



Farm Bill 2002

State Technical Committee

Fact Sheet

Overview of the State Technical Committee (STC)

The Secretary of Agriculture is required to establish a technical committee in each state to assist in the technical considerations and to develop the technical guidelines necessary to implement conservation provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985. Section 1261(c) of the 1985 Act, as amended, establishes State Technical Committees (STC) and defines their legal responsibilities.

The responsibility of establishing a technical committee was delegated to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in 1990. Although NRCS originated the concept, STC's are currently used in an advisory capacity by various United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies.

Responsibilities of the State Technical Committee

State Technical Committees provide advice on a number of issues within a variety of conservation programs. Although they have no implementation or enforcement authority, USDA gives strong consideration to the committee's recommendations.

The South Dakota STC meets on a quarterly basis to assist in technical considerations and to develop the technical guidelines necessary to implement conservation provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended.

State Technical Committee Membership

The state conservationist is the chair. Membership is composed of individuals who represent a variety of natural resource sciences and occupations, including soil, water, air, plants, and wildlife.

To participate on the STC, individuals or groups may submit a request to the NRCS state conservationist that explains their interest and outlines their natural resource credentials.

One member from each of the following agencies or groups, if present within the state, may participate on the STC:

Within USDA:

- NRCS, as Chair
- Farm Service Agency,
- State Farm Service Agency Committee,
- Forest Service,
- Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, and
- Rural Development.

Other Federal Agencies and Groups:

- U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
- Environmental Protection Agency,
- Bureau of Land Management,
- Bureau of Reclamation,
- Bureau of Indian Affairs,
- U.S. Geological Survey,
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and
- Each of the federally recognized American Indian Reservations and Alaskan Native corporations encompassing 100,000 acres or more in the state.

In addition to agency membership, STC's shall contain members from the following private interests, including:

- agricultural producers with demonstrable conservation expertise,
- nonprofit organizations with demonstrable conservation expertise,
- persons knowledgeable about economic and environmental impacts of conservation techniques and programs; and
- agribusiness.

The following State agencies or groups may participate as members:

- State water resources agency,
- State fish and wildlife agency,
- State coastal zone management agency,
- State forestry agency,
- State natural heritage program,
- State department of agriculture,
- State association of conservation districts,
- State soil and water conservation agencies,
- other agency personnel with expertise in soil, water, wetlands, plant, and wildlife management that the state conservationist considers appropriate; and
- groups and interests that have historically been excluded from these processes.

Meetings

The state conservationist is responsible for scheduling and conducting the meetings regardless which USDA agency requested the meeting. Public attendance is permitted at STC meetings. In notifying the public, the state conservationist is to publish a meeting notice:

- No later than 14 days prior to the meeting, unless this 14-day minimum is exceeded by State open meeting laws.
- In at least one or more newspaper(s), including Tribal publications, in an attempt to attain statewide circulation.

Note: The 14-day notice may be waived in the case of exceptional conditions.

A STC meeting may be requested by any USDA agency as needed. Although any USDA member may request a meeting, the state conservationist schedules and conducts the meeting. The state conservationist will prepare meeting agendas and necessary background information to prepare members for upcoming meetings.