

## State Technical Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date, Location, and Time:** August 1, 2012; Bradford Farm, Columbia, MO; 9:00am-12:00pm

**USDA Leadership/Presenters/Moderators in Attendance:** J.R. Flores, State Conservationist, NRCS; Allen Powell, Conservation Program Specialist, FSA; Mark Kulig, Assistant State Conservationist-Programs, NRCS; Harold Deckerd, Assistant State Conservationist-Water Resources, NRCS; Dwaine Gelnar, State Resource Conservationist, NRCS; Bill Wilson, DNR; Judy Grundler, MDA; **Facilitator:** Karen Brinkman, Area Conservationist, NRCS; **Public Affairs:** Charlie Rahm and Emily Murray, NRCS; **Recorder:** Sonja Williams, Exec Assist, NRCS.

**Members in Attendance:** Marilyn Gann, NRCS; George Seal, CFM; Bruce Biermann, MASWCD; Judy Grundler, MDA; Seth Swafford, USDA-APHIS-WS; Alan Schwanke, SWCD; Kelly Srigley-Werner, USFWS; Chris Hamilton, NRCS; Bill Wilson, MoDNR; Rob Myers, MU; Elsa Gallagher, QF; Jef Hodges, Total Resource Mgmt; Dale Blevins, MO Prairie Foundation; Steve Taylor, MO Agribusiness Assoc.; Tom Harper, SWCD; David Baker, MU; Terri Brink, EPA; Rodney Meng, SWCD; John Tuttle, MDC; Richard Hoelscher, SWCD; Tim Gibbons, MRCC; Jorge Lugo-Camacho, NRCS; Jodie Reisner, NRCS; Darlene Johnson, NRCS; George Engelbach, SWCD; Timothy Healey, Koch Agronomic Services; Lisa Potter, MDC; Chris McLeland, MDC; Car Allee, SWCD; Liisa Schmoele, FWS; Dave Drennan, Mo Dairy Assoc; Leslie Holloway, MFB; Steve Mahfood, Nature Conservatory; John Niemeyer, Agrion Advanced Technologies; Joe Barnes, IWLA; Bob Broz, MU Extension; Brian Schweiss, MDC; Greg Anderson, MoDNR; John Burk, NWTF; Glenn Davis, NRCS; Nick Prough, QUWF; Kenny Lovelace, MASWCD; Melvin Dickmeyer, SWCD; Amy Hamilton, Hamilton Native Outpost; Bev Dometrorch, MASWCD; Frank Oberle, Landowner; Lloyd Gunder, Dairy Farmers of America; David Hale, SWCD; Ben Gorden, SWCD; John Dwyer, MU; Ralph Glosemeyer, SWCD; Kat Logan Smith, Mo Coalition for the Env.; Bill White, MDC; and Larry Heggemann, Cent. Hardwoods Joint Venture.

**Discussion:**

Item	Discussion
1. Welcome	J.R. Flores, Missouri State Conservationist (STC), welcomed the attendees. The STC discussed the drought, saying it was one of the worst in the U.S. He said we may be getting additional funding and stated Bill Wilson from the Missouri Department of Natural Resource (DNR) would be discussing this later in the meeting. The STC asked that everyone in the room introduce themselves. After the introductions the STC gave an overview of what the State Technical Committee is and the responsibilities of the committee members, STC, and Farm Service Agency (FSA) Executive Director.
2. Farm Bill Activities: Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wetlands Habitat	Mark Kulig, Assistant STC-Programs, started the presentation with an overview of NRCS programs. He said it would be a two-part presentation, 2012 programs accomplishments and 2013 programs-direction for future programs.  Kulig said that the numbers given in the presentation are preliminary estimates. FY 2012 CSP Sign Ups: 1025 applications were received. There were 425 contracts developed with a total of 200,000 acres. There was \$3.4M in financial assistance distributed for contract implementation. In major categories, 400 contracts were cancelled, 75 were ineligible, and 75 are

