

Missouri State Technical Committee Meeting
USDA Training Room – Suite 232
Columbia, MO
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 a.m.
May 14, 2009

Opening Comments – Roger Hansen, Missouri State Conservationist

Roger welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked each person to introduce him or herself. Roger explained the role of the State Technical Committee and reviewed the meeting agenda.

Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)

Harold Deckerd, Assistant State Conservationist for Water Resources, announced that July 5, 2009 will begin a three week sign up period for 2009 GRP. He stated that offers will need to consist of a minimum of forty acres and the rental payments will range from \$10 to \$16.50. Harold mentioned that CRP acres coming out of contract in September and October will receive a higher priority than no CRP acres and that FSA will publish the exact rental rates in the near future. Harold pointed out several easement length changes in 2009 GRP as he covered the hand out.

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

Dwaine Gelnar, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs and Operations, stated that Missouri is just now beginning to approve 2009 EQIP applications even though the sign up began in July of 2009. He noted numerous reasons that occurred but the most prevalent was the program changes driven by the new Farm Bill.

Dwaine presented a hand out that broke down the 2009 EQIP sign up. He stated that it was the largest sign up to date totaling just under 3,400 applications requesting \$62.5 million. Dwaine explained to the committee the new ranking procedure used in 2009 and pointed out how the funds will be utilized.

Dwaine covered a news release that announced that EQIP would now contain an organic element. Agriculture Deputy Secretary Merrigan announced that \$50 million in funding would be available Nation wide for this element. Dwaine stated that Missouri would set aside \$1.5 million to fund organic EQIP contracts.

Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP)

Dwaine Gelnar stated that Missouri had received 185 WHIP applications in 2009 totaling \$1.75 million. He stated that this was up \$50,000 from 2008. Dwaine also explained to the committee the new ranking procedure used in 2009 and pointed out how the funds will be utilized. Dwaine pointed out that the 2009 WHIP request for financial assistance doubled our 2009 allocation.

EQIP Sub-Committee

Dwaine Gelnar encouraged the sub-committees to work on specific proposals for the 2010 programs. He stated that planning for 2010 programs had began and asked the sub-committees to prepare their suggestions for full committee review.

Dwaine covered the hand out outlining details from the EQIP sub-committee meeting held in April.

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Alan Powell, Program Specialist, FSA announced that 50,000 to 60,000 acres may be coming out of General CRP in the next couple of years in Missouri. At this point, it is felt that up to 80% of those expiring contracts will be offered a 3 to 5 year extension. There may be a provision in which partial acres may be accepted but all extensions will be at the original rental rate.

CRP Sub-Committee

Alan Powell covered the hand out outlining details from the CRP sub-committee meeting held in April.

Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)

Lisa Allen, Missouri Department of Conservation, stated that the 2008 Farm Bill contained a Forestry Title and that MDC would be highly involved in administering the program. She stated that the Forestry Title is driving a state wide Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy on public and private forested acres. She stated that the assessment needs to be completed by June, 2010 and that the program will bring in \$2.1 million annually to the state.

Conservation Security Program (CSP)

Dwaine Gelnar, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs and Operations, stated that there will not be a 2009 CSP sign up. He mentioned that we are still waiting on the final ruling on CSP and that little action would take place until the final rule became available. He stated that the new CSP program would be available state wide which is much different than in past years.

2010 Conservation Programs

Roger Hansen asked for the committee's input on 2010 Conservation Programs. He informed the committee that preparations for 2010 EQIP and WHIP are underway and he is interested in their input.

He asked that any additional comments and suggestions be sent to him via email at (roger.hansen@mo.usda.gov) or by telephone (573-876-0901).