

MICHIGAN AGRICULTURE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSURANCE PROGRAM ADVISORY COUNCIL

Constitution Hall – Atrium Level
ConCon Conference Room
525 West Allegan Street
Lansing, Michigan

MEETING NOTES APRIL 1, 2011

PRESENT:

Tom Coon, Co-Chair, Scott Piggott, Co-Chair, Max Benne, Ken Blight, Elaine Brown, Jim Clift, Keith Creagh, Lauri Elbing, Shelly Hartmann, Melissa Higbee, Sam Hines, Allen Krizek, Lori Phalen, Jody Pollok-Newsom, Dale Rozeboom, Jim Scott, Gary Trimner, Josh Appleby, Jim Johnson, Peter Ostlund, Janice Wilford, Dan Wyant, Tom Young, Paul Zuger and Jennifer Eyde (scribe)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jim Johnson began the meeting by welcoming everyone and having all participants introduce themselves.

APPOINTEE RECOGNITION, INTRODUCTION OF CO-CHAIRS, COUNCIL CHARGE

Director Creagh recognized co-chairs, Tom Coon and Scott Piggott, as well as appointees to the Advisory Council (AC) and explained the charge given to the AC as directed in the new legislation. MAEAP was signed into law to give the program standing and be able to move environmental assurance to the next step. The AC has been charged with developing conservation practices for approval by the Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development and upon approval shall promote their implementation. The AC shall develop standards and protocols for voluntary on-site evaluations so that MAEAP verified farmers may then qualify for the legislative incentives that will take effect six months from the signing of Public Acts 1 and 2 of 2011. The standards will be presented for approval at the September 14, Commission Meeting. The AC will need to define what is to be achieved for verification and how verification is to be completed.

Director Wyant expressed that MDARD and MDEQ will be working very closely on this effort as environmental stewardship will be critical for agriculture's success. The MAEAP demonstrates innovation and will be looked upon as a model for other states.

MAEAP PROGRAM REVIEW AND BYLAWS

Scott Piggott provided a power point on the history, mission, and process of MAEAP. The MAEAP By-Laws were provided which included the mission, goals, and structure of MAEAP.

MEETING PROCESS

Jim reported that the Attorney General's Office was consulted to review the status and process of the AC meetings. Since the purpose of the AC is advisory to the MDARD

Director, it is not subject to the Open Meetings Act. However, all correspondence handled by state staff (e-mail, hard copy notices, phone messages, etc.) are subject to Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

The members agreed that notices of meetings and meeting notes would be posted on the MDARD website and anyone requesting information from the meetings will be added to the carbon copy list. The AC will be as open and transparent as possible.

Action: The Co-Chairs will provide meeting notes to the group for review.

Six Month Plan of Work

The AC will develop a set of standards and protocols in time for the approval at the September Commission meeting. To ensure that this task is accomplished, the AC will establish sub-committees. The sub-committees will meet separately and will be charged with developing the standards and protocols related to that sub-committee's purpose. They are to report back to the AC for input and then for final approval. The sub-committees will review current standards and ensure congruence between all three systems. The members agreed on the importance of establishing a format of standards and protocols for all three sub-committees.

The members also discussed establishing outreach efforts to ensure that the commissioners understand the systems and process involved in becoming verified; to possibly include commissioners visiting farms.

The sub-committees first charge will be to establish the format for standards and protocols. The members discussed using the format already in place for the a*syst tools related to the requirements for verification only. Mr. Blight shared that from a producer's standpoint they should be user-friendly, similar to Manure Management Planner from Purdue.

The current MAEAP standards reference standards from other agencies and the members agreed to continue with that same format.

Action: Jen Eyde will send out a system verification checklist to the AC for reference.

Josh Appleby described a document that MAEAP staff has been developing that combines all three systems standards. This will be the starting place for each of the three systems sub-committees.

Livestock/Farmstead/Cropping System Subcommittee Creation, Charge, and Chair Selection

Given the new legislation gives the AC the authority to establish sub-committees as needed, the members agreed to recognize the three existing system committees (Cropping, Farmstead, and Livestock) and their standing members. The goal is for each member of the AC to also serve on one of the system committees. The three system committees will be referred as *sub-committees* of the AC. AC members will be given an opportunity to review the purpose of each sub-committee and decide which they will participate on. AC members should also consider other individuals that would

be appropriate to serve on a sub-committee. Sub-committee chairs will have the discretion to add members with beneficial skill sets. Current members of each committee will be notified of the new charge that it has been given and can decide if they are still willing to serve under the circumstances.

The sub-committees will establish meetings as schedules permit. The schedule of meetings will be shared with the AC. Each sub-committee will review the current MAEAP standards already in place for the specific system to determine if they are complete, adequate, and understandable/doable.

The Farmstead Sub-Committee will need someone to serve as chair. If a member of the AC is not willing to serve in this position, the AC co-chairs will open the offer to others that would be beneficial to serve in that capacity.

Action: Current chairs and/or co-chairs of the Livestock and Cropping Sub-Committees will send schedule of meetings to Jen Eyde.

Action: Tom and Scott will send e-mail to AC with sub-committee information, to include list of meetings scheduled.

Action: AC members will commit to serving on a sub-committee. They will also consider the addition of other members beneficial to the sub-committees.

Action: A note will be sent by the sub-committee chairs, to standing members of system sub-committees to review the new task charged to them and ask if they wish to continue serving under these circumstance.

Public Comment

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

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be June 6 in the afternoon. The main agenda item will be sub-committee progress review.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Eyde
April 8, 2011