

State Technical Committee Minutes

Richmond, Virginia

July 23, 2013

Wade Biddix, NRCS ASTC-Programs, opened the meeting at 10:04 a.m. He welcomed everyone, introduced himself and asked those in attendance to do the same. Attendees stated names and agencies represented. A sign-up sheet was passed around the room and all were encouraged to pick up hand-outs from the front table.

Attendance: Wade Biddix (NRCS), Jack Bricker (NRCS), Jane Corson-Lassiter (NRCS), Kristen Hughes Evans (Sustainable Chesapeake), Emily Horsley (FSA), Gary Moore (DCR), Ron Wood (NRCS), Betsy Bowles (DEQ), Barbara Bowen (NRCS), Todd Groh (DOF), John H. Parker (VA Pork), Chad Wentz (NRCS), Jim Schroering (VCE), Kelly Liddington (VCE), Dale Gardner (Water Stewardship), Jon Roller (Ecosystem Services), Greg Frey (VSU/VCE), Blaine Delaney (NRCS), Diane Dunaway (NRCS), Sue Ellen Johnson (Piedmont Environmental Council), Maribeth Pettigrew (NRCS Recorder). **Connected via teleconference:** Sarah Richardson (DCR); David Byrd (USFWS); Brian Chandler (National Wild Turkey Federation).

Jack Bricker, NRCS State Conservationist – Opening Comments: Welcomed group. We're in for a "soft landing" to FY-13. It's amazing that we've had one of the biggest years of financial assistance in this time of sequestrations, spending ceiling, etc. However, budget for personnel is down. NRCS in Virginia has fewer employees than in anyone's memory. We would like to give you an update on the new Farm Bill, but we don't have one. It keeps getting shoved aside for issues that are considered to be more pressing. Had hoped there'd be one effective by January 1, but now am not very optimistic about that. Hopefully when the current Farm Bill expires at the end of September, a look will be taken at the payment limitation situation, because that is starting to be a problem with people maxing out their benefits. Right now, *sans* a miracle, there will probably be an extension in September and someone will address the cap issues.

Program Updates:

Emily Horsley– (FSA) – (handout) CRP/CREP – Results of general sign up 45. Over 2,000 acres will be approved. General sign up is different than CREP – there is a cut off for the number of offers and acres approved for contracts. Now we are working on whether the offers will be accepted or denied. Goal is to have all the offers in place by 9/15. Contracts will be in place hopefully by Oct. 1, 2013. Meanwhile CREP and continuous CRP are up in the air until new Farm Bill either happens or the extension is made – probably will be a shut down on sign up period again because of that.

Gary Moore – (DCR) – There is a draft policy circulating with the SWCD Board – no funding for CREP in that draft policy. There will be state funding to meet the commitments that have already been made.

Question – is there money in CREP for maintenance? Emily said yes there is. Dale said there is a maintenance incentive included in their yearly allowance. It is 50% cost share. Gary said the person may need to go back in and reapply if their contract has been in place for a while; it may not have been part of initial contract.

Jane Corson-Lassiter and Kristin Hughes Evans – Manure to Energy Projects – PowerPoint Presentation (handout) As the PowerPoint was presented, there were some questions and answers. The bottom line of the presentation was that CIG grants do try to develop new technologies; this particular one shows merit.

Diane Dunaway – (NRCS) – Easements – (Handout) – There are 26 currently going through the acquisition process. Blaine and Diane conducted an easement training workshop in Area I that went well. An area-wide market analysis is being conducted so Geographic Area Rate Caps can be established.

Ron Wood – (NRCS) - Organic/WHIP/EQIP/CSP – Reviewed EQIP budget allocation; clarified that the fund codes in yellow cannot be reallocated for other purposes. It has been a busy year with lots of money out.

Wade commented that the applications remaining indicate that we were able to fund most of the applications that came in. Not sure about percentage, but we do not have too much of a backlog to roll over into next year. The backlog showing will actually be reduced a bit more as things are closed out for the year.

Ron then reviewed CBWI monies; then on to the Golden Winged Warbler WHIP handout. He also reviewed handout on CSP applications. Normally we are already through this process with CSP; field staff is currently out doing the planning. DOF foresters are assisting; this should be completed soon.

FY13 Contracts “snapshot” on the handout shows the top 10 practices for each area by dollars obligated and also by practice count. It gives an idea of where practices are used geographically. Clarification: Area IV – on 590 – nutrient management, not cover crop.

Wade – Edge of Field Monitoring Request for Proposals sent out in the Smith Creek Watershed area of the Shenandoah Valley but we did not get any applications. Think we will probably try this again next year. Nationwide, this came out late and does require a lot of monitoring and data collection – didn’t have time to really get this going. Out of the 6 Bay states, there were NO applicants this year, but it does have potential for next year; has a 9 year potential practice period. There was limited interest because there was not a lot of information available. It does require a partnership relationship. Blaine commented the applications that did come in were from the areas of the country that have already established those partnerships and done this in the past. Only the Smith Creek Watershed area of Virginia is eligible.

Dale noted that he and Libby had talked about getting something going, but the time issue was a problem. They liked the project, but it had some problems i.e. tax liabilities to farmers that need to be resolved.

State CIG – (NRCS) – Blaine Delaney – We received 16 proposals; that’s the most we’ve ever got. Most of them were focused on the soil health initiative. Of the 16, nine were selected. Of those 9, seven submitted final proposals. The review group meets this afternoon. Over \$406,000 requested. Group will make recommendations today. Aiming for commitments made with a September 1st obligation deadline date.

Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Floodplain Easements – (NRCS) – Blaine Delaney – this is a lesser known program associated with EWP. This is the first sign up that we have had in years. Hurricane Sandy was the “trigger” for opening these programs up – designed to help local governments and states gradually get homes out of the floodplain so damages in the future can be minimized. Virginia has 25 counties that are eligible. Applicants have to prove that Hurricane Sandy caused damages, so Virginia may or may not have legitimate applicants. NHQ has the final word on whether applicants are “eligible”. Structures would have to be relocated – program pays for that. If there are residential properties – local jurisdictions would have to be sponsors and get involved and would have to purchase the remaining value of the residential lots after NRCS purchases the floodplain easement. Sign up is open through September 2nd. NRCS does kick in about 75% - a substantial amount – ag land does not have to have a county sponsor, but if there are a series of homes and the area is residential, local sponsor or county would have to take possession of that land and be the partner to work with NRCS.

CBWI Accomplishment Report for FY12 - Virginia is doing a great job in its CBWI efforts.

Virginia is also the only state in the country that meets the standard for Farm Bill contract administration – the only state with no deficiencies identified by NHQ performance monitoring.

Wade introduced a handout summarizing the contracts for FY13 (active and completed contracts), then reviewed data, money obligated and amounts paid out. Good conservation is being rewarded and going out into the economy. Funding goes up – our staffing is limited, but we are a “can-do” agency. With partnerships, we are providing things that are helpful to the farmers. Wade offered kudos to the people who have brought the numbers to where they are. Seeing the improvements that are happening makes us very proud.

Handout on FY-14 Program Issues – between now and the beginning of FY14, there will be a lot of staff and committee work to put these program offerings together. We have to be flexible to adjust to whatever changes will come with the new Farm Bill and be ready for that.

A committee made up of area and field people came up with the goals on this handout. To have an application deadline during the 1st quarter is the goal – there are dates on the handout for the sign up periods. The handout also includes training dates for field staff. This is the schedule we're working toward. Specific people are designated to work with STC subcommittees. We welcome anyone on the STC to volunteer to work on any of these subcommittees with us.

Next handout – Farm Bill handbook changes – Wade showed the group the FY-13 Farm Bill Handbook that was put together. Once a program year has started, it is hard to make changes. They have put together a list of needed changes for next year. Also there is a list of potential changes that are being considered and evaluated.

