

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

JULY 22, 2013

1:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Northwest Horticultural Research Station
6686 South Center Highway
Traverse City, MI 49684

ATTENDEES

Tom Coon (Co-Chair), Scott Piggott (Co-Chair), Ken Blight, Brian Geerlings, James Clift, Dean Letter, Sam Hines, Allen Krizek, Lauri Elbing, Michelle Napier-Dunnings, Lori Phalen, Phil Korson, and Jim Johnson

RESOURCE

Jan Wilford, Tom Young, Dan Busby, Erin Satchell, Elaine Brown, Heather Casteel (Scribe), Jim Pawlowicz and Emily Ries

GUESTS

Don Coe, Ag Commissioner; Buzz Long, Executive Director, Leelanau Conservation District; Art Pelon, Chair, Ionia County Conservation District; Laura Moser, MI Milk Producers

WELCOME TO NORTHWEST HORTICULTURAL RESEARCH STATION

- Tom Coon began the meeting at 1:06 p.m., following a tour of the Jeff and Nita Sends cherry operation, Cherry Bay Orchard's processing facility, and the Northwest Horticultural Research Station.
- Introductions were made around the table.

APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES FROM MARCH 11, 2013

- Tom Coon asked if there were any corrections to the past meeting notes. No changes were suggested.

MOTION: KEN BLIGHT MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MEETING MINUTES FROM MAY 13, 2013. SECONDED BY BRIAN GEERLINGS. MOTION CARRIED.

**STANDARDS CHANGES, REVIEW AND APPROVAL
LIVESTOCK SYSTEM SUB-COMMITTEE (LAS)**

- Dean Letter read through the handout that was provided. (Attached)
- New language addresses the option for DEQ permitted CAFO facilities to become MAEAP verified by addressing three additional items.
- James Clift asked who is doing the inspection for the MAEAP components? The MAEAP verifiers perform this function.
- Jan Wilford clarified that after performing a line by line comparison between DEQ permit's and MAEAP verification, a pilot with Josh Appleby, MDARD, and Tim Hall, DEQ, was completed. The NPEDS permit is reviewed by DEQ.
- Jim Johnson reported that the MOU between DEQ and MDARD will help to clarify from a regulatory standpoint.

- Tom Coon clarified that James Clift is requesting language that states if there are DEQ issues with notice of violation letters, then the MAEAP visit will not be continued at that time.
- Discussion over how MDARD and DEQ will review permitted facilities to make a determination.
- Livestock*A*Systr language was suggested, “Owners of farms operating in compliance with a MDEQ NPDES permit may also request MAEAP verification.”

MOTION: TOM COON MOVED THAT THE ABOVE LANGUAGE BE ADDED TO THE LIVESTOCK*A*SYSTR. SECONDED BY JAMES CLIFT. MOTION CARRIED.

MOTION: LORI PHALEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE FULL SET OF LIVESTOCK*A*SYSTR CHANGES PRESENTED. SECONDED BY LAURI ELBING. MOTION CARRIED.

FARMSTEAD SYSTEM SUB-COMMITTEE (FAS)

- Allen Krizek reviewed the proposed Farmstead Standards changes in place of Jeffrey Zimmer (Chair). (Attached)
- No additional changes were indicated since the adopted and approved FAS Summary of Changes at the May MAEAP AC meeting.

CROPPING SYSTEM SUB COMMITTEE (CAS)

- Allen Krizek (Chair) reviewed the proposed CAS Standards changes. (Attached)
- No additional changes were indicated since the adopted and approved CAS Summary of Changes at the May MAEAP AC meeting.

LANGUAGE CHANGE FOR ALL A*SYSTR NARRATIVES

- Jim Johnson suggested that additional language should be added to all A*Systrs.(Attached)
- Part 87 that codifies MAEAP is clear that we view MAEAP associated risk assessments and plans are conservation plans that qualify for exemption from FOIA requests.

MOTION: KEN BLIGHT MOVED TO APPROVE THE LANGUAGE CHANGE FOR ALL A*SYSTR NARRATIVES. SECONDED BY SAM HINES. MOTION CARRIED.

RTF, SITING & MAEAP

- Jim Johnson reminded the group that the Right to Farm law does not speak to zoning and land use.
- Don Coe mentioned that this is a complication with the Ag Commission, who did not approve Siting GAAMPs proposed language due to the issue of 50 or less animal units.
- Discussion over RTF, Siting and Urban Agriculture.
- Tom Coon suggested a possible clause that reads, “this is the assumption that local zoning is met and set.” This would put the burden on the producer that they are in compliance with zoning and local ordinances. No action taken.

