

MINUTES

AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

December 17, 2014

DEP SouthCentral 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
Kerry Golden, House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
Destiny Zeiders, House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
William Neilson, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau
Matt Royer, Penn State University
Judy Radel, Pennsylvania Farmers Union
Robert Maiden, Pa. Association of Conservation Districts
Nelson Heagy, Fruit Industry
Michael Firestine, Agri-Business
Walt Moore, Dairy Industry
Matt Matter, Grain Producer
Darwin Nissley, Livestock Industry
Christopher Uhland, Ornamental Horticulture
Susan Marquart, PA USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Gregory Hostetter, USDA, Farm Service Agency

In Attendance - Agencies, Advisors, and Guests

Richard Day, Penn State University
Karl Brown, State Conservation Commission
Frank Schneider, State Conservation Commission
Kelly O'Neill, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
William Fink, Country View Family Farms
Ryan Smoker, House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
Grant Gulibon, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau
Andy Zemba, DEP, Interstate Waters Office
Krinsten Wolf, DEP, Interstate Waters Office
Michele Tate, DEP Citizens Advisory Council
Glenn Rider, Director, 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 Chair Jennifer Reed-Harry at 10:03 a.m.

Members of the AAB introduced themselves, as did the other meeting attendees. Also, Nelson Heagy was introduced to be the new Fruit Producer board member. Mr. Heagy manages Honey Bear Orchards in Lebanon County.

The April 16, 2014, June 18, 2014 and October 15, 2014 meeting minutes were approved.

Legislative Update – The General Assembly is set to be sworn in on January 6 with Michael Turzai as the House Speaker and Jake Corman as the Senate Floor Leader. Also, Ryan Smoker will take the place of Kerry Golden on the board in representing the House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee.

Chesapeake Bay Program Grant Activities – Steve Taglang, DEP, Bur. of Conservation and Restoration, went over details of two of the major Chesapeake Bay Program grants for Pennsylvania.

The first grant is the Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant (CBIG) that features funding for installation of BMPs on farms, such as cover crops, no-till, riparian buffers, manure storages and animal heavy use areas. For the 2014 year, \$1.049 million went into BMP installation. Also under CBIG, technician and engineering staff with the Conservation Districts provide technical assistance for installing BMPs and to implement other aspects of the Chesapeake Bay Program, such as farm visits, complaint response policies, BMP counting, education and outreach.

The second grant is the Chesapeake Bay Regulatory and Accountability Program Grant (CBRAP) that includes support for:

- The Conservation Tillage Information Center (CTIC) Transect Survey;
- PSU assistance with BMP inputs and poultry data for the Bay Model;
- The PA NRCS Remote Sensing of BMPs in the Pennsylvania Potomac River drainage;
- PA OneStop development and release;
- Point-source data collection for the Bay Model;
- CAFO and manure management program support;
- Ag Ombudsman outreach materials; and,
- The Regional Ag Watershed Assessment Program Initiative.

Verification of BMPs for the Chesapeake Bay Program Modeling – Andy Zemba, DEP, Interstate Waters Office, covered the current efforts to include and verify the BMPs that go into the Chesapeake Bay Program Model. Mr. Zemba went into the issues related to protocols and lifespans for the BMPs that Pennsylvania reports. He said that the CTIC Transect Survey and the PA NRCS Remote Sensing of BMPs are expected to help with a significant portion of this verification. EPA has said that transects and spot checks may be used to deal with the large extent of acreage and BMPs in Pennsylvania. Kelly Heffner said that EPA is becoming stricter on acceptance of reported BMP information and that we should strive to have more accepted reporting methods, BMP amounts and BMP types. Mr. Zemba presented the details on how EPA plans to accept BMPs for the latest model phase.

PA OneStop Use for Erosion and Sediment Control Planning – Dr. Rick Day, Penn State, went over the current usage of the PA OneStop ag planning map development tool for helping farmers to meet regulatory requirements. It currently has modules for Nutrient Management Planning, Nutrient Balance Sheets, Manure Management Plans, and Ag E&S Plans. In 2014, through the month of October, the usage recorded has been: 3,189 users, 9,396 farms, 64,880 fields, and 37,767 features mapped. Features include manure storages, waterways and other ag BMPs. Roughly 75% of the users are repeat users, which is very good for a Web application. He

emphasized that training for usage of the program is important and that it has state-of-the-art security. It was mentioned that PA OneStop may help in augmenting Chesapeake Bay reporting.

Board Goals/Focus/Topics for 2015 – It was suggested that joint Nutrient Management Advisory Board and Ag Advisory Board meetings could be held, especially if there are overlapping issues. No other topics were offered.

Election of 2015 Chair – William Neilson, with the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, was voted in as the new chair for the board.

There being no additional discussions, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

The future meeting dates were to be scheduled after the meeting.