided an update on the status of the *Chesapeake Executive Council Directive in Support of Agricultural Technical Assistance*, following the annual meeting of the CBP Executive Council (EC) on August 7th, 2018.

- Rachel Felver noted that the Ag Directive was signed by all states, except for NY since they could not attend the meeting. In addition, the Chesapeake Bay Commission drafted a letter in support of the Farm Bill addressed to delegation across the watershed.

Discussion:

- Kristen Saacke-Blunk: In respect to the directive, is there expectation that the needed technical assistance funds would come through the federal government and the farm bill? Or is there commitment at the state level to identify resources for technical assistance?
 - Rachel Felver: The directive requests to look at different and innovative funding sources as well, it's not only specifically federal.
- Kristen Saacke-Blunk: For the Farm Bill letter from the commission, is the request specifically to increase funds through CTA conservation technical assistance?
 - Rachel Felver: It's very general in its request for a strong farm bill to support agriculture and farmers throughout our watershed. If we look at the provisions identified in the letter, it calls for increased funding, greater capacity, flexibility, and a strong farm bill.
- Kristen Saacke-Blunk: Is it correct that this is nationwide, meaning that the Chesapeake Bay region still must compete for national funds, there is not a designated pool of funds for the Chesapeake Bay.
 - Kelly Shenk: That is correct, yes.
- Kristen Saacke-Blunk: One concern I have is that we still have to ensure we have resources and funds to get the Bay restored. I saw the exciting news out of NRCS that MD, PA, and NY put out a

request for technical assistance. Could we expect more of that out of this? What are some paths forward with this?

- Denise Coleman: As far as the technical assistance, this is money available at the state level for technical assistance. We had some carry over funding of technical assistance. We had a large revision that was proposed by the OMB [Office of Management and Budget] and that money did not go through. The money came back to NRCS. With that being said, there could be adjustment to other funding pots. That freed up money for our conservation technical assistance funding, as well as EQIP technical assistance. This is basically our staffing money, paying for NRCS staff now that our hiring freeze is lifted.
- Jason Keppler: Essentially, that money made available through this RFP is for positions that the state NRCS agencies have deemed important to fill, correct?
 - Denise Coleman: Correct. To give some background, we generally operate at full capacity with about 12,000 people. We were down to about 10,300 people after the hiring freeze, and we are now back up to a level of 10,800 people, which is our staffing cap. Within that, we still have technical assistance funding that exceeds the 10,800 people, so we use that to enter into agreements to do more technical assistance.
 - Kelly Shenk: For example, with MD's maximum amount of funding, MD could go into agreements where a MD entity would carry out the technical assistance?
 - Denise Coleman: Yes, that's the idea. Our focus in PA will probably be on conservation districts because we are requiring certified planners, and the districts have that.
 - Jason Keppler: In that RFP, there is a table that shows specifically what positions need to be filled with that money, and that is all the grant money could be used for.
- Kristen Saacke-Blunk: I think it would be important for us to track progress on these, maybe on a month to month basis. I would like to know what kind of response NRCS gets, and how this moves along throughout the entire process so we don't lose momentum.
 - Rachel Felver: I think that's a great idea. The directive calls for an update at next year's EC meeting of progress that has been made, so that would be helpful.
 - Jason Keppler: Perhaps updates on the directive and the farm bill at future meetings would be helpful for us.

ACTION: The AgWG would like updates on the progress of Agricultural Technical Assistance Directive and the Farm Bill at future meetings.

Data Input Deadlines

Loretta Collins

Loretta Collins, UMD, briefly reviewed the updated CBPO draft *Data Input Deadlines to Inform Future Years of Milestone Planning and Progress Updates*. Any feedback from the Workgroup will be relayed back to the Chesapeake Bay Program office.

- Loretta Collins noted that saturated buffers and agriculture ditch bioreactors interim BMPs were approved at the WQGIT conference call on Monday. The mortality freezer interim BMP will be moved forward to the WTWG in September, and then up the chain to the WQGIT.

Discussion:

- Jason Keppler: Looking at the June 29th deadline with the NASS data, are we confident that the Ag Census will be out by that time for incorporation?
 - Loretta Collins: That is the anticipated timeframe, but is beyond our control.
- Jason Keppler: Back to the interim BMPs, how quickly will approved interim BMPs be updated into CAST for use by the jurisdiction's planning purposes?

- Loretta Collins: That happens in CBP office, but I think it will be a turnaround time of a couple weeks. I can check in with the CBPO staff to get an update. They are aware of these approvals, but they were only approved this past Monday on the WQGIT call.