Item 2 - There is a continuous improvement project in place to try to solve some of the ranking issues – Jessie Howard, DC in Bedford, is chair. She was to be here today but injured ankle. Chad talked about the committee and how they are trying to streamline the ranking process. They will be meeting to try to put something together by the next STC, and hopefully Jessie will be here then and can report. (This is an improvement project that has been suggested by NHQ – it is not just VA that needs this focus. Jessie is in a leadership program and is involved at a national level – trying to address all the resource concerns across the state in a fair and equitable way.)

The handout also includes other ideas that could be implemented in FY-14. These items came out of a Programs Committee meeting last week – they are fairly minor tweaks that could make things go more smoothly. These are ideas to consider and some will be fleshed out in various committees over the next couple of months.

Local Work Groups – handout – Wade explained that we have consolidated the information that we got back from the Local Work Group meetings. We received comments from 30-35 SWCD districts. Wade encouraged the group to read through the entire handout. Some of these issues will be addressed in subcommittees.

Wade encouraged STC to contact him or Maribeth or the subcommittee leaders to participate in the subcommittees. If we don't hear from you, we will be contacting you. We need your input.

Wade opened it up – do you see anything else that needs to be addressed in these standing committees? Kelly Leddinger made a comment about the issue of abandoned wells and wondered if there is a way to provide a venue to address this issue. Wade wondered about interest and data that might be available. Betsy Bowles said they might have some data. Wade said we have a decommissioning of wells program, but hasn't been offered on EQIP he doesn't think. That is something that can be put on the table and considered.

Gary Moore said he's had some inquiries about nitrogen application to sorghum crops – leakage issues. TAC is going to be looking at that. Application on corn but don't have info on sorghum.

John Parker made a comment about the potential for adding freezer units for handling animal mortality – said this is successfully being done in North Carolina, and is very interesting to the swine industry too. It is a disease prevention issue. He would like to know what happens with this particular issue – to have pick-up available from only one vendor is limiting the area to offer the practice. He asked if this practice is just available for people with no animal mortality composting now? What would be the advantage of adding it to existing facilities? Wade responded that right now, we are leaning toward having it available only to someone with no existing facilities. Clarification: it is part of practice 316 - Animal Mortality Facility.

Jon Roller noted that some data on wells might be available from the Virginia Department of Health.

Betsy noted that subcommittees were divided a bit differently in years past and wondered if we are back to dividing subcommittees by programs. Wade noted that with the new Farm Bill pending and since we are in the last year of the existing Farm Bill, it seems more efficient to keep it program related for now. We had talked about issue related committees in the past, but right now, the programs offerings are the focus. Betsy pointed out that because of that, people with interest in certain issues might need to be on multiple committees to address those issues on all programs.

Agency Updates:

Betsy Bowles – (DEQ) – Most of you are probably familiar with the amendment to the CAFO rule. We are moving forward with making statewide changes to the CAFO rule to conform to changes made by EPA. It's currently in the Governor's office. Once it is signed, they are hoping general permit regulations will be ready for use by March of next year. Hoping to have all of these actions come together. Moving forward with small animal feeding operations strategy; seems to be going pretty well. Mentioned wanting to get in on the agenda for Area JED training – Wade told her to let us know when she wants to be on the agenda.

Gary Moore – (DCR) – mentioned draft Virginia Cost-Share Program changes – noted that there is a lot of resistance to some allocations policy. It is still in process as they are trying to deal with some issues. SWCD allocations will go out when policy is finalized. He is already in the process of editing the BMP Cost-Share Manual. He commented that they are behind schedule. Training is normally in June – they are aiming for August this year with the delays. They are really in catch-up mode because of time delays with looking at policies and making changes. SWC Board meeting is this week. Most issues have been addressed. Hoping current draft will be successful. Manual will have to get out to the printer as modifications are approved. Policy document has to be authorized first.

Please note: The newly named DCR - Division of Non-Point Pollution Prevention is located at 600 E. Main 4th Floor, Richmond, VA 23219 – new location and new name.

Barbara Bowen – NRCS - Wade introduced her – she is going to be the point person in terms of public affairs to work with other agencies, so she will be attending STC from now on.

Todd Groh – (DOF) – on forestry side – new money is coming through; about \$1.2 million has been distributed. Distribution channels are different; it's now through work units. The money is basically already obligated. As far as tree planting and release, we are making sure trees grow well. State of VA is hosting the National Association of State Foresters on Sept. 23-26. A lot of effort is going into planning for that national meeting.

DOF is in the process of reorganizing. A lot of existing buildings are being sold. Contacting them could be an issue, but the website will be the most efficient way to ensure contact. Website is organized by counties. The employees do have their cell phones with them at all times.

Jim Schoering – (VCE) – All the rain is definitely affecting the work of VCE. We are doing a lot of scouting for bugs; there is still unharvested wheat in Hanover County

Kelly Liddington – (VCE) – *Richmond County*- first time attending; he introduced himself and noted that he is happy to help with efforts.

Sue Ellen Johnson – discussed management changes.

Greg Frey – (VSU/VCE) – VSU is just now beginning to explore a Forestry degree or minor program; they have put together an advisory committee to set up program. Jack was able to come to the meeting. They appreciate the support. Right now, they are looking at how to put together a program. They have General Assembly approval to hire a wildlife support person at VSU; no news as to when that will happen. Also, Greg is working with VCE, VT and NRCS specialists training on silvopasture. Will be doing 2 trainings in September; hoping NRCS field personnel, as well as other natural resources professionals will participate. Sept. 10th and 11th – the 10th will be in the Valley and the 11th will be in Keysville in Charlotte County.

Jack thanked everyone for coming today and summarized again our hopes for the new Farm Bill. He stated that he has been impressed by the ideas to improve the process that have come out of this meeting. His ultimate goal is for one overall ranking process.

Wade Biddix – (NRCS) – adjourned the meeting at 12:15. The next meeting is scheduled for September 24, 2013, at 10 a.m.

State Technical Committee
Agenda

July, 2013 - 10:00 a.m.
NRCS State Office Conference Room

Welcome and Opening Remarks	NRCS - Bricker
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP & CREP)	FSA - Horsley DCR - Moore
Manure to Energy Projects	Hughes-Evans Corson-Lassiter
FY-13 Status of Program Funding Easements EQIP, CBWI, CSP and WHIP Edge of Field Monitoring State CIG	NRCS - Dunaway NRCS - Wood NRCS - Biddix NRCS - Delaney
EWP Floodplain Easements	NRCS - Delaney
Continuous Improvement Project – Ranking Tools	NRCS - Wentz
FY-14 Program Offerings Key Items From Local Work Group Feedback NRCS Programs Committee State Technical Committee/Subcommittees	NRCS – Biddix
Agency Updates	All



Next Meeting –September 24, 2013



USDA-NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant Program July 2013 Update

On-farm demonstration of energy generation and phosphorus recycling as an alternative to land application of poultry litter

Organization: Eastern Shore Resource Conservation and Development Council

Project Partners: Farm Pilot Project Coordination, Inc., VA Department of Conservation and Recreation, VA Department of Agriculture, VA Tech Eastern Shore Agricultural Research and Extension Center, Wayne Combustion Global ReFuel, Farmer Glenn Rodes, and Cargill with additional project support and partnerships through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation *Farm Manure to Energy Initiative* (separate fact sheet)

Grant Award: \$421,650

Matching Funds: \$443,000

Project Description

The Eastern Shore RC&D Council is working with several partners to advance innovative farm-scale thermochemical conversion systems that can extract the energy from poultry litter and convert it to heat and /or electricity.

With project funding and significant cost share contributions by technology vendors, farmers and other state and regional partners, the Eastern Shore RC&D has targeted two opportunities to demonstrate innovation and learn how new technologies using poultry litter as a renewable, carbon-neutral fuel can benefit their local farmers, support a viable poultry industry and reduce nutrient loading to the Chesapeake Bay.



