

State Technical Committee Meeting
667 Federal Building
September 27, 2004
1:00 p.m.
Des Moines, Iowa

MINUTES

Present: Rick Van Klaveren, Chair; Paul Taulke for Mike Brandrup, and Ken Herring for Dale Garner, DNR; Jim Munson, FWS; Rick Robinson and Doug Gronau, Farm Bureau; Dan Brutche, Corn Growers; Rich Leopold for Susan Heathcote, IEC; Doug Lindgren, Soybean Association; Kelly Tobin, Producer; Mike Musel for Derryl McLaren and Merlin Plagee, FSA; Dave Petty, Cattlemen's Association; Ken Tow, DSC; Mark Ackelson, INHF; John Sellers, Jr., SSCC; Brad Riphagen for Shannon Ramsey, Trees Forever; Deb Ryun, CDI; Brad Parks for Jim Sands, NASS; Russ Brandes, Producer; Linda Kinman, Iowa Water Agencies Association; Emily Eide for John Glenn, Iowa Watersheds; and Inger Lamb, Iowa Prairie Network. Others not members: Todd Bogenschultz, DNR; Lisa Heim, INHF; John Moreland, Senator Tom Harkin's Office; Jim Gillespie, DSC; Larry Ginter, and Lisa Wayland, ICCI; Dennis Pate, Tom O'Connor, Marty Adkins, Roger Link, Mark Lindflott, Larry Beeler, Dave Beck, Marcia Roll, Barb Stewart, and Shelly DuBay.

Welcome Comments – Rick Van Klaveren

Rick stated that he was looking forward to working with this committee. Rick provided a brief overview of his background/career. He is also very excited about being the State Conservationist in Iowa. Rick shared that he didn't see making any changes on how this committee makes its recommendations and implementing them for the Farm Bill Programs.

Rick shared that the budget is going to be delivered different this fiscal year. Chief Bruce Knight will be providing the mandatory funds (EQIP, EQIP-Ground and Surface Water, FRPP, CRP, WHIP, WRP, GRP) by the end of October to the states. Instead of holding the funds back as in previous years, they want to get the money to the states so the planning process will be able to be done prior to planting. This is going to be a great opportunity. With the Conservation Security Program (CSP), we will be working across state lines. There will need to be consistency with each state that has a designated watershed with the adjoining states.

Animal Agriculture Conservation Framework Sub-Committee Report – Rick Robinson

Rick Robinson shared some background why this Sub-Committee was developed. Rick stated that they have met twice and have another meeting scheduled for November 10. So far they have been working on 20 issues/strategies but are looking to see if there are others they need to address. They have placed these issues/strategies in four categories: technology development/transfer; program funding and flexibility; management; and information/education and outreach. Rick provided examples of issues for each of the categories.

Rick Van Klaveren stated that the work that this Sub-Committee is doing is very important to Iowa.

CRP Sub-Committee Report – Kelly Tobin

Kelly Tobin provided a handout to the group and went over the document in detail. Kelly is hoping to get this information all worked out by next year to be able to provide it to FSA. This will allow time for FSA to take action, if they agree, prior to 2007-2008 contracts expiring. There was a detailed discussion from the group. There will be more on this issue at the next meeting.

CRP Update – Mike Musel

Mike Musel stated that the general CRP sign-up 29 was just completed on Friday, September 24. Mike provided two handouts, one showed the counties that are eligible for CP-33 which is a quail focus area and the other contained seeding recommendations. There are 53 counties in the bottom four tier counties in Iowa that are eligible. This program would begin October 1, 2004. Mike went over details with a discussion from the group.

The Sub-Committee for CRP rental rates involved DNR, NRCS, and FWS. There was some discussion on this issue.

Mike also provided a copy of the draft Update Wetland Restoration Guidance for CRP-27. Mike stated that Iowa is limited to 3,000 acres in the prairie pothole area. The applications will be accepted on a first-come first-serve basis. Mike did provide more details to the group.

Dennis Pate provided information on a Federal Register notice that involved FSA asking for comments on implementing CRP more effectively. The comments are due by December 8, 2004. They are asking eleven (11) specific questions. You can find this in the Federal Register dated August 10, 2004, Volume 69 under 153, page 48447.

CSP: “Watersheds for the Future” – Dennis Pate/Tom O’Connor

Tom O’Connor stated that NRCS completed the sign-up and payment process for FY2004. Tom provided a copy of a power point presentation. Tom stated that approximately 27,500 farmers/ranchers or 14 million acres which included 60 percent cropland and 40 percent grazing lands were involved with the first CSP sign-up. There were approximately 2,180 contracts approved using \$34.5 million that covered 1.9 million acres. Tom then provided a handout that shows by state how many contracts per tier was approved. There was a discussion from the group.