<p>Incentives Program (WHIP, Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)/FY 2012 Summary</p>	<p>still eligible.</p> <p>WHIP-there has been a significant change in funding structure and how it is evolving into another program. We received no funds in 2012 for general WHIP; we did receive some funds for the Missouri River Basin Initiative (MRBI). WHIP is developing into Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW) program. None of the targeted species in the program are in Missouri. We hope expansion of the program includes additional species that includes Missouri in the future.</p> <p>EQIP-one of our most popular programs. There were 5200 applications this year. We entered into 1225 contracts. 2750 were unfunded. 550 cancelled by applicant, 275 ineligible, and ½ remain eligible. Lack of funding is why these remain unfunded</p> <p>[Why are so many applications cancelled? Many reasons for cancellations. Quite often personal circumstances. When no funds have been obligated we accept the requests.]</p> <p>[Is it because the individuals can't provide the cost share required? This is possible or could be because they didn't have full details of the contract. Again, there are various reasons.]</p> <p>EQIP initiatives. Missouri is the leading state in the nation for these initiatives. A chart was provided that showed six major initiatives: organics, seasonal high tunnels, energy, Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiatives (CCPI), CCPI-MRBI, and the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) which is new for 2012. An estimated \$12.4M was distributed. MRBI is a popular initiative; we had four additional projects approved in 2012 for 1.3M.</p> <p>General EQIP/non-initiative funds. State Conservationist has discretion to redistribute in accordance with major resource concerns-cropland, forest, pasture and hay, and animal feeding. Chart provided showed for 2012 what our targets were. In 2012, there was change in distribution from 2011, due to comments from the State Technical Committee. The STC changed animal feeding from 15% to 20% and pasture and hayland from 45% to 40%.</p> <p>[When you add all funds together we receive about \$25M? This is correct-actually surpassed this-actually received more, with MRBI funds it was around \$27M.]</p> <p>[When is anyone going to develop water programs-we need storage areas? When we get into 2013 programs (packet contains information on this-series of spreadsheets that shows practices that are offered). Missouri offers 57 practices-we offer more compared to many other states. Water quantity concerns are embedded within these. Certainly water resource options will be of higher demand currently and into the future. May want to make a recommendation to prioritize these programs. These are things the STC would take into consideration. Note: Someone made a 2<sup>nd</sup> of this if it was actually a recommendation. Kulig said the STC would certainly take the State Technical Committee's recommendations into consideration. He said we are covering a lot of material and we have a full agenda, so comments and recommendations today are not the end of it. Comments will be taken until August 31, 2012. Written comments may be sent to the STC at the address given at the bottom of the agenda.</p>
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[Water management is a big concern. We spend most of our money trying to figure out how to get rid of our water instead of trying to figure out how to manage it. We should have a water management group-just like other subcommittees. They could discuss how we could manage our water.]

[When a landowner cancels a program it hurts them. We went into a contract to buy a tanker and now we want to cancel it because we can't afford it, but if we cancel the contract it will lessen our chances of getting another contract. This is not fair. You raise a good point. Cancelling a contract doesn't mean you won't get another contract and the lower category doesn't knock you out of the running, but contracts are approved by priority and this year the higher priorities are what were approved. This would be a good topic for the EQIP subcommittee.]

Moved into discussing the 2013 portion of the presentation. Focused on EQIP. Payments will be based on regional payment schedules along with nationalized cost share. Want to have more uniformity between state and regions. We have done some of this in our practices already. Baseline date will be more standardized.

Kulig asked for members' thoughts on 2013 EQIP programs. Wanted to touch on three things. 1) Fund distribution, 2) Practices currently authorized-do we want to cut back on some, and 3) Recommended cost share percentages per practice.

Funds distribution. Referred to pie chart. Major concerns are cropland, forestry, pasture and hayland, and animal feeding. 60% must be related to livestock concerns. In 2012 We had 20% going to Animal Feeding and 40% to Pasture and Hayland. You can increase this, but can't go below that level.