Goals and Outcomes

1. Optimization of the first on-farm system in the U.S. using poultry litter to generate grid-connected electricity through thermochemical conversion (FPPC project in Cheraw, SC).
2. Installation of a cost-effective thermochemical conversion system that uses poultry litter to heat a Shenandoah Valley of Virginia turkey production house. This system will also track how animal waste nutrients can be effectively removed from threatened watersheds via the thermochemical conversion process.
3. Demonstration of the fertilizer value in the phosphorus-rich ash co-product and its potential markets.
4. Outreach to Virginia farmers about these new technologies and an unbiased evaluation of technical, environmental and economic performance.

Status

In Cheraw, SC work is ongoing with the engineering and design changes required to optimize system performance. The current installation includes a BGP gasifier rated for a feed rate of 300 lbs. poultry litter per hour, connected through a Cain heat exchanger to an Electratherm Organic Rankine Cycle 30-50 kwe generator. Performance of the gasifier is being optimized based on lessons learned in operating the unit on the South Carolina farm and from operation of a much larger system running in Colorado that produces steam from cattle feed lot manure to flake animal feed.



In Port Republic, VA a Global ReFuel Poultry Litter Furnace© was installed in March 2013 on the Riverhill turkey farm in the Shenandoah Valley. The unit processes the poultry litter (180 lbs/hr) to produce heat for the poultry production house. Located on the brooder house, where the young turkeys require a week of 90°+ temperature, this system has been operated over two flock cycles and has demonstrated its capabilities to run turkey litter as a fuel and generate forced hot air for production house heating. Data collection on performance and return on investment are ongoing over the coming year.

Ash Research by VA Tech researchers is ongoing with data collection on ash constituents and fertility characteristics. Two years of crop studies have been conducted through field trials on tomatoes grown under plastic mulch. Field trials in grain crops are underway in 2013.



Lessons Learned

- Project partners understand that the experience and lessons learned from showcase installations will promote adoption if performance data is objectively documented and effectively shared.
- Technologies are in varying stages of commercialization and readiness for the marketplace.
- Farmers are interested in alternative, farm-produced energy options.
- Farmers and policy makers support new programs and opportunities to improve manure nutrient management for environmental benefits through proven solutions.
- Policy makers are gaining better understanding of incentives and pathways to promote sustainable agricultural systems.

For more information, contact:

Sara Reiter, Projects Director, Eastern Shore RC&D
esred.sara@gmail.com

Chesapeake Bay Watershed *Farm Manure to Energy Initiative*

NFWF-sponsored partnership project supported by funding from:

- NRCS Conservation Innovation Grants program
- EPA-sponsored Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Program
- Bay Funders Network

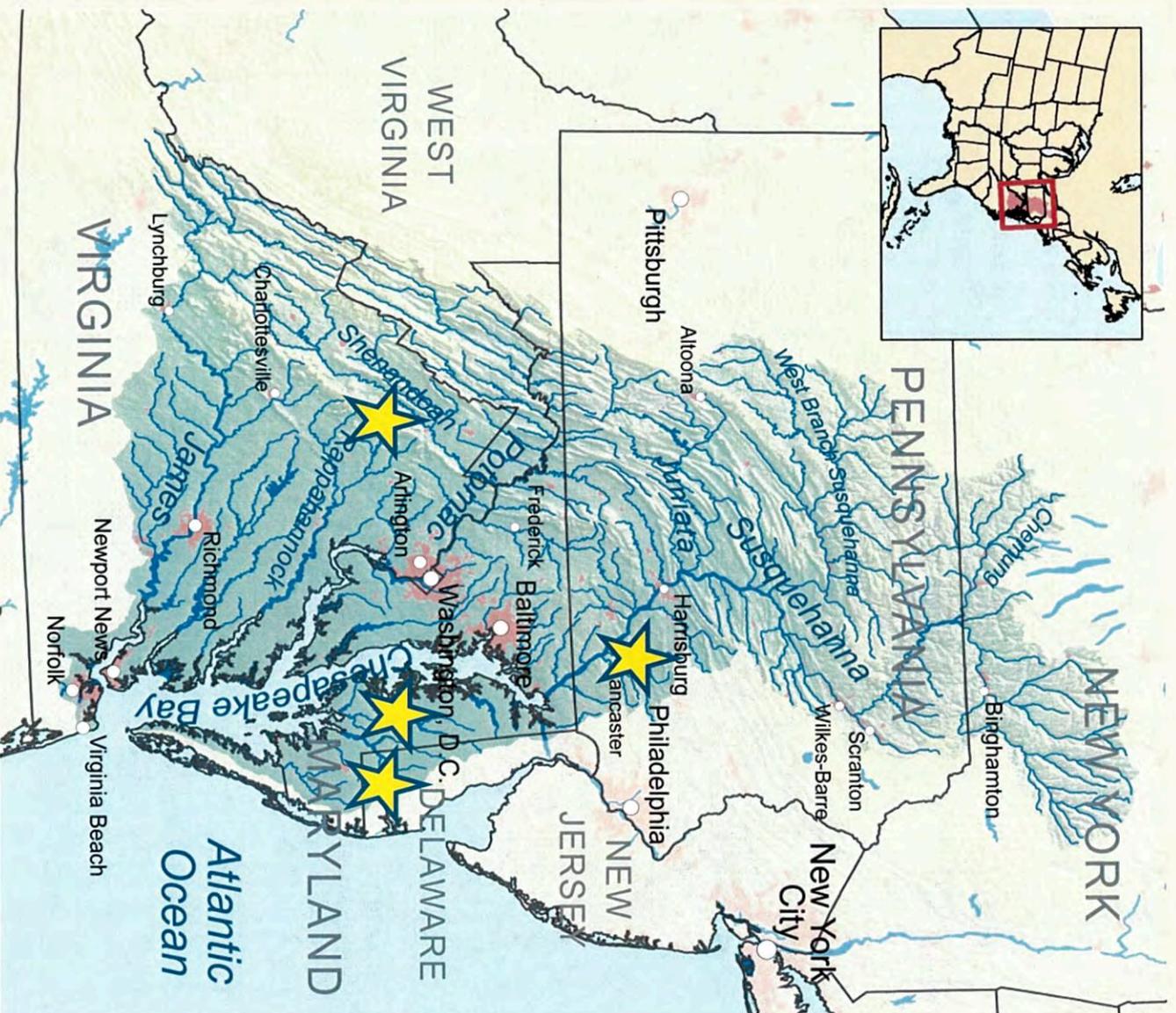
Kristen Hughes Evans – Sustainable Chesapeake

Jane Corson-Lassiter – NRCS IPA to Farm Pilot Project Coordination, Inc.

Eastern Shore RC&D 2011 CIG

*On-farm Demonstration of Energy Generation
and Phosphorus Recycling as an Alternative
to Land Application of Poultry Litter*

- RC&D collaboration with Farm Pilot Project Coordination, Inc.



Farm Manure to Energy Initiative

- 3-4 demonstrations in high priority phosphorus and nitrogen yielding areas of the Chesapeake Bay
- Showcase different technologies
 - 1) farm scale
 - 2) technically feasible
 - 3) produce heat and/or electricity
 - 4) provide a pathway to remove nutrients



RC&D CIG –original scope:

- Implement a poultry litter to grid-connected electricity system on 11-house poultry farm in Melfa, VA
- (version 2.0 of an FPPC system in Cheraw, SC)
 - BGP gasifier to process 600 lbs/hr
 - Organic Rankine Cycle 50kwe power generation



Cheraw South Carolina system: Grid connected generating 3-phase power.