Dennis Pate shared that the comment period for the CSP rule has been extended from September 21 to October 5, 2004.

Dennis provided a handout on the FY2005 CSP sign-up (see attachment). He went over the document in detail. There was a detailed discussion. The following individuals were on the Sub-Committee:

Dave Beck, NRCS
Tom O’Connor, NRCS
Dennis Pate, NRCS
Jim Sands, NASS

Bill Ehm, DSC
Ubbo Agena, DNR
Derryl McLaren, FSA
Linda Kinman, Des Moines Water Works

Dennis also stated that he thought the Secretary of Agriculture would be announcing the FY05 Watersheds sometime in October.

Conservation Partnership Initiative (CPI) – Marty Adkins

Marty Adkins provided a fact sheet on the Conservation Partnership Initiative (CPI). You can also access this from website www.nrcs.usda.gov. In July, the Department announced how it was implementing Partnership and Cooperation Provision of the 2002 Farm Bill nationally. Marty provided details of the fact sheet. There is \$1 million for approximately ten watershed areas nationally. The State Technical Committee will make recommendations to NRCS then NRCS will submit the proposals, if recommended, to NRCS National Headquarters by October 10. Chief Bruce Knight, NRCS, will make the final selection of the ten watersheds.

One proposal is related to the Iowa Great Lakes area and the other is an initiative to encourage grass based variance similar to the discussion earlier involving Taylor County.

A Sub-Committee was selected for the review of the two proposals:

Lyle Asell, Chair	Rick Robinson
Roger Link	Jim Gillespie
Deb Ryun	Marty Adkins

Phosphorus Index Update – Barbara Stewart

Barbara Stewart provided a copy of the Iowa Technical Note No. 25 – Iowa Phosphorus Index to the group. Barb stated that the index has not changed, the equation is still the same but there are some revisions and clarifications. One change is the reference to the current erosion prediction model that NRCS is using. Example, if you were changing from RUSLE to RUSLE2 it is now referenced in this revised Iowa Technical Note. NRCS also added a reference to dominant critical area. A new item is additional phosphorus soil test that includes the main three ICP. Barb provided more details of the document. There was some discussion.

FRPP Revised Ranking Criteria – Lisa Heim

Lisa Heim stated she was representing the FRPP Sub-Committee. Lisa provided a revised copy of the criteria for ranking applications. Lisa went over the document in detail. She stated that the items that are in bold are requirements that have to be met to be eligible. The sites that are being protected are along the Upper Iowa River, the Mississippi Gulf land region, and the Loess Hills areas. There was some discussion from the group. There is a lot of interest in this program but it has been difficult to find the local match money. There was a concurrence from the group on the revised ranking criteria.

Sub-Committee consists of the following individuals:

Suzanne Hickie, Chair	Brian Share
Lisa Heim	John Walkowiak
Mark Ackelson	Leann Porter
Les Beck	Susan Heathcote
Marcia Roll	Marty Adkins
Russ Brandes	Paul Taulke

EQIP Sub-Committee Update – Deb Ryun

Deb Ryun provided a document on the Sub-Committee's discussion notes from their meeting on September 13. She went over the document in detail. The first recommendation from the Sub-Committee is to reserve \$7 million for open feedlots and \$500,000 for special projects. There was a discussion from the group with a concurrence to reserve \$7 million for open feedlots and \$500,000 for special projects. There was a Sub-Committee established to rank the applications for the open feedlots that consists of the following:

Deb Ryun – Chair	Lyle Asell
Doug Lindgren	Jim Gillespie
Dave Petty	Larry Beeler

The second recommendation is to continue the same allocation formula that has been used the past two years except pulling out the open feedlot money prior and using up-to-date data sets to the allocation distribution. There was a discussion from the group with a concurrence.

The third recommendation is regarding practice incentive. The Sub-Committee is asking that the NRCS State Office continue to monitor incentives offer and discuss high incentives with the district conservationists. There was a concurrence from the group in this issue.

Larry Ginter, ICCI – shared this is the first time that he has ever attended a State Technical Committee meeting and was very impressed with the amount of work this group is doing. He also stated that he didn't feel that a lot of others understand or know of the responsibility that this group has to help the land, water and the farms in Iowa. Mr. Ginter went on to say that he has some concerns with the EQIP allocation process that has allowed the factory farms to receive funds. Mr. Gitner also stated that he felt more education/information needed to be provided to the farmers/landowners because he didn't think they were aware of the existence of the EQIP program. He went on to share more details with examples to the group.

The next State Technical Committee Meeting will be held on December 9, 2004 at 1:00 p.m. in Room 667 Federal Building.