

**MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM
ADVISORY COUNCIL (AC)**

JANUARY 12, 2015

1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Michigan Farm Bureau
7373 West Saginaw Highway
Lansing, MI 48917

ATTENDEES

Ray Hammerschmidt (Co-Chair), Jeffrey Zimmer, Jan Wilford, Laura Doud, Warren Suchovsky, Rich Bowman, Michelle Napier-Dunnings, Mike Bitondo, Elaine Brown, Doug Buhler, Scott Lonier, Jason Darling, Lori Phalen, Ken Blight, Dean Letter, Scott Simon, Jim Johnson, Director Jamie Clover Adams, James Clift, Kevin Gould

RESOURCE

Ben Schram, Joe Kelpinski, Heather Casteel (Scribe), Dan Busby, Josh Appleby, Emily Reinart, Brenda Reau

GUESTS

Laura Campbell, Jen Silveri, Andrea Stay, Bill Bradford, Natalie Rector, Carrie Vollmer-Sanders, Maury Kaercher, James Clift

WELCOME TO MICHIGAN FARM BUREAU

- Ray Hammerschmidt started the meeting at 1:02 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES FROM NOVEMBER 10, 2014

- Ray asked if there were any corrections to the November 10th meeting notes. No changes were suggested.

MOTION: JAN WILFORD MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MEETING MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 9, 2014. SECONDED BY MIKE BITONDO. ALL IN FAVOR SAY AYE, UNANIMOUS AYES, HEARING NO NAYS, MOTION CARRIED.

VERIFICATIONS REPORT – JOE KELPINSKI

- Joe read through the handout provided.

COMMUNICATIONS WORK GROUP REPORT

- Emily Reinart reported that a few priorities have been established by the Communications workgroup:
 - The workgroup plans on targeting non-verified farmers, especially involved with the 4R Program, and in the Western Lake Erie Basin, with new pieces and messages.
- The Communications workgroup will be meeting next week and they will have a more formal report after that meeting.
- Emily asked that each partner at the table encourage someone from their organization to attend those meetings and bring new ideas to the workgroup.

- Scott Lonier suggested that the landowners could be targeted. He suggested that landowners could be encouraged to rent only to MAEAP verified producers, especially if they received a tax incentive on their property.
- Josh Appleby suggested that the verifiers could hand out a marketing piece at the time of verification.

MAEAP & 4R PROGRAM (NATALIE RECTOR AND CARRIE VOLLMER-SANDERS)

- Carrie Vollmer-Sanders went through a PowerPoint based on the history and goals of the 4R Program. Carrie described how the 4R Program fits nicely, and aligns, with MAEAP Standards.
- Natalie Rector reported that the 4R Program has a little more of a paper trail than MAEAP and that 4R audits are all performed in the office.
- Carrie suggested www.nature.org/wleb or www.4rcertified.org websites to review.

PARTNERSHIP MEETING

- Joe Kelpinski informed the group that the Partnership meeting will be held this year around late February or early March.
- Ray, Scott and Joe will put together a work group for the Partnership meeting agenda.
- A "Save the Date" will be sent out shortly.

SYSTEMS SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS

LIVESTOCK SYSTEM (LAS) SUB-COMMITTEE

- Kevin Gould reported that a few things are on the radar with the Livestock System Sub-committee:
 - The application of manure on frozen ground. Dr. Dale Rozeboom is working on that topic. Winter applications are a factor and are on the radar. (Topography, water ditches, etc.)
 - Another topic that was critical in 2014 is relative to Right to Farm and Siting GAAMPs livestock numbers, 50 units and under.
 - The potential Energy System topic will be addressed by the Livestock System Sub-committee at a later date.

FARMSTEAD SYSTEM (FAS) SUB-COMMITTEE

- Laura Doud reported that there are no major revisions expected to the Farm*A*Syst except for the fuel section, as the new regulation changes will cause updates to the Standards.
- Laura said the changes to the portable fuel storage standards and regulations are going to be put into the Farm*A*Syst as educational questions.
- Laura informed the group that she is also looking into the On-Farm Fuel Bulletin for updates to bring it into compliance with the new regulations.