- BGP gasifer rated for 300 lbs/hr poultry litter input
- Cain Heat Exchanger
- Electratherm 30-50 kwe generator

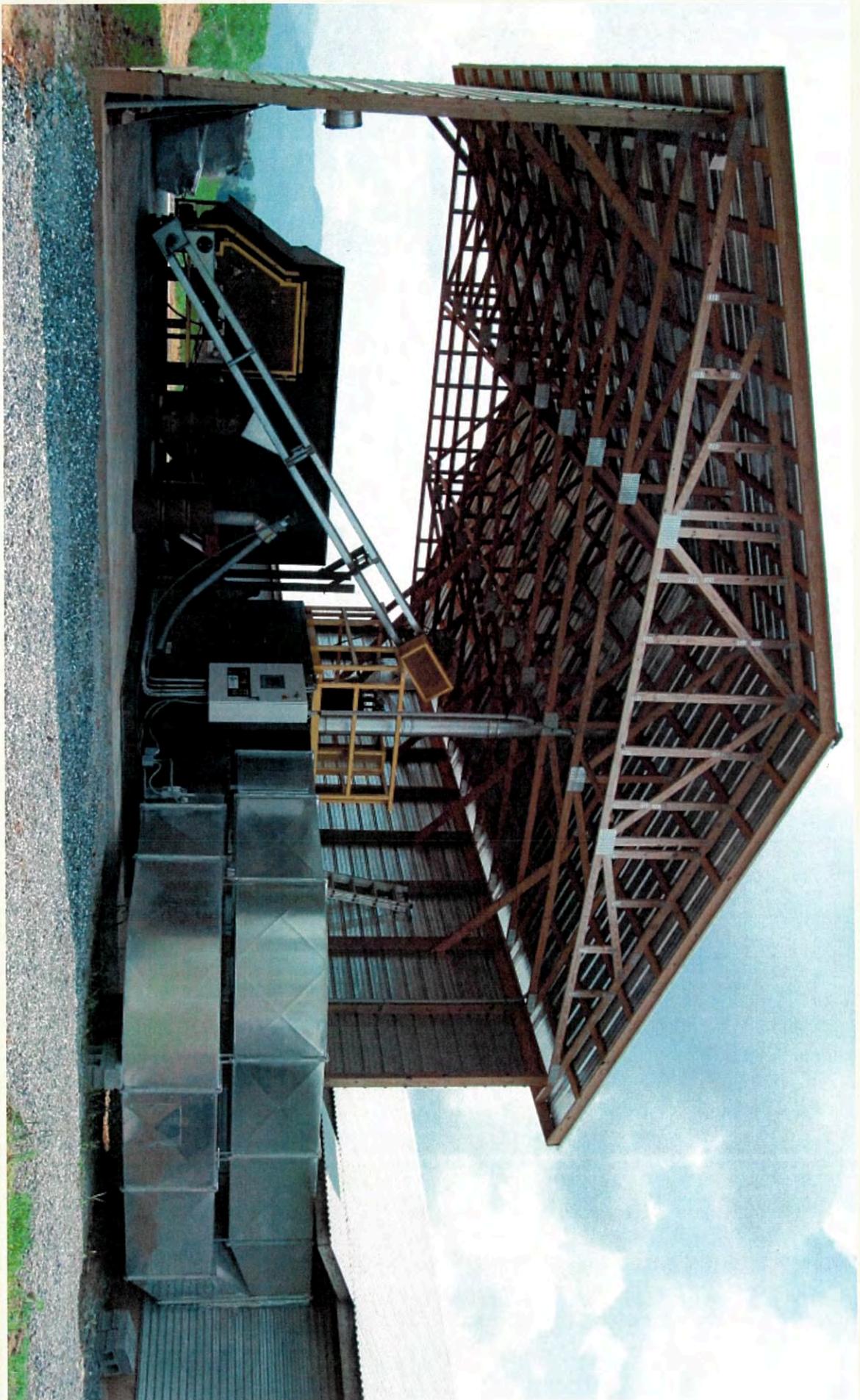
Current Status of the Eastern Shore RC&D CIG:

A rescope was necessary –

1. Optimize performance on SC version 1.0 system
2. Install a litter to energy technology demonstration in VA.



- RC&D's celebrity farmer – Glenn Rodes in Port Republic, VA



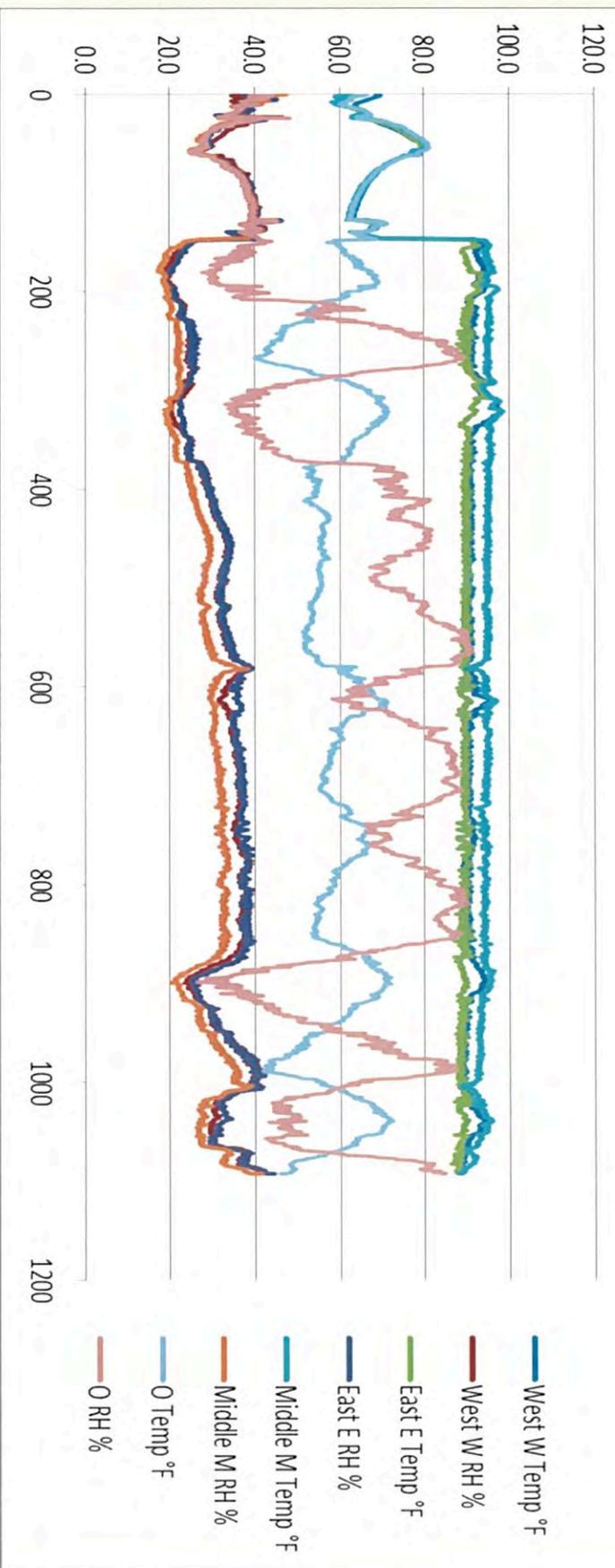
Port Republic, VA system: Forced hot air litter furnace.

- 180 lbs/hr poultry litter input – sufficient Btu's for 1 to 2 house heating

Temperature and Relative Humidity Data --captured by ChoreTime HP1 Use Controller, Glenn Rodes Turkey Brooder House

Flock Placement was on April 26. Ambient outdoor temperatures ranged from 40° to 80° F.