ACTION: The AgWG is asked to send any specific comments on the updated CBPO Draft Data Input Deadlines as soon as possible to Loretta Collins (lcollins@chesapeakebay.net) or Lucinda Power (power.lucinda@epa.gov).

BMP Reference Guide

Jeremy Hanson

Jeremy Hanson, VT, provided a brief introduction/orientation to the recently published *Chesapeake Bay Program Quick Reference Guide for Best Management Practices (BMPs): Nonpoint Source BMPs to Reduce Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment Loads to the Chesapeake Bay and its Local Waters*. The reference guide is available [here](#).

Discussion:

- Jason Kepler: For each BMP, is there a link to each panel report in the guide for reference?
 - Jeremy Hanson: Yes, there are links throughout the guide to newer panel reports and the Simpson-Weammert report.
- Jason Kepler: Is there an expectation for each expert panel to create their own sheet for this guide? Or will the CBPO take care of that once a new BMP is approved?
 - Jeremy Hanson: That is not expected of each panel, that will probably fall to me for the time being, and a long-term plan to keep this updated will need to be created.
- Frank Coale: This is incredibly useful for many people, and I commend you for creating this.
 - Kristen Saacke-Blunk: I want to agree on that, this is something so many people will find helpful. Does it fulfill the crosswalk we discussed in June? Or is there more to do on that front?
 - Jeremy Hanson: This report does not go that far to include all of the crosswalks.
 - Kristen Saacke-Blunk: When I look at the synonymous BMP names in the report, what more is necessary than that for the crosswalk?
 - Jeremy Hanson: We would need all of the BMPs included. I only used what I was comfortable with from my own knowledge, as well as posts on CAST. There may be other state cost share practices, for example, that I am not aware of.
- Ted Tesler: You mentioned you have all but three of the Ag BMPs included, how about on the urban side of things?
 - Jeremy Hanson: The urban side is not as complete, I did all the top priority ones, but there are still roughly half of urban BMPs that are needed. I also have not done septic BMPs, which I am hoping I am able to combine. I tried to include the bulk of the most used and most complicated BMPs in this first version.
- Jason Kepler: We are interested in printing some of these off, how often would you say we could expect updates to this document?
 - Jeremy Hanson: It really depends on how many mistakes may be found. I will plan to update with corrections along with missing BMPs in the next version at a later date. After that, it would depend on any errors found or new BMPs approved.

Expert Panel: Animal Mortality Management

Jeremy Hanson

In April the CBP, under its Expert Panel Management Cooperative Agreement with Virginia Tech (VT), released an RFP to solicit proposals to convene an expert panel to consider BMPs for routine animal

(livestock and poultry) mortality management. Jeremy Hanson, VT, presented the selected proposal from Oklahoma State University along with updates resulting from the July Partnership review period.

Discussion:

- Jason Keppler: In terms of WTWG and modeling representation both from Jeff Sweeney, is that normal protocol, or do we need separate representatives?
 - Jeremy Hanson: We have done it that way in the past, if there is another jurisdiction who would be willing to volunteer, that is welcomed.
 - Allie Wagner: I believe this was discussed at a WTWG meeting, and Jeff Sweeney volunteered to represent WTWG if nobody else volunteered.
- Kristen Saacke-Blunk moved to accept the changes presented and approve the Animal Mortality Management Expert Panel to move forward.
 - The motion was seconded.
 - Jason Keppler: There were no objections, so the AgWG will consider this approved through consensus.

DECISION: The AgWG approved the Animal Mortality Management Expert Panel Statement of Work and membership to move forward.

Next meeting: September 20th, 2018, 10 AM-3 PM: Carvel Center, Room 3, 16483 County Seat Hwy, Georgetown, DE 19947.

Meeting Participants:

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| Jason Keppler | MDA |
| Matt Monroe | WV DA |
| Loretta Collins | UMD |
| Allie Wagner | CRC |
| Clint Gill | DDA |
| Adam Lyon | MDA |
| Greg Albrecht | NYSDA |
| Ted Tesler | PA DEP |
| Tim Sexton | VA DCR |
| Bobby Long | VA DCR |
| Kelly Shenk | EPA Region 3 |
| Frank Coale | UMD |
| Gary Felton | UMD |
| Jeff Hill | LCCD |
| Kristen Saacke-Blunk | Headwaters, LLC |
| David Graybill | PA Farm Bureau |
| Denise Coleman | USDA NRCS |
| Emily Dekar | USC |
| Jeremy Hanson | VT |
| Mark Dubin | UMD |