[Define animal feeding animal feeding. How could someone request money for animal feeding?? Generally we are talking about concentrated operations-opposed to pasture and hayland, more of a feedlot operation.]

[Group representing mostly independent farmers believes only 10% should to animal feeding. Due to drought, economy, amount of EQIP dollars the state has, and number of contracts that are unfunded. Animal feeding contracts are larger and an effort should be made to spread the money further and fund more contracts. If animal feeding is continued, hopefully it goes to more independents. Two individuals disagreed. One person stated that funding has to be open to all, not just independents. Another said that animal feeding/waste deals with water quality. When it rains, waste can run into ditches. Money is needed to solve runoff issues and get rid of lagoons. It was also stated that existing operations should be prioritized. The individual that initially brought up this issue said that they don't disagree with either of these statements and that existing operations should be prioritized.]

[Are there programs to get rid of exiting lagoons? Yes.]

[Are we funding any anaerobic digestive facilities?? Not been a popular practice. We provided no funding this year for this, but Kulig can't say if we have had any applications, but can show what we have had contracts on this practice over the past 4

	<p>years. The question is do we want to offer all the practices on the spreadsheet. Light orange color-only used for 1-2% of contracts, blue-less than 1% (this is 4 year average). Kulig is asking that the committee give this topic consideration going into 2013. The third column has the option of yes or no; the spreadsheet could be expanded for comments they could be added on the back. This is important feedback that we would like to receive prior to August 13. You may have strong feelings about whether a practice should be offered in 2013.]</p> <p>[What was the number of fencing contracts-the spreadsheet shows 184 contracts? Top five contracts dollar wise.]</p> <p>[What offers greatest benefit, fencing or something like water? We keep our spreadsheets to a minimum amount of material-strictly the amount of practices. Some can't be entered into just as a stand-alone practice, may be part of a practice system.]</p> <p>[Is there a hierarchy or priority of resource concerns in the state? There is a group of four land use categories. Within these there are many resource concerns. Once we have an application there is significant screening process that the field office goes through and there is ranking criteria with local and national questions. National questions are predetermined, state and local questions we have some flexibility. We don't have a list of resource concerns in general terms. The EQIP subcommittee made recommendations for resource concerns. We used these recommendations in our ranking criteria in 2011 and we also used it in 2012.]</p> <p>[Should decrease waste management cost share to 65% instead of 75%. This is something else the committee needs to make recommendations on, whether or not we should change cost share percentages.]</p> <p>[Which practices are top three? Look at volume in individual fiscal years and it can be hard to define. Will send the spreadsheet to the committee to fill out and we will send out the top five practices with the dollar amounts.</p> <p>[Will changes in WHIP make Early Successional Habitat Development a more viable practice in EQIP? We don't know. May want to leave available.]</p> <p>[If a practice is on 1% or 2%, what is the harm in leaving it there? If you take it off, then landowners don't have the opportunity, especially if WHIP is changing. It doesn't seem right to take away the opportunities that are there.]</p> <p>[Many individuals can't remember the 1950s. Right now the water issues we are having are worse. The "association" passed a resolution to try to build more water storage, but it didn't happen. The Clean Water Act is not being addressed. We aren't prioritizing water. We have to save water. We want to work on this. We could work on capturing rain water.]</p>
<p>3. Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Grassland Reserve Program), Farm and Ranch Lands</p>	<p>Harold Deckerd discussed the purpose and emphasis of WRP. The main purpose is to restore, protect, and enhance wetland on eligible private or tribal lands while maximizing wildlife habitat benefits. Emphasis is placed on habitat for migratory birds and other wetland wildlife including threatened/endangered species and species of concern. Application is voluntary.</p> <p>Land Eligibility from 2008 Farm Bill: Land is capable of having wetland hydrology and hydrophytic vegetation restored.</p>

