

**MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Michigan Corn Growers Association
13750 Sedona Parkway
Lansing, MI 48906

**MEETING NOTES
JUNE 6, 2011**

Present:

Max Benne, Ken Blight, Elaine Brown, James Clift, Tom Coon, Lauri Elbing, Shelly Hartmann, Melissa Higbee, Sam Hines, Jim Johnson, Allen Krizek, Peter Ostlund, Lori Phalen, Scott Piggott, Jody Pollok-Newsom, Dale Rozeboom, Jim Scott, Gary Trimmer, Paul Zuger

Absent:

Jim Byrum and Phil Korson

Resource Staff:

Josh Appleby, Jennifer Eyde (scribe), Joe Kelpinski, Emily Ries, Heather Throne, and Janice Wilford

Guests:

Heather Casteel and Natalie Rector

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Scott Piggott began the meeting by welcoming everyone and having all participants introduce themselves.

Review Agenda - The council reviewed the agenda and added 'Adoption of Verification Committee' as an additional Discussion Topic.

Review of Past Meeting Notes - The April 1 meeting notes were reviewed. Paul Zuger noted that he was not listed as an attendee at the previous meeting and should have been. The April 1 meeting notes were approved with the addition of Paul as an attendee.

Action: Jen will add Paul Zuger as an attendee at the April 1 meeting and send the approved notes out to the council.

The group shared recent and upcoming events.

- MDARD hosted Senator Stabenow's Staff on a tour of MAEAP verified farms on June 1 and 2. Discussions included the challenges of funding and cost share for MAEAP and assurance programming as part of the Farm Bill for FY 2012.
- U.S. Senator Pat Roberts of Kansas expressed interest in MAEAP at the Senate Ag Committee Field Hearing on May 31.

- Peg Buman from Agren, Inc. in Carroll, Iowa, also contacted MAEAP staff related to program information. Ms. Buman is contracted through the Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) in Iowa and is working through a NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) to develop an environmental assurance program for farm operators.
- USDA is gathering information related to nonpoint source water quality “certainty” programs. Specifically, Regional Conservationist, Tom Christensen, has been seeking input on behalf of Ann Mills, USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment. She has asked staff to provide information about what “certainty” looks like and what might be required in a national program related to plan, system of practice, follow-up, verification, etc. Ms. Mills specifically mentioned Michigan’s MAEAP as an example.
- Lauri Elbing, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) staff member, will introduce MAEAP to an internal group on June 7th – TNC’s State Chapters Legislative Policy Network (external affairs staff from around the country).
- On June 7, America’s Heartland will be filming for a MAEAP segment, featuring MDARD MAEAP Verifier, Josh Appleby. The segment will give MAEAP national exposure.
- Scott Piggott was recently in Washington D.C. and reported that several states expressed an interest in MAEAP.

Josh Appleby explained the standards review process to the group. Each subcommittee worked from existing A*Syst tools. Standards that the subcommittees felt required further discussion were listed as ‘parking lot issues’ and will be taken up with the future systems subcommittee meetings.

LIVESTOCK SYSTEM SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Gary Trimner reported for the Livestock System Subcommittee. A summary to explain the recommended changes and adjustments to the livestock standards was provided. Gary reviewed the standards with the council and provided a chance to comment after each standard statement. Comments included:

- 2.01) Add to end of low risk language for clarification, “...and does not discharge directly to surface water.”
- 4.03) Add to parking lot issues; hard to prove standards.
- 10.07) The group discussed how many years manure management records are required to be kept. The GAAMPs do not specify a period of time. Add to end of second sentence in medium risk language, “...for review at future verification.”
- 11.02) The group discussed manure application in the winter season and runoff. Parking lot issue – monitoring manure application in environmentally sensitive areas. Field should have a low to very low MARI rating.
- 11.03) Under medium risk, combine two sentences to make one.
- 11.07) Under low risk, delete “in” and replace with “from entering”.
- 11.11) Add “<” in second sentence of low risk language after “Wastewater application rate supplies...”

FARMSTEAD SYSTEM SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The group was provided a summary of recommended changes and adjustments.

Josh Appleby reviewed the standards with the council and provided a chance to comment after each question. Comments included:

- 3.01) The 800 foot setback for pesticide storage in reference to water wells is a parking lot issue. Under "Reference or guidance document", the date of the MDEQ Water Bureau Criteria needs to be listed.
- 3.26) Rinsing sprayer system is a parking lot issue. Rinsing the sprayer creates a very diluted mix of chemicals that could potentially be a food safety issue when using the same sprayer on foods such as blueberries.
- 6.17) Remove "Yes," from beginning of sentence in medium and high risk columns. Check all boxes in all standards for same.
- 6.24) Insert parenthesis around, "installed after August 1, 2003 with a capacity of less than 1,100 gallons".
- 6.24B) Same as 6.24
- 9.09) Add to end of low risk language for clarification, "...and does not discharge directly to surface water."

Also note, the standards document provided for review had incorrect bolding of the boxes due to a formatting glitch. These will be corrected and a revised document will be sent to the Council.

