

MINUTES

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

June 18, 2014

DEP South Central Regional Office
Susquehanna Room A
Harrisburg, PA

In Attendance – Members

Jennifer Reed-Harry, PennAg Industries, Chair
Kelly Jean Heffner, Deputy Secretary, Office of Water Management, Department of Environmental Protection
Jay Howes, Deputy Secretary, Department of Agriculture (PDA)
J. V. Lamb, Pennsylvania Grange
Grant Gulibon, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau
Judy Radel, Pennsylvania Farmers Union
Michael Firestine, Agri-business
Christopher Uhland, Ornamental Horticulture
Duane Hobbs, Ag Chemical Manufacturer
Susan Marquart, PA USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service

In Attendance - Agencies, Advisors, and Guests

Gary Smith, PA USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Dr. Craig Shultz, Director, Bureau of Animal & Poultry Health, Department of Agriculture
Kelly O'Neill, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
William Fink, Country View Family Farms
Michele Tate, DEP Citizens Advisory Council
Laura Henry, DEP Policy Office
Andy Zemba, DEP, Interstate Waters Office
Glenn Rider, DEP Bureau of Conservation and Restoration
Steve Taglang, DEP Bureau of Conservation and Restoration
Ryan Kostival, DEP Bureau of Conservation and Restoration
Tom Juengst, DEP Bureau of Conservation and Restoration

The meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB) was called to order by Board Member Jennifer Reed-Harry at 10:05 a.m.

Members of the AAB introduced themselves, as did the other meeting attendees.

There was not a quorum, so the April meeting minutes were left for future consideration.

Update – Dr. Craig Shultz, Director, Bureau of Animal & Poultry Health with the PDA, provided information on the Secure Milk Initiative to aid continuity of milk sales beyond the regional level, which allows milk from uninfected farms to move in areas with farms having Hoof and Mouth Disease quarantines. This is part of efforts to have more uniform sanitary rules, which can aid in dealing with other problems, such as avian influenzas or tuberculosis, and also to maintain marking without having larger-scale animal or product destruction or losses.

Porcine Epidemic Diarrhea Virus (PEDV) – Dr. Craig Shultz covered the current situation with PEDV, which is a group of Corona viruses that causes serious intestinal malabsorption in young swine. It is not a human health concern, but has caused about a 15% loss in production.

Dr. Shultz said there is little resistance to the disease and it is easily spread. Some of the measures to deal with this are: one-way vehicle use, limitations on inspections and other farm visits, and major sanitation efforts.

Technical Service Providers (TSP) – Gary Smith, Assistant State Conservationist with the PA USDA-NRCS, reviewed the current system of gaining reimbursement from the USDA when using Technical Service Providers. TSPs are most often used when funding is made available or there is a backlog for obtaining NRCS assistance. Some of the requirements are that the TSP must be on the NRCS certified list for the BMP being installed, and the practice must be included in an EQIP contract for the farm. If TSP funding is in the contract, the operator can use that to cover the costs for the TSP; otherwise, the operator would use other funds, such as those provided to directly install the practice. Payments for the TSP can be negotiated between the operator and the TSP. The two most common TSP work items in Pennsylvania are Forestry Management Plans and Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans.

Chesapeake Bay Program BMP Update: Program Related and Non-cost-shared Tracking – Andy Zemba, DEP, Interstate Waters Office, provided a review of the Pennsylvania Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) BMPs and the relation of the current BMPs to the EPA modeling efforts. Mr. Zemba noted that Pennsylvania needs to: get more BMPs accepted by the model; better report the BMPs that are done; and, to better advocate for our BMPs within the program. Pennsylvania is working on generating installation data on non-cost-shared BMPs, and it was suggested that more use of the PA OneStop Program could aid in generating more installed practice data.

Waters of the United States and Jurisdiction Areas – Deputy Secretary Kelly Heffner reviewed the draft rule that was published on March 25 for a 90-comment period by the EPA and the Army Corp of Engineers as a “clarification” of what are federally jurisdictional waters. Deputy Secretary Heffner said that an Environmental Law Foundation report on this draft rule made no mention of the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law and that because of this law and the federal primacy that Pennsylvania has for federal water programs, this draft rule would likely not cause much change, and that reviews by DEP should continue. DEP is developing its own comments on this. [Subsequent to this meeting, the comment period was extended for another 90 days or until October 20, 2014.]

The proposed date for the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 18 at 10 a.m. at the DEP SCRO.

The following was suggested for future meetings: use of the PA OneStop Program to assist with agricultural plan and map generation.

There being no additional discussions, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.