<p>Protection Program (FRPP).</p>	<p>Only private land or land owned by Indian Tribes is eligible. Landowner must provide legal Ingress/Egress to NRCS. Landowner must provide clear title. The eligibility rules may change with the new Farm Bill.</p> <p>Landowner Eligibility: Must own land for 7 years prior to enrollment (there is waver capability), must be compliant with Highly Erodible Land and Wetland with FSA, and compliant with Adjusted Gross Income requirements.</p> <p>Easement and Cost share: There are three WRP enrollment options: Permanent Easements, 30 year Easements, and Restoration Cost Share. 95% of what we enroll is permanent easements.</p> <p>Harold explained how land prices for easements are determined. A map was provided with rate cap determinations for 2012. Market appraisers are hired by our agency. They go in and determine what land is worth. A market analysis is done yearly based on this information. We are changing the map this year-will go from Marion County to St. Louis County-this will be a Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC) area.</p> <p>Reserved Rights Easement-land rights do change. Landowner rights are removed with the exception of five: 1) Right to sell, convey, or transfer land to someone else, but the easement goes with the sale, conveyance, or transfer; 2) Right to control trespass and access; 3) Right to undeveloped recreational uses; 4) Right to sub-surface mineral rights, but NRCS may dictate how minerals are extracted; and 5) Quiet enjoyment.</p> <p>Restoration Techniques: Restore the hydrology and hydric plant conditions that existed prior to current conditions; use of low level berms and water control structures to retain floodwaters and slowly release as floods recede; shallow excavations to mimic wetland features like scours, sloughs, and oxbows; and plant trees and herbaceous plants to maximize seasonal wildlife habitat, or allow natural regeneration to occur if seed source is in close proximity.</p> <p>Prohibitions: Harvesting of crops (can plant food plots for animals), timber harvests, grazing, construction of structures (no buildings), commercial seed production, and surface mining.</p> <p>WRP Past and Now: Initiated in 1992-Missouri was one of nine trial states to initiate programs. Congress has appropriated funding through 2012 to enroll maximum of 3,041,200 acres; currently at 2,500,000 acre. Missouri ranks sixth among states in number of WRP acres and third in number of easements. Missouri statistics: has closed 994 easements covering 140,219 acres [includes WRP and Emergency Watershed Protection Program-Floodplain Easements (EWPP-FPE)]; enrollment goal for 2012 is 4,524 acres. A map was provided that showed 2012 preliminary enrollment by county-of the easements shown, 45% will be enrolled. We have two-30 year easements this year and may have two cost share easements this year.</p> <p>Deckerd discussed the WRP and EWPP-FPW Easements by County map. These easements are historically by rivers. There are 300 in four counties. This is 1/3 of the easements in the state. These counties are Chariton, Carroll, Livingston, and Saline.</p>
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[Why the concentration in these counties? Chariton County has 150 easements. This is a wet area. Rivers drain here. Land doesn't make money by cropping, so it is put into easements. Another individual added that the Wetlands Reserve Enhancement program (WREP) counties that were talked about have a number of rivers that run through them. Because they are so wet, farmlands become basins. These easements are used for migratory birds.

WREP allows conservation partners to apply to address specific issues. After the flood in 2011 the Nature Conservancy had a project to enroll badly damaged lands. Criteria was relaxed to 20% hydric and there was one application in Atchison County with 621 acres.]

MRBI-WREP: There are six state involved: Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Program is designed to solicit landowners with farmland between the flood protection levee and the Mississippi River to convert to bottomland hardwoods. Purpose is to reduce nutrients and sediment to the river. Limited to Mississippi, New Madrid, and Pemiscot Counties. Partnership with the Mississippi River Trust. Application period was May 23-June 18, 2012. Missouri had one application in Mississippi County for 859 acres that ranked low. The leading state for this program is Mississippi.

GRP Program: Similar to WRP. You keep the right to hay property. When GARC is done the grazing value of the land is subtracted. Program rental contract options are 10, 15, and 20 year or permanent easements.

