

Programmatic and Policy Issues for Energy and AQAC in NRCs: Now and Future



*Air Quality, Atmospheric Change
and Energy Training*

Las Cruces NM

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Energy, Air Quality and Climate Change are (new) NRCS Endeavors

- **Energy:** A new resource concern???
- **Air Quality:** 4 resource concerns; new regulatory pressures + GHGs (?)
- **Climate Change:** Agency commitment; future???



Energy and NRCS

- **Maybe an official Energy resource concern coming??**
- **Energy audits**
- **Energy tools**
- **An Energy Team!**
- **State Energy Contacts**



Energy Programs and NRCS

- **EQIP Energy Conservation Activity Plans**
- **Conservation Stewardship Program**
- **Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP)**



Energy Enhancements for 2009 CSP

- Solar powered electric fence
- Locally grown and marketed farm products
- Recycling lubricants
- Pumping plant powered by renewable energy
- Field operations fuel reduction
- Energy Audits(?)



Energy Resource Concerns?

- Decision memo
- Practice effects matrix
- Conservation delivery streamlining initiative – 2 proposed energy resource concerns focused on excess fossil fuel use and land use



Air Quality and NRCS

- Air Quality is a major emphasis area
- An AQAC Team!
- USDA Agricultural Air Quality Task Force
- Air Quality resource concerns and practice standards
- Increasing regulatory pressures on ag.
- Increasing emphasis on GHGs



Air Quality and NRCS Planning

Air Quality

- Past (pre-1994)
 - Air quality = wind erosion
- Present (1994-Now)
 - Air quality is a resource that has to be addressed: The first 'A' in SWAPA+H
 - Air-related resource concerns --
 - Particulate Matter, Ozone, Odor, Greenhouse Gas
- NM/AZ AQ and NRCS: Smoke, dust, others??



Air Quality and NRCS Planning

NRCS Conservation Delivery Streamlining Initiative (CDSI)

- Developed new quality and planning criteria for air quality (4 resource concerns)
- Integrating AQAC planning tool concept (“SNAP”) with the CDSI conservation planning tool



2009 CSP Air Quality Enhancements

- Incorporating or injecting manure
- Dust treatments for roads & unpaved surfaces
- Alternatives to burning of orchard trimmings and residues
- Smudge pot replacement
- Pesticide Drift (2)
- Nutrient Mgmt. (9)—N₂O reductions





Climate Change: International Agreement, Regulation or Legislation – What will be first?

Regulation

EPA becoming aggressive on GHG control

- July 2008 – Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking
- 2009 Policy and Regulatory Activity
 - ▶ GHG Reporting Rule
 - ▶ Endangerment finding for vehicular GHGs (MA vs. EPA) impetus – the stage is set to regulate GHG emissions
- Principal Ag impact on largest CAFOs (methane)
- N₂O very important but hard to quantify
- Congress may try and stop EPA on this issue



Climate Change & NRCS

- Now one of the few agency Strategic Initiatives directly reporting to the Chief
- Have established 2 climate change-related teams to address these issues
- NRCS Programs GHG benefits analysis
 - ▶ For 2002, 2007, and out to 2020
- Now making plans for potential climate change legislation
 - ▶ Eligible practices and GHG/carbon seq. effects
 - ▶ Developing credit schemes