Temp and RH% 4/25 to 5/2



this data was collected by our dataloggers not ChoreTime.

pburnette, 7/8/2013



Ash Study conducted by VA Tech

-combines funding from both projects

- TC conversion processes concentrate poultry litter nutrients

- Ash and Biochar

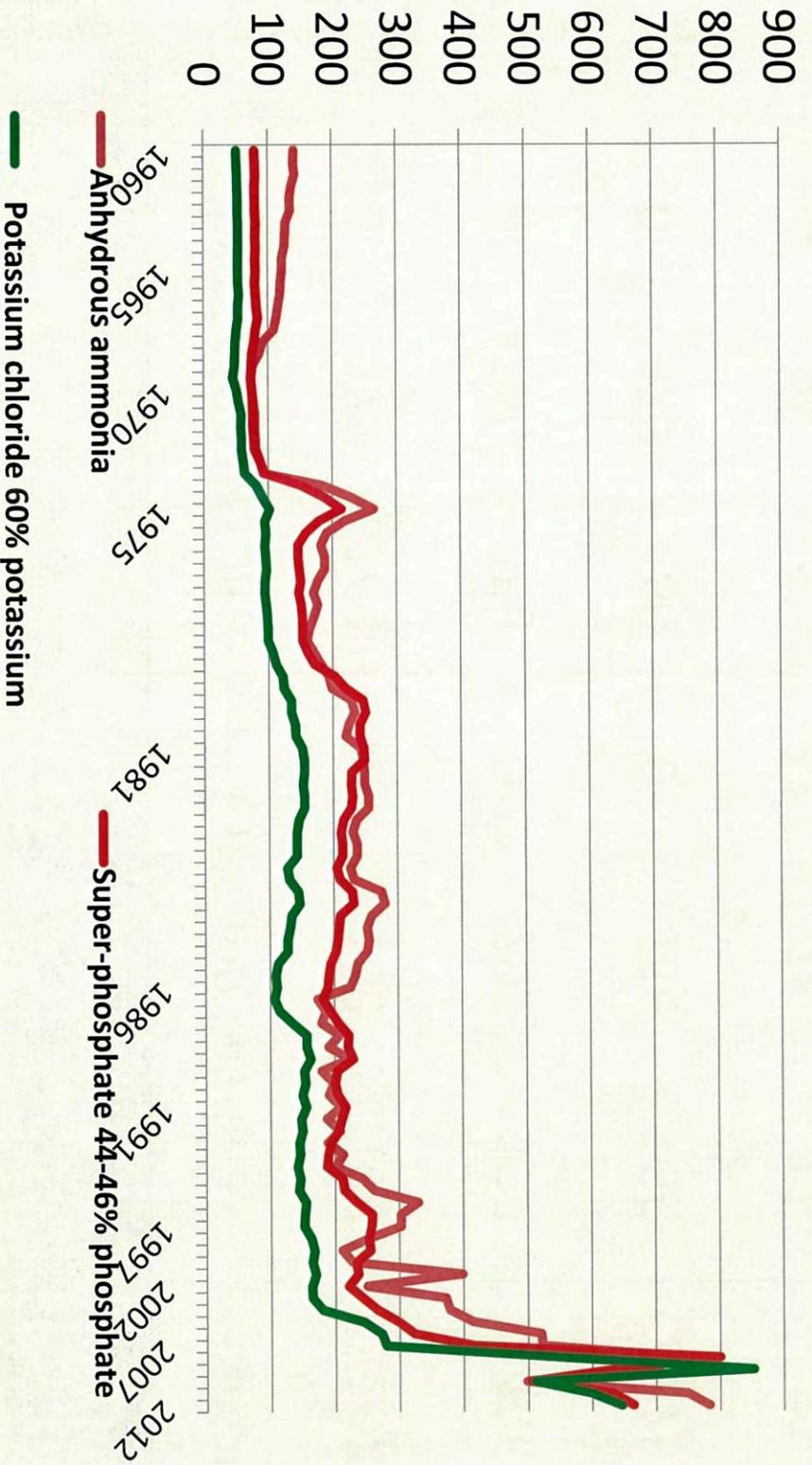
The Ash Study

- Demonstrate ash fertilizer value
- Reformulate the biochar or ash into acceptable forms for the end-user.

Fertilizer Values

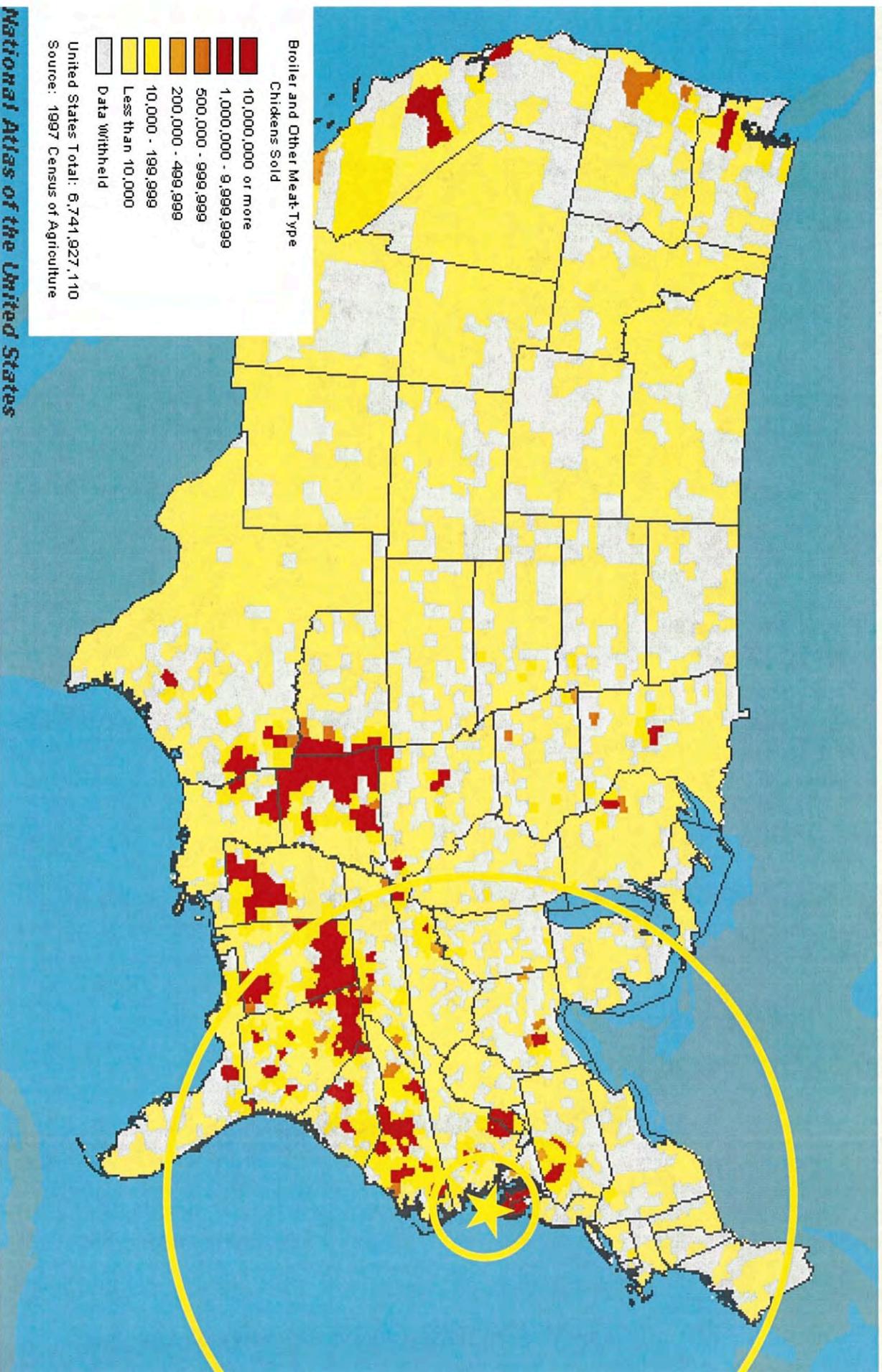
	N	P ₂ O ₅	K ₂ O	N	P ₂ O ₅	K ₂ O	Value
	--lbs per ton "as-is"--			---\$ per ton "as-is"---			--\$/ton--
Ash1 0-14-13	0	277	260	0	160	107	267
Ash2 0-18-24	0	360	480	0	209	197	406
Ash3 0-16-23	0	320	460	0	186	189	375
PL 3-2-3	64	48	53	32	28	22	82
Cost/lb.	\$0.50	\$0.58	\$0.41				