FRPP-Missouri has had limited success with this program. The program provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and rangeland in agricultural uses. USDA partners with state, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements or other interest in land from landowners. USDA provides up to 50% of the fair market easement value of the conservation easement.

Emergency Watershed Program (EWP): We received 29.2M for the April 2011 Flood on the Mississippi River. We had 72 projects, mostly in the bootheel. 900 miles of channels and ditches were cleaned out. We received \$3M for the June 2011 Flood on the Missouri River. This money was for levee repairs and ditch clean outs in NW Missouri.

[GRP land values in Adair and Sullivan County. These are high quality prairies. Why are the land values not comparative to other northern counties?? We hire appraisers to determine land values off of actual sales. We have to base the GARC on market analysis.]

[The landowner still pays taxes when there is an easement? Yes.]

[We grow herbaceous plants on easements? Deckerd said we grow trees and plants.]

[It probably is hard to get FRPP applications because you need a partner to pay the other 50%. We only took two

	applications through. Funding is normally an issue. States that have the state 25% match have active programs.]
4. Waste Permit Rules and Animal Waste Projects	<p>Troy Chockley presented on Animal Waste Operations.</p> <p>Presentation was for the renewal of general permits. New regulations went into effect on August 27, 2012.</p> <p>Permit choices are State No-Discharge General Permit and State National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) General Permit. Difference between the two is discharge from manure storage because of precipitation in excess of the design standard. NPDES Permit: this type of discharge is allowed if your facility has been maintained and operated appropriately. No-Discharge Permit: means no discharge. No rainfall release is allowed. If a discharge occurs, you will be evaluated for enforcement action.</p> <p>NPDES Permit requires submitting a nutrient management plan to DNR and requires public notice of the Land Application Information Form. No-Discharge Permit requires a nutrient management plan be maintained on your farm and no public notice is required.</p> <p>If you have a Dry Litter Operation-all manure roof, a No-Discharge Permit is likely your best option-you will get little benefit from the NPDES Permit. If you have slurry manure operation with all manure storage under a roof-a No-Discharge Permit is likely your best option. Good management is needed to meet no-discharge. With slurry manure operations with open manure storage, precipitation-based overflow is possible. Either permit is a reasonable choice.</p> <p>Lagoon-open manure storage. NPDES permits are designed for this type of operation. If you think that the storage won't discharge you can get a no discharge permit.</p> <p>A current Nutrient Management Plan is needed to renew your permit. The plan is current if it is compliant with the 2009 Missouri Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation Nutrient Management Technical Standard, you have followed your plan, your record keeping is up-to-date, the plan is less than 5 years old, and the expiration date is after February 2013. Any change to the plan requires the permit to be modified.</p> <p>[Municipal Waste-what do we do with this? DNR does have a program for this. A Nutrient Management plan needs to be in place; it is in the regulation. Contact DNR about this. ]</p> <p>[What defines an Animal Feeding Operation that requires a permit? You have wet manure and dry manure operations. The greatest impact is going to be for the poultry industry. The requirements for having a permit went from 100,000 to 125,000 for a wet operation. Hog and cattle operations remain unchanged.]</p>
5. Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)	Dwayne Gelnar presented on CIG. The purpose of CIG is to stimulate the development and adoption of innovation conservation approaches and technologies while leveraging the federal investment in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production. Projects are expected to lead to the transfer of conservation technologies, management systems, and innovative approaches into NRCS technical manuals, guides, and references or to the

private sector. CIG does not fund research projects; projects intended to formulate hypothesis do not qualify. CIG is to apply proven technology which has been shown to work previously. It is a vehicle to stimulate the development and adoption of conservation approaches or technologies that have been studied sufficiently to indicate a likelihood of success. CIG promotes the sharing of skills, knowledge, technologies, and facilities among communities, governments, and other institutions. CIG funds projects targeting innovative on-the-ground conservation, including pilot projects and field demonstrations.

NRCS anticipates that the total state funds available for support of this program in FY12 will be approximately \$150K. Individual grants will not exceed \$50K.