CROPPING SYSTEM (CAS) SUB-COMMITTEE

- Jeffrey Zimmer reported that the CAS Sub-committee has a meeting coming up in early February.
- Jeffrey informed the group that the CAS Sub-committee met in September and discussed several revisions to the Standards.

- One reoccurring issue is the update of phosphorus recommendations on potatoes and coming up with a way to allow the potato industry to apply more phosphorus while not conflicting with RTF GAAMPs.
- Another issue the sub-committee is dealing with is septage management and portable toilets.

FOREST WETLANDS HABITAT SYSTEM (FWH) SUB-COMMITTEE

- Ben Schram introduced the new member to the MAEAP AC, Jason Darling, Darling Farms, from Mason, Michigan.
- Ben Schram provided the report for the FWH Sub-committee.
- Ben described the group's meeting on Warren Suchovsky's property to go through the FWH Standards and discussed compliance with the tool.
- The foresters are also planning another visit to a landowner in Cadillac, MI, who has a plan in place, as well as another location in February in the NE.
- They are trying to get the foresters to understand what the process is like and how to handle the new forestry verifications.
- Emily asked what we should be telling the people who are asking "what is the next step" in moving forward on a FWH verification?
 - Ben answered that their first communication should be with the local conservation district, or refer to documents online. Forestry Management Plan, Wetland Management Plan, or a Habitat Management Plan is priority one.
- Ben is also working on a "Frequently Asked Questions" document for Forestry.

MAEAP ENERGY SYSTEM

- Jan Wilford provided the background on how the potential MAEAP Energy System conversation was started.
- Kevin Gould reported that the Livestock group's discussion felt that it did not benefit the program, and that its best fit was still under Farmstead.
- Laura Doud reported that the Farmstead group's concluded that if a separate Energy System was developed, it would not impact the remaining road blocks or the "last remaining practices" fund, from a cost share perspective. They also did not recommend separating fuel into an Energy System.

FEE SUNSET DATE

- Jim Johnson said the Ground Water/Fresh Water fees produce the operational revenue for the MAEAP program and all of the associated grants. The Groundwater Fund sunset is December 31, 2015. The Department hopes for a removal of the sunset or an extension.
- Jim reported that there have been a number of conversations prior to the New Year, which included strategy and process.
- Jim reminded the group that the fee is paid by growers at the retail level.
- Jim said the MAEAP Partnership meeting will have this topic on the agenda, in order to better understand where we are in moving forward.

UPDATE ON REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROPOSALS (RCPP)

- Elaine Brown reported that there were six proposals from Michigan, and the official announcement should be revealed sometime this week.

LINKING TO NATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

- Jan Wilford informed the group that because we have a program that has been in the works for the past ten plus years, we want producers to know we are recognizing non-duplicative ways to incorporate the sustainability efforts connection.
- Jan said the reporting needs to be targeted to provide meaningful information to national and international groups with sustainability requirements.
- We need to evaluate the method used to provide metrics, and they need to be environmentally based on performance outcomes and sustainability reports.
- Joe Kelpinski said he would be willing to lead a designated workgroup, and he would send out a reminder by email.
 - The group will consist of Joe Kelpinski, Emily Reinart, Laura Campbell, Michelle Napier-Dunnings, Rich Bowman, Ken Blight, Dean Letter, Lori Phalen, Ken McFarland, Josh Appleby, and Jim Zook.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- There were no public comments.

THANK YOU TO JAN WILFORD

- Emily Reinart, Ken Blight, Jen Silveri, and Rich Bowman all had some wonderfully nice things to say to Jan, and the MAEAP AC wished her the best.
- Michigan Farm Bureau provided cake and punch to the group in honor of Jan's 14 years as MAEAP's driving force.
- Jan also had a nice speech and encouraged the group to continue their leadership with the MAEAP AC.

MOTION: RICH BOWMAN MOVED THAT THE MEETING BE ADJOURNED. SECONDED BY MIKE BITONDO. ALL IN FAVOR SAY AYE, UNANIMOUS AYES, HEARING NO NAYS, MEETING ADJOURNED.

Meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

NEXT MAEAP AC MEETING

Host: Lori Phalen and NRCS

Location: 3001 Coolidge Road, Ste. 250, Conference Room B, East Lansing, MI 48823

Date: March 9, 2015

Time: 1:00 p.m. - MAEAP AC Meeting begins

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Casteel