Average U.S. Fertilizer Price (Dollars per ton)



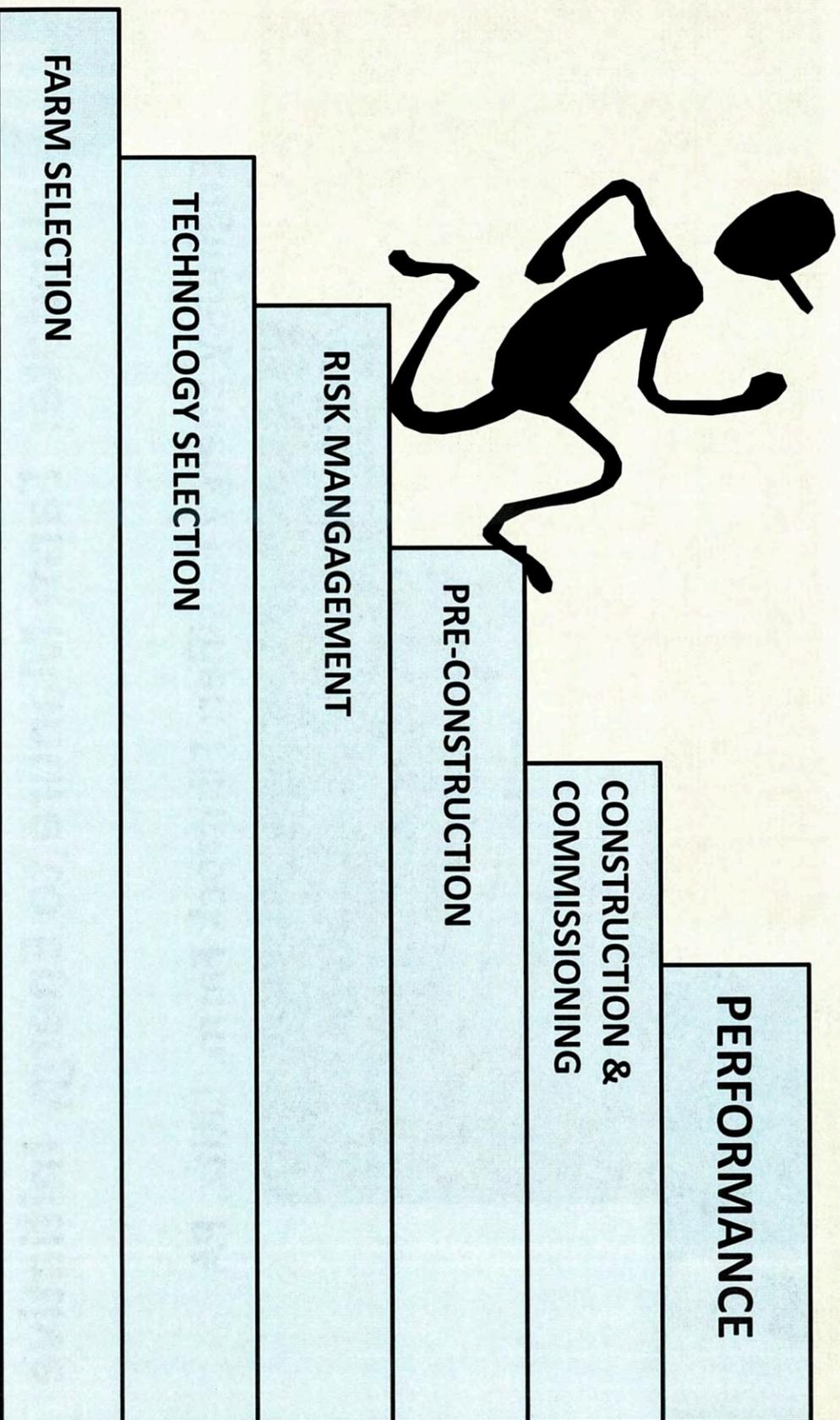
From: USDA ERS Average Fertilizer prices of selected fertilizers, 1960-2012 in dollars per ton

Ship "Back" the Nutrients





Demonstration Implementation Pathway





Update: Farm Manure to Energy Initiative

Engenuity Energy Gasifier: Flintrock Farm, Lititz, PA





Update: Farm Manure to Energy Initiative

Wayne Combustion: Terra Blue Hen Farm, Delmar, De





Update: Farm Manure to Energy Initiative

Proposed Biomass Heating Solutions Ltd.
Project at Riverbank Farm





Update: Farm Manure to Energy Initiative

Next Steps

- 2 additional Wayne Combustion units - one in PA and one in WVA;
- Focus MD Delmarva efforts on electricity;
- Air emissions testing late summer/fall;
- Performance monitoring this fall/winter/spring;
- Training and field days after installation.



Insights for On-Farm Poultry Litter to Energy Projects

- There are technologies available but experience using poultry litter as fuel is critical.
- Vendor qualifications and commitment to project (financial and technical) is key.
- Whole system approach – thermochemical system compatible with heat/electricity system.



Insights for On-Farm Poultry Litter to Energy Projects

- Heat is lower risk compared to electricity. Heat via hot water (vs. forced air) is preferred. Electricity may be limited to proximity to 3-phase power supply.
- Upfront investment in management to reduce risks (vetting technologies, system design, air emissions performance, contract negotiation, etc.);
- Long-term performance data not available.

Easements, General

- 26 easements are in the acquisition process.
- Emergency Watershed Protection Program – Floodplain Easements (FPE) funding is available to selected counties impacted by Hurricane Sandy; applications being accepted through 9/2/13.
- Easement training workshop was conducted by NRCS staff in Area 1 in July.

FRPP :: Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program

- 12 FRPP easements are in the acquisition process, with 8 partners, total 2,054 acres.
- 2 new: For the FY-13 allocation of \$3,436,976, we received two applications totaling \$1,625,000; this leaves an unspent balance of \$1,811,976.
- Partner entities/holders' annual monitoring is on-going.

GRP :: Grassland Reserve Program

- 2 GRP easements are in the acquisition process, total 181 acres.
- We received total FY-13 allocation of \$24,000 for two GRP Rentals.
- No new easements: No funds were allocated to Virginia for GRP Easements.
- NRCS annual monitoring is finishing up on all easements.
- Resurveying with re-signing/posting is being done as needed where signage is missing.

WRP :: Wetlands Reserve Program

- 12 WRP easements are in the acquisition process, total 365 acres.
- 2 new WRP applications will likely move forward into the acquisition phase. Eight applications were received and reviewed, 3 moved forward with due diligence; Environmental Database Searches done and approved; title searches are underway; survey estimates being prepared; Agreements to go out to applicants in August.
- Considering all FY-13 allocations, we received \$1.2 M:
 - \$500,000 for new easement acquisitions, and
 - \$700,000 for restoration and monitoring on existing easements.
- 15 restorations are in the planning process or underway; funds are being obligated for easements that will soon close.
- NRCS annual monitoring is finishing up on all easements.
- Resurveying with re-signing/posting is being done as needed where signage is missing. 5 resurveys are already completed and additional resurveys are being contracted.