There is a \$1M limit for each national proposal. Missouri had 12 proposals. There will be a lot of money involved. We have not heard which ones will be approved. We allocated EQIP money for this. There were five proposals. We allocated \$150K; a \$75K cap per state program was established nationally. In Missouri the cap was \$50K.

The four review areas for FY12 applications are Energy Conservation, Soil Health, Sustainable and Organic Agriculture, and Invasive Species.

We did receive input from the State Technical Committee on which areas were of importance last year. The State Conservationist used this information in last year's evaluations.

The State Conservationist is asking for guidance again on what the 2013 priorities should be. He would like to know if they should stay the same, should some be added, or should some be removed. You may send an email with what you feel the priorities should be and if you think we should continue this funding. We have gotten good results from this program, but it does take away from cost share.

[Is the ranking list in order when received by the state from NHQ? The national list isn't in order, they are assigned a number. The state office's involvement is when the preproposal is sent to the State Conservationist and he is asked if he supports it. He has supported almost all the proposals; at least the ones from within the state.]

[Are there income and payment limitations for the program? There are some, but there is a waiver for certain entities to the Adjusted Gross Income. Payment limitations apply as well. To Gelnar's knowledge there is no restriction on entities applying for CIG grants.]

[How does this compare to Sustainable Agriculture Research and Agriculture (SARE) grants? There are some differences. CIG takes existing technology and makes it more usable for the general public farmers and ranchers. SARE grants are involved with research grants, education programs, and farmers and ranchers grants that are aimed at research and education. CIG is aimed at researching conservation.]

<p>6. Elimination of Tall Fescue for Missouri's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands</p>	<p>Conservation Federation of Missouri Resolution-Elimination of Tall Fescue from Missouri's Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Grasslands. This resolution came out in March or April of 2012. The topic was taken up by the CRP subcommittee at the same time. Rankings were done in May-after the resolution. First 24 lines of resolution describe the issue and on line 25 the petition starts. Eliminates tall fescue as an acceptable introduced grass for CP1. This was a recommendation by the CRP subcommittee. The mixes that are acceptable in the state are free of fescue. Number 3 is national in scope-a change would have to be made nationally before Missouri could adopt it. Number 1 states no reenrollment would be made on predominately fescue acres unless they were converted to warm season grasses. The State Conservationist asks that you consider this resolution and send comments to NRCS and FSA. Send to Jasper Grant or Allen Powell at FSA.</p> <p>[Comment from group said that the resolution isn't trying to eliminate fescue from the landscape.]</p> <p>[State Technical Committee was supposed to have comments on this. Missouri Farm Bureau is not in support of this. State Technical Subcommittees (CRP and EQIP make recommendations to the State Conservationist. Issues are given to FSA and NRCS. Allen Powell is going to get input before sending out. Not adopted for sign up 43.]</p> <p>[Each state needs to look at this for CRP. There are long term benefits from the yields you can get from native grasses.]</p> <p>[Fescue situation. Missouri Farm Bureau does have an annual meeting. If you want to have quail don't mow down all the blackberries. If not for Johnson grass you wouldn't have feed.]</p> <p>Members were reminded that comments to the State Conservationist and FSA are encouraged.</p> <p>[Release of hay ground. The fescue is gone and native grasses will be our feed. We need to release some of these.]</p>
<p>7. Soil Health/Drought Guidance for Missouri</p>	<p>Dwayne Gelnar presented on Soil Health and the Drought in Missouri.</p> <p>The State Conservationist came from a state that had a strong Soil Health program, North Dakota. 6 to 8 months ago we put together a team to plan how to address this issue in Missouri. We have come up with a plan. The plan includes why Soil Health is important, how we can partner with others, and how to educate ourselves and others. The purpose of this is to accelerate Soil Health in Missouri.</p> <p>We plan to establish a Soil Health Specialist position to educate employees and landowners, enhance Farm Bill programs, establish demonstration plots, and develop Soil Health partnerships. Want to have a lot of interaction with partners.</p> <p>Funding possibilities include EQIP, CSP, and cost share assistance (cover crops and related practices). We have a pilot in Chariton County. Decisions haven't been made, but we are trying to incorporate this into existing programs. Will develop further in 2013. May develop into a national initiative and may have specialized funds.</p>