MAEAP LOGO USAGE

MOTION: KEN BLIGHT MOVED TO BRING BACK THE TABLED DISCUSSION OF MAEAP LOGO USAGE FROM MAY'S MEETING. SECONDED BY LAURI ELBING. MOTION CARRIED.

- Jim Johnson reported that the Director has considered different sides of the argument, including policing and our ability to verify that people are using this logo as intended. The Director expressed concern that further restricting logo usage would not be good for the program. The use of the logo is about the farm practices, not the actual product.
- Discussion about Co-op usage and if five producers are providing berries to one co-op, it would inspire all five producers to get verified and then the use of the logo stickers could be acceptable.
- Dean Letter requested that a motion be made to approve the revised logo use agreement. (Attached)
- Tom Coon suggested that a vote be taken instead, and stated that an 'aye' would indicate the red wording be deleted, and keep the wording in blue, a 'nay' would retain status quo and leave it as is.
- Vote was 3 'ayes' and 7 'nays', deciding that the recommendation to the Director is to keep as is, with no changes.
- Tom Coon suggested that the original Logo Use work group can come back with new language on a special clause for the issue of "blending" at the September MAEAP AC meeting.

****ACTION ITEM**** Original Committee of Shelly Hartmann, Emily Ries, Heather Throne, Laura Moser and Dean Letter to reconvene on Logo Use Agreement and Co-op usage, bringing back recommended changes to September's meeting. Other members may be added as needed. The original group was co-chaired by MAEAP Communications Committee Co-chairs: Heather Throne and Emily Ries.

FORESTRY RELATED CHANGES – IMPACT TO THE MAEAP AC

- Jim Johnson provided a forestry update. (Attached)
- The creation of a Forest*A*Syst tool, committee and verification is in process and to be completed by June, 2014.
- Three more individuals will be appointed to the AC; representing a forester, forestry products, and logging profession. We will use those organizations to identify experts for appointment.
- Tom Coon asked if there will be a Forestry GAAMP?
- Jim Johnson answered that it does not affect the Right to Farm, so no GAAMP will be developed.

WATER QUALITY MONITORING REPORT

- Lauri Elbing gave the final draft version of the MAEAP Water Quality Monitoring report. (Attached)
- Lauri requested that any feedback be returned by noon on Friday, August 19th.

****ACTION ITEM**** AC members to report any changes for the Water Quality Monitoring report to Lauri Elbing by Friday, August 19th.

- Lauri outlined the report, thanked committee members, and mentioned that a more in-depth report, including any additional suggested changes, will be provided at the September meeting.

REAT UPDATE

- Jan reviewed the function outlined in law of the Regional Environmental Assurance Team (REAT).
- There will be five focus groups related to the potential functionality of REATs.
- Elaine Brown agreed to facilitate the focus groups.
- Elaine will have recommendations by the November meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Art Pelon wanted to pass along the great compliment he had received as he introduced Debbie Stabenow in Washington DC. Senator Stabenow said that Jan Wilford and Steve Shine were great contacts and she wanted to have Art pass it along to anyone regarding MAEAP.

IRRIGATION TOPIC

- Ken Blight wanted to mention that NRCS is accepting Center Pivot Evaluation Design, (CPED) software reports, which is computer designed irrigation. Center Pivot Nozzle and surface storage are tools to estimate the potential for runoff and subsequent economic impact from reducing the operating pressure of a sprinkler irrigation system.
- Ken thought it could be a useful tool for the Cropping Sub-committee to review.

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

- Emily Ries reported that “WE SUPPORT MAEAP” signs at Ag Expo, and they were highly visible. Tyler Charles did a good job developing and delivering those signs.
- Emily also informed the group that if help is needed to promote MAEAP please let the Communications Committee know.

MOTION: LORI PHALEN MOVED TO ADJOURN. SECONDED BY SAM HINES. MOTION CARRIED.

Meeting adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

Host: Melissa Higbee, Shiawassee Conservation District

Location: Shiawassee County Fairgrounds, Black Pavilion 2900 E. Hibbard Road, Corunna, MI 48817.

Date: Monday, September 9, 2013

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 a.m. - Tour of Shiawassee County MAEAP verified farms

1:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m. - Lunch at Shiawassee County Fairgrounds

1:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. - MAEAP AC Meeting

Respectfully submitted by,
Heather Casteel