

# MINUTES

## AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

June 23, 2016

DEP South-Central Regional Office  
909 Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, PA

### In Attendance – Members

William Neilson, PA Farm Bureau  
Jennifer Reed-Harry, Penn-Ag Industries  
Judi Radel, PA Farmers Union  
JV Lamb, PA State Grange  
Matt Matter, Grain Producer  
Darwin Nissley, Livestock Farmer  
Brenda Shambaugh, PA Association of Conservation Districts  
Matt Royer, Penn State University  
Susan Marquart, PA USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service

### In Attendance - Agencies, Advisors, and Guests

Hannah Smith-Brubaker, Deputy Sec. for Market Development, Pa. Dept. of Agriculture  
Matt Keefer, Assistant State Forester, DCNR Bureau of Forestry  
Veronica Kasi, Director, DEP Chesapeake Bay Office  
Lee McDonnell, Director, DEP Bureau of Clean Water  
Ron Ohrel, Mid-Atlantic Dairy Assoc.  
Marel King, Chesapeake Bay Commission  
Kim Snell-Zarcone, Conservation Pennsylvania  
William C. Fink, CVVF  
Frank Schneider, State Conservation Commission  
Laura Edinger, DEP Policy Office  
Andrea Blosser, Environmental Group Mngr., DEP South-Central Regional Office  
David Gates, Water Quality Specialist Supervisor, DEP South-Central Regional Office  
Steven Taglang, DEP Bureau of Clean Water  
Ryan Kostival, Environmental Group Mngr., DEP Bureau of Clean Water  
Tom Juengst, DEP Bureau of Clean Water

The meeting of the Agricultural Advisory Board (AAB) was called to order by William Neilson at 9:05 a.m.

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

**Legislative Update** – Marel King said that Senate Bill 563 on fertilizer labeling was being amended. Also, Ms. King said House Bill 2114 was introduced by Representative Sturla to enact a water resource use fee (1/10th of a cent per gallon) on daily water withdrawals in Pennsylvania over 10,000 gallons. Consumptive uses (i.e. water that gets returned) would have a fee of 1/100th of a cent per gallon. This bill could generate up to \$245 million annually. Agriculture and municipalities would be exempt and some of the funds would go agricultural BMPs.

**Meeting Minutes** – There was no quorum so no action was taken on the minutes.

**Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Stream Buffer Programs** – Matthew Keefer, Assistant State Forester, DCNR's, Bureau of Forestry, reviewed DCNR efforts to assist

with stream buffer installations that can include the 35 service foresters on the DCNR staff to assist on public and private forests in Pennsylvania. This involves recreation and public access grants, education and outreach, land conservation, urban tree planting (TreeVitalize), and riparian forest buffer assistance, with other program such as CREP and Growing Greener. Mr. Keefer noted that tree placements can help in dealing with meanders and that new construction projects are now required to include buffers on site or nearby.

**Chesapeake Bay Update** – Veronica Kasi, Director of the DEP Chesapeake Bay Office, covered recent DEP Chesapeake Bay activities and that there will be five filled positions in her office. Ms. Kasi listed some of the Office’s outreach activities, including: a webinar for the State Conservation Commission and conservation districts on May 20<sup>th</sup>; standard operating procedures for the 50 ag inspections were developed and posted on their website; a FAQ was developed; DEP regional office training was held on May 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, and conservation district training were set to start on July 13<sup>th</sup>. At the time of the board meeting, 9 conservation districts planned to drop from doing the 50 farm inspections per technician for this year, so DEP would do inspections in those counties. For the future, Pennsylvania is still in “backstop” with respect to the EPA and its funds, the 2016/2017 Milestones will be evaluated, and Watershed Improvement Plan #3 (WIP) outreach will include stakeholder groups.

**USDA AMS proposed Organic Rulemaking** – Hannah Smith-Brubaker, the Deputy Secretary for Market Development with the PA Dept. of Agriculture, covered the federal rules to clarify use of its organic label, especially for poultry. Ms. Smith-Brubaker said some operations may transition out of organic with these new rules; that only 25% of the dairy organic demand is met; and, that various labels other than *USDA Organic* greatly misinform and distort the food market.

**Chapters 91 and 92a Fee Updates / NPDES Fees in other States** – Lee McDonnell, Director, DEP Bureau of Clean Water, recapped the information that was presented at the April 28<sup>th</sup> meeting on a proposal to increase fees for Chapter 91 Water Quality Management Permits and Chapter 92a Individual NPDES Permits. The fee increases are for obtaining funds to restore positions to process these permits. In addition to DEP advisory groups, this proposal will be presented to the Environmental Quality Board, the legislative committees and the Independent Regulatory Review Commission, and be published in the PA Bulletin. JV Lamb again said that consumers and the legislatures should provide more funding support to help with processing these permits. The Board maintained that medium-sized operations should not have the higher fees, even though they happen to be in an area designated as a Pennsylvania Special Protection Waters. The proposed fee levels were in the middle compared to other states.

**Board/Public Comments/Concerns** – Jennifer Reed-Harry emphasized that a DEP Deputy Secretary or higher did not attend this meeting, as required by the law establishing this board.

Matt Royer said that briefings on the Farmer Practice Survey and the Pennsylvania in the Balance Conference held on March 1-3, 2016 were provided to various state and federal groups, and that similar topics would be part of Ag Progress Days. Training for Extension staff visiting 10% of the survey sites would be held in July. Mr. Royer supported further focus on ways to recognize and document water quality progress for the Chesapeake Bay goals.

There being no additional discussions, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

The next meeting is set for Thursday, August 25, 2016, in Susquehanna Room A of the DEP South-Central Regional Office.