	<p>[Question about funding? It was explained that there is a possibility of funding through CSP and EQIP, and cost share assistance. The pilot in Chariton County was discussed. The plan is to try to incorporate the program into existing funds. Some funds may be set aside for this, but the main focus is to try incorporating into the existing program. Mark Kulig said the program will develop further into 2013. The decision has not been made by J.R. as to the amount of EQIP funds that will be utilized. It isn't known if this will become a national initiative. We do believe some funds will be available in 2013.]</p> <p>[This will include all the things that the committee has been asking for: Soil Health, Water Quality, Warm Season Grasses, and Wildlife Habitat. This is outstanding.]</p> <p>[Lot of potential for water infiltration, wildlife benefits, and cover crops.]</p> <p>[Member attended Soil Health event and really liked it.]</p> <p>Drought Relief Questions: Frequently Asked Questions handout was provided. Drought is on everyone's mind. There is no quick solution. From comments that have been made at this meeting we need to be working on things to reduce the effects of a drought in the future. Back in July, the State Conservationist wanted to do something and sent out an email to all employees. A webpage was set up through USDA. Focus on sending people to where they can get assistance. Keep in mind that NRCS is not an expert on the drought situation.</p>
8. EQIP Comments	<p>EQIP Questions:</p> <p>[Question on funding for reapplications of crops, application of new crops, and rescheduling of practices. We are seeking funds to reestablish practices that have failed. 85-90% of vegetative practices have failed.]</p> <p>EQIP isn't an emergency program. Landowners must keep this in mind. We are at the end of the year and must work with existing funds. We expect to hear if we will be receiving more funds by Friday of this week of Monday of next week.</p> <p>[What about seeding programs; is there additional money? We would have to go into another agreement with the landowner. Practices may have to be moved to a later date. We just don't have approval for anything.]</p> <p>CSP-we are looking for waivers on impacted activities. There is a schedule and a contract just as with EQIP. If you can't apply the practice within the year there are contract violation issues.</p> <p>[The State Conservationist asked if we should move forward with some of these items that we have flexibility on; we do need to get the State Technical Committee's opinion. There a unanimous yes from the room. The majority of the individuals in the room felt that the State Conservationist should move forward with this. Many feel there is no reason to do seedings if the</p>

	<p>drought continues.]</p> <p>[Is FSA doing the same thing with CRP and Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP)? FSA is asking what they are able to do. BCAP funding was specific funding. The agency is looking at what can be done. With CRP, counties have been told to be flexible, but not supposed to go past 8 years (they are trying to be flexible).]</p> <p>WRP acreage has been released for haying. NRCS appreciates the comments that were received from the State Technical Committee. We took the comments under advisement and opened up this acreage.</p> <p>[Will grass be high in nitrates? Probably. This is being looked at. Nothing specific has been found, but this could be an issue. Cornstalks, green ones, may be high in nitrates. Wait 30 days and have them tested. In St. Clair, cows were fed corn stalks and they died.]</p> <p>[The Missouri University Guide has information on feeding. Multiple extension links are in the handout. Remember to share information with each other. This is very important.]</p> <p>[Crop Residue Issues. Use of cover crops is a good way to get residue back in the field so there aren't compliance issues. If the drought affects cover crops. We do have flexibilities. No Till will suffer through a drought no matter what. The benefits of cover crops are they can be used for supplemental forage and for water quality. Also too much tillage removes nitrogen from the soil. Farmers who usually use cover crops are not seeing as much damage as those that don't use them.]</p>
<p>8. Farm Service Agency (FSA) Report/CRP and Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)</p>	<p>Allen Powell provided the FSA Report. Eddie Joe Hamill has retired. Jasper Grant is the Acting State Executive Director. Expecting the permanent appointment soon.</p> <p>FSA updated the State Technical Committee about CRP SU43 results. Missouri had 99% of the eligible CRP offers approved. Currently there are approximately 100 counties that have been approved for CRP Emergency Haying and Grazing. There is a 25% reduction to the producers' annual payment for Managed hay/graze release and a 10% reduction for Emergency hay/graze release.</p> <p>Over 60 counties have requested approval for the Emergency Conservation Program. A county must be 40% short of normal precipitation over the last 4 months or be designated as D3 on the Drought Monitor in order to be approved. Producers can be eligible for 50% cost share on permanent practices such as well drilling, tanks and permanent water lines or up to 75% on temporary measures such as pumping water into a pond from another water source.</p> <p>FSA thanked all the wildlife organizations for supporting the release of CRP due to the ongoing drought.</p> <p>[What can be done about ponds drying up or any way to improve those that are drying up? This could be addressed through DNR.]</p>