FY - 13 EQIP Budget Allocation - 7/22/13

Fund Code	Account Name	Allocated	# of Contracts	Contract Approval	# of Preapproved Applications	Preapproved	Funds Remaining	Applications Remaining			Funding Request
								Eligible	Pending	Total	
76F 51	Virginia	\$16,809,973.00	842	\$14,939,999.96	29	\$878,667.35	\$991,305.69	52	84	136	\$2,261,002.07
76F 51 AQ	Aquaculture	\$89,518.00	17	\$84,517.50	1	\$5,000.00	\$0.50	0	0	0	0
76F 51 BF	Beginning Farmer	\$797,171.55	21	\$797,171.55	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	1	6	7	\$28,000.00
76F 51 CA	CAPS-Conservation Activity Plans	\$197,255.00	104	\$189,850.00	2	\$6,940.00	\$465.00	3	4	7	\$6,365.00
76F 51 CC	Cropland - Christiansburg	\$76,641.00	4	\$76,640.50	0	\$0.00	\$0.50	0	0	0	\$0.00
76F 51 CF	Cropland - Farmville	\$366,249.50	15	\$366,249.50	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	0	0	0	\$0.00
76F 51 CH	Cropland - Harrisonburg	\$267,418.00	13	\$267,378.00	0	\$0.00	\$40.00	2	3	5	\$0.00
76F 51 CS	Cropland - Smithfield	\$1,497,486.50	83	\$1,496,651.00	0	\$0.00	\$835.50	1	3	4	\$2,308.00
76F 51 FS	Forestry - Statewide	\$1,054,524.77	106	\$976,504.77	6	\$78,020.00	\$0.00	4	10	14	\$53,530.00
76F 51 2	FY13 Certified Organic	\$17,851.00	3	\$7,919.00	0	\$0.00	\$9,932.00	1	1	1	\$166,727.00
76F 51 4	FY13 On-Farm Energy	\$508,268.10	95	\$508,267.30	0	\$0.00	\$0.80	2	3	5	\$1,860.00
76F 51 3	FY13 Organic Transition	\$57,112.00	7	\$47,164.42	0	\$0.00	\$9,947.58	0	0	0	\$0.00
76F 51 5	FY13 Seasonal High Tunnels	\$545,000.00	94	\$537,224.75	1	\$6,316.20	\$1,459.05	1	5	6	\$12,637.20
76F 51 GG	Greenhouse Gas Project	\$1,000,000.00	6	\$439,296.00	2	\$318,000.00	\$242,704.00	0	0	0	\$0.00
76F 51 IW	Irrigation Water Management	\$133,957.00	13	\$133,957.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	0	1	1	\$0.00
76F 51 AC	Livestock in Confinement - Christiansburg	\$1,629,584.00	13	\$1,629,584.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	16	5	21	\$1,563,951.00
76F 51 AF	Livestock in Confinement - Farmville	\$1,095,453.00	10	\$998,935.00	1	\$21,850.00	\$74,668.00	0	2	2	\$45,100.00
76F 51 AH	Livestock in Confinement - Harrisonburg	\$686,946.58	16	\$597,973.00	1	\$73,494.20	\$15,479.38	11	5	16	\$251,724.87
76F 51 AS	Livestock in Confinement - Smithfield	\$46,530.00	4	\$46,530.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	1	0	1	\$20,000.00
76F 51 LP	Long Leaf Pine Initiative	\$206,669.00	5	\$206,669.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	0	0	0	\$0.00
76F 51 FM	NWQI - Fifteen Mile Creek	\$225,318.00	1	\$79,379.00	1	\$110,955.00	\$34,984.00	0	0	0	\$0.00
76F 51 MR	NWQI - Smith Creek - Mountain Run	\$225,318.00	2	\$90,730.00	1	\$83,968.00	\$50,620.00	0	0	0	\$0.00
76F 51 WB	NWQI - Smith Creek - War Branch	\$225,318.00	3	\$67,531.00	3	\$71,268.00	\$86,519.00	0	0	0	\$0.00
76F 51 PC	Pasture - Christiansburg	\$1,620,758.25	42	\$1,618,227.15	0	\$0.00	\$2,531.10	3	3	6	\$56,305.00
76F 51 PF	Pasture - Farmville	\$1,089,768.70	42	\$1,083,551.70	0	\$0.00	\$6,217.00	1	1	2	\$49,400.00
76F 51 PH	Pasture - Harrisonburg	\$386,916.95	13	\$340,766.00	4	\$32,590.95	\$13,560.00	2	10	12	\$0.00
76F 51 PS	Pasture - Smithfield	\$61,170.00	5	\$61,170.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	1	1	2	\$0.00
76F 51 SD	Socially Disadvantaged	\$864,793.00	9	\$864,793.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	0	0	0	\$0.00
76F 51 CG	State CIG	\$406,641.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	\$406,641.00	0	0	0	\$0.00
76F 51 SF	StrikeForce	\$642,754.00	21	\$607,698.00	3	\$26,500.00	\$8,556.00	0	0	0	\$0.00
76F 51 HA	Wildlife - Aquatic Wildlife Habitat Creation	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	0	1	1	\$0.00
76F 51 HM	Wildlife - Habitat Maintenance	\$116,245.10	18	\$104,595.10	1	\$11,650.00	\$0.00	2	1	3	\$3,094.00
76F 51 HC	Wildlife - Upland Wildlife Habitat Creation	\$566,828.49	59	\$513,074.59	2	\$32,115.00	\$21,638.90	0	5	5	\$0.00
76F 51 13952	FY13 EQIP Reserve	\$100,137.56	0	\$100,002.13	0	\$0.00	\$135.43	0	0	0	\$0.00
	Balance Available	\$4,370.95	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	\$4,370.95	0	0	0	\$0.00
No Fund Code									15	15	
	Totals	\$16,809,973.00	842	\$14,939,999.96	29	\$878,667.35	\$991,305.69	52	84	136	\$2,261,002.07
Funds we cannot move to other accounts											

FY - 13 CBWI Budget Allocation - 7/22/13

Fund Code	Account Name	Allocated	# of Contracts	Contract Approval	# of Preapproved Applications	Preapproved	Funds Remaining	Applications Remaining			Funding Request
								Eligible	Pending	Total	
97F 51	Virginia	\$8,967,000.00	292	\$8,053,667.10	16	\$729,238.19	\$184,094.71	17	32	52	\$442,089.59
97F 51 AB	CBWI - Animals in Confinement	\$3,118,822.29	27	\$2,581,621.50	4	\$415,124.59	\$122,076.20	12	7	22	\$357,137.89
97F 51 CB	CBWI - Cropland	\$2,590,991.51	149	\$2,408,938.00	3	\$130,517.00	\$51,536.51	1	4	5	\$30,000.00
97F 51 FC	Forestry CCPI	\$167,000.00	11	\$162,888.00	0	\$0.00	\$4,112.00	1	10	11	\$30,970.00
97F 51 NF	CBWI - New Farmer	\$601,184.00	18	\$568,534.00	3	\$32,650.00	\$0.00	1	1	2	\$0.00
97F 51 PB	CBWI - Pasture	\$2,246,581.00	79	\$2,095,634.40	6	\$150,946.60	\$0.00	2	10	12	\$23,981.70
97F 51 SB	CBWI - Socially Disadvantaged	\$223,065.00	8	\$223,065.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	0	0	0	\$0.00
97F 51 TU	Trout Unlimited	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	0	0	0	\$0.00
97F 51 13979	FY13 CBWI Reserve	\$19,356.20	0	\$12,986.20	0	\$0.00	\$6,370.00	0	0	0	\$0.00
	Totals	\$8,967,000.00	292	\$8,053,667.10	16	\$729,238.19	\$184,094.71	17	32	52	\$442,089.59

Funds we cannot move to other accounts

CSP Applications Update

- June 14, 2013 - Ranking Period 2013-1 cutoff date for accepting applications.
- July 12, 2013 - Complete application evaluations and resource inventory in CMT, select applications for funding, and set applications to preapproved status in ProTracts.

Fund Code	# of Applications Preapproved	Total Acres	FY 13 Cost
Agriculture	45	18,777	486,292
Forestry	18	6,124	34,340
Total	63	24,901	\$520,632

- August 30, 2013 - Complete onsite field verification, develop stewardship plan, and complete initial fund obligations.
- September 25, 2013 - Final obligation deadline for reallocated acres.

**Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
Sign-up Progress**

As of 7/23/2013

Chesapeake Bay -	1,901 contracts approved 16,911 acres <i>AVAILABLE ACRES: 8,098</i> <i>Current Allocation: 25,000</i>
Southern Rivers -	2,163 contracts approved 14,255.2 acres <i>AVAILABLE ACRES: 744.8</i> <i>Current Allocation: 15,000</i>
CP-33 - Habitat Buffer For Upland Birds	237 contracts approved 1,695.3 acres <i>AVAILABLE ACRES: 1,804.7</i> <i>Current Allocation: 3,500</i>
CP-36 Longleaf Pines	19 contracts approved 384.9 acres <i>AVAILABLE ACRES: 3,365.1</i> <i>Current Allocation: 3,750</i>
SAFE	
<i>Culpeper Basin Bird Habitat Restoration CP-38A – (Forested Riparian Areas) CP-38E – (Native Grass Areas)</i>	<i>AVAILABLE ACRES: 500</i>
<i>CP-38C Restoration and Management of Eastern Shore Migratory Bird Tree/Shrub Habitat</i>	<i>AVAILABLE ACRES: 300</i>
<i>CP-38C Statewide Tree Planting</i>	<i>AVAILABLE ACRES: 500</i>
<i>CP-38D Longleaf Pine</i>	14 contracts approved 361.5 acres <i>AVAILABLE ACRES: 638.5</i> <i>Current Allocation: 1,000</i>

NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service • 1606 Santa Rosa Road,
Suite 209, Richmond, VA • Phone: (804) 287-1691 • Web: <http://www.va.nrcs.usda.gov>

Contact: Blaine Delaney, 804-287-1663
[Local DC Name], XXX-XXX-XXXX

Easement Program to Aid Virginia Hurricane Sandy Recovery, Prevent Future Flood Damage

Richmond, July 10, 2013 – USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service is providing up to \$124.8 million in Emergency Watershed Protection Program-Floodplain Easement (EWP-FPE) funding to help prevent future damage from significant storm events in Virginia and 11 other states affected by Hurricane Sandy.

The program complements traditional disaster recovery funding and allows NRCS to purchase a permanent easement on lands within floodplains that sustained damage from Sandy and restore the area to a natural condition.

Private lands and those owned by local and state governments are eligible if they are located in a floodplain, not subject to tidal influence or action from storm waves, and meet the following requirement: ***The land must have been damaged by flooding during Hurricane Sandy, which impacted Virginia on October 28-29, 2012.*** Other lands within the floodplain are eligible, provided the lands would contribute to the restoration of flood storage and flow, provide for control of erosion, or improve the practical management of the floodplain easement.

NRCS will accept applications through **September 2, 2013** from residents of these 25 counties affected by this storm and where a major disaster was declared under the [Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act](#):

Accomack	Fauquier	Lancaster	Nelson	Rappahannock
Clarke	Frederick	Loudoun	New Kent	Shenandoah
Craig	Greene	Madison	Northampton	Surry
Culpeper	Highland	Mathews	Northumberland	Warren
Essex	King & Queen	Middlesex	Prince William	Westmoreland

“Floodplains store water, helping to protect lands downstream from future flood damage,” NRCS State Conservationist Jack Bricker said. “Restoring these ecosystems ensures that the land will continue to provide environmental, economic and social benefits in the face of future threats.”

Compensation rates and ranking priorities will vary by location and whether the land is agricultural or vacant or has homes or other structures on it. If a structure is present, NRCS will cost-share the removal or demolition of that structure and enroll the remaining lot in a permanent easement.

Interested landowners should contact their local [USDA Service Center](#) to learn more about the program and submit an application prior to the September 2 deadline. Other states included in this EWP-FPE offering include: Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and West Virginia. More information is also available on the NRCS floodplain easement [website](#).

###

Helping People Help the Land

FY13 Contracts as of 7/16/13

Top 10 Practices by Area by Dollars Obligated

Area I			
Code	Count	Obligation	
367	20	\$580,106.00	Roof & Covers
561	55	\$493,796.00	HUA
590	167	\$452,732.00	Nutrient Mgmt
313	24	\$426,154.00	Waste Storage
382	128	\$400,549.50	Fence
328	84	\$257,580.00	CCR
614	68	\$235,710.00	Watering Fac
516	56	\$214,692.50	Livestock Pipe
329	52	\$180,641.00	Res Mgmt
528	63	\$141,056.00	Pres Grazing
Grand Total	717	\$3,383,017.00	

Area II			
Code	Count	Obligation	
382	204	\$938,001.35	Fence
561	50	\$910,466.50	HUA
367	18	\$511,678.00	Roof & Covers
614	137	\$471,228.00	Watering Fac
516	85	\$389,729.80	Livestock Pipe
528	108	\$264,332.00	Pres Grazing
512	62	\$223,457.50	Forage & Bio
642	28	\$161,355.00	Water Well
798	17	\$96,471.20	SHT
313	15	\$81,667.00	Waste Storage
Grand Total	724	\$4,048,386.35	

Area III			
Code	Count	Obligation	
382	257	\$625,204.45	Fence
367	12	\$465,181.00	Roof & Covers
512	142	\$361,632.00	Forage & Bio
561	26	\$346,821.00	HUA
516	107	\$277,259.25	Livestock Pipe
614	107	\$276,231.00	Watering Fac
374	30	\$249,761.10	Farm Energy
642	40	\$224,880.00	Water Will
666	50	\$206,812.00	Forest Stand
313	12	\$176,599.00	Waste Storage
Grand Total	783	\$3,210,380.80	

Area IV			
Code	Count	Obligation	
590	215	\$1,510,692.00	Cover Crop
328	205	\$775,413.00	CCR
329	141	\$582,983.00	No Till
490	42	\$416,437.00	Tree / Shrub Prep
340	85	\$377,429.00	Cover Crop
612	59	\$257,924.00	Tree / Shrub Est
798	25	\$144,162.20	SHT
561	9	\$102,465.00	Heavy Use
666	26	\$99,010.00	Forest Stand
338	31	\$91,611.00	Pres Burn
Grand Total	838	\$4,358,126.20	

Top 10 Practices by Area by Practice Count

Area I			
Code	Count	Obligation	
590	167	\$452,732.00	Nutrient Mgmt
472	131	\$21,094.00	Access Control
382	128	\$400,549.50	Fence
328	84	\$257,580.00	CCR
315	68	\$63,803.00	Herbaceous Wee
614	68	\$235,710.00	Watering Fac
314	63	\$74,377.00	Brush Mgmt
528	63	\$141,056.00	Pres Grazing
512	59	\$127,702.00	Forage & Bio
516	56	\$214,692.50	Livestock Pipe
Grand Total	887	\$1,989,296.00	

Area II			
Code	Count	Obligation	
382	204	\$938,001.35	Fence
472	195	\$55,413.65	Access Control
614	137	\$471,228.00	Watering Fac
528	108	\$264,332.00	Pres Grazing
516	85	\$389,729.80	Livestock Pipe
314	73	\$79,513.00	Brush Mgmt
512	62	\$223,457.50	Forage & Bio
342	59	\$45,139.00	Critical Area
391	57	\$49,971.00	RFB
590	55	\$31,585.00	Nutrient Mgmt
Grand Total	1035	\$2,548,370.30	

Area III			
Code	Count	Obligation	
382	257	\$625,204.45	Fence
512	142	\$361,632.00	Forage & Bio
472	125	\$20,806.20	Access Control
516	107	\$277,259.25	Livestock Pipe
614	107	\$276,231.00	Watering Fac
122	67	\$137,170.00	Energy CAP
342	63	\$49,630.00	Critical Area
528	57	\$117,717.00	Pres Grazing
612	57