CROPPING SYSTEM SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Allen Krizek reported for the Cropping System Subcommittee. A summary of recommended changes was provided for each cropping tool. Allen reviewed the standards for field crop and vegetable producers with the council and provided a chance to comment after each question. MAEAP staff incorporated the same changes to the cropping tools for greenhouse producers and nursery crop and Christmas tree producers. Comments included:

- 1.13) Parking lot issue; RTF Nutrient GAAMPs conflict with MSU recommendations – this will be referred to the Nutrient GAAMPs Committee.
- 1.14) Verify medium risk statement with GAAMPs.
- 1.16, 1.18 – 1.22, 1.24 and 1.25) Any changes made to Livestock Standards must also reflect in the Cropping Standards.
- 1.28) Biosolids reference – NREPA
- 3.18) Need to check law for number of years required to maintain records.
- 5.05) Need to verify with MSU.
- 7.04 and 7.05) Refer to Irrigation GAAMPs Committee.
- 7.11) Parking lot issue.

The Greenhouse and Nursery Crop and Christmas Tree Standards are in line with the Farmstead and Cropping Standards but customized for each. Allen provided a quick review of the Greenhouse Standards.

- 3.27) Remove yellow high-light.

Action: MDARD will incorporate changes as agreed and ensure that changes are consistent for each standard where duplicative. The revised standards will be sent out to the council by Wednesday, June 15.

Action: Council will review revised standards and provide comments to the respective chairs and co-chairs by Wednesday, June 22.

Action: The subcommittees will work on revisions and send out new standards documents for review prior to the July 25, AC Meeting.

Action: Please send any 'parking lot issues' to Scott and Tom.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

MAEAP Communications and Financing – The MAEAP Communications Committee consists of 17 members who meet every other month to implement the yearly plan of work for the MAEAP partnership. The Committee is financed by the MAEAP partnership. Money is provided each year to be allocated towards promotion materials and ACE. A handout was distributed to show the history of MAEAP financing that included a breakdown of partner contributions and MAEAP expenditures.

Heather Throne, MAEAP Communications Committee co-chair, reviewed the Committee's Plan of Work for 2011 and their Multi-Year Outreach Plan. The Plan of Work includes four categories of communication; public, partnership, farmers and other. The Multi-Year Outreach Plan targets Michigan farmers and producers and encourages farmers to become MAEAP verified. The plan includes MAEAP Regional Environmental Assurance Teams to help raise awareness about MAEAP at the local level.

Members suggested adding a category for policy makers to the Plan of Work and include marketing the MAEAP website to non-farmers as part of the outreach efforts.

Scott recommended that the Committee should also report to the AC. The Committee will be referred as a "workgroup".

Max Benne moved to support the establishment of a MAEAP Communications Workgroup. The motion was seconded by Shelly Hartmann. The AC voted unanimously to recognize the MAEAP Communications Workgroup.

Elaine Brown moved that Heather Throne and Emily Beutel serve as co-chairs of the MAEAP Communications Workgroup for a term of two years. The motion was seconded by Lori Phalen. The AC voted unanimously to recognize Heather Throne and Emily Beutel as co-chairs to serve a two year term.

The MAEAP Communications Workgroup will meet on June 15.

Action: Heather will send meeting information to Jan Wilford, Tom Coon and Scott Piggott.

Action: Heather will forward the list of MAEAP Communications Workgroup members to Jen Eyde.

Action: Jen will send the MAEAP Communications Workgroup Directory to the AC and post on the MAEAP website.

Action: The MAEAP Communications Workgroup will continue fund raising efforts by approaching partners for financing, secure an appropriate office to house the funds and produce a multi-year financing plan.

The AC requested more discussion on the role of the AC versus the partnership. This topic will be discussed at the next AC meeting.

Action: Jen will add “MAEAP Workgroup and role of AC” to the next meeting agenda.

Action: Jen will add “Education” to the next meeting agenda to discuss how to provide and promote educational opportunities for farmers and provide adequate technical assistance.

Adoption of Verification Committee – A recommendation was made to establish a MAEAP Verification Committee to fulfill the role of advising the MDARD Director on protocols for verification and revocation of MAEAP verification. The Committee will develop protocols to present to the AC for approval. The AC will annually recommend protocols to the MDARD Director.

Max Benne moved for the adoption of the Verification Workgroup. Motion was seconded by Lauri Elbing. The Council voted unanimously to establish the Verification Workgroup. By consensus, the Council also voted to recognize Jan Wilford as chair with other members including three MAEAP verifiers, the Right to Farm Program Manager, MAEAP systems chairs, a DEQ representative and an NRCS representative.

Draft Council Meeting Guiding Principles – A draft of “Council Operation Principles” was provided and reviewed. Council members will all have equal authority and work toward achieving consensus. Voting will be used when the Council is being asked to adopt a recommendation.

NEW BUSINESS

Public Comment – Scott asked for comments and since there were none, the meeting was adjourned.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be July 25, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. at The Nature Conservancy.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Eyde
June 9, 2011