	<p>[Is there any information on emergency livestock programs? Allen Powell will try to get his information. This is part of the Farm Bill. It was suggested that individuals contact their State Representatives and tell them that these programs are needed.]</p>
<p>9. Drought Assistance Program</p>	<p>Drought Assistance Program/Judy Grundler, Missouri Department of Agriculture, and Bill Wilson from DNR/Soil and Water Conservation Program (SWCP). Missouri has a cost share program to provide water to crops and livestock. It is provided through the Department of Agriculture and DNR SWCP. 1407 applications have been approved, 1204 approved. Of the approved applications 1107 were for livestock, 17 for crops. The applications are reviewed by a Technical Review Team, DNR, and the Department of Agriculture.</p> <p>Three handouts were provided to the meeting attendees. The Executive Order providing the funding, Guidance for Implementation, and FAQs. Right now there is a total of \$11.8M. Some of this money will be utilized for longer of mid impact items. Totals haven't been finalized at this time. It hasn't been decided if additional practices will be added. Right now, only working on immediate practices; getting water to livestock and crops. The Executive Order states that it runs through the weekend. Teams have been assigned to help the districts.</p> <p>[How quick is it to get a turnaround on allocations? The maximum is \$150 per acre. Maximum is \$20K per landowner.]</p> <p>[Governor Nixon was in Nodaway and spoke to landowners. He was asked about the 60 day completion date on the contracts. There are only a certain number of approved well drillers. What happens if we can't get a well driller in 60 days? What is the solution? You have the contact and then they can't get there for 45 days, what do you do? There are concerns about the number of well drillers. There have been thoughts on using other states, but there is a concern about licensing. Have been in close contact with the board on this issue. New actions the well drilling board took may be sent out on this issue. A list of permitted drillers is provided to individuals entering into contracts.]</p> <p>[There are issues with the cost list. There has been some discussion with the well drillers about the current cost list and this is being worked on.]</p> <p>[If a person doesn't have cattle, they aren't eligible. If a person is leasing to cattle, they are eligible. It is all about immediate need. If there are no cattle on the land at this time, there isn't an immediate need.]</p> <p>[It is too late for crops; water will not help the corn. Some crops might be helped. Each case should be looked at individually; the current health of the crop should be reviewed.]</p> <p>[Of those applications approved, has there been a mechanical failure? Yes. The ones that are being funded have some sort of watering being done.]</p>

	Forms can be sent electronically. There is an online application, but the individual still has to come to the office to get on the list.
9. Adjournment	<p>Karen Brinkman said that the USDA strives to provide our services fair and equally to all customers. Later this fall there will be meetings on the Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers Claims process.</p> <p>J.R. Flores reminded the committee that he values their input. Comments may be provided until August 13, 2012. The State Conservationist appreciates the professionalism he has seen from all groups during the drought.</p> <p>Meeting adjourned at 12:00pm.</p>

Approved.

J.R. Flores  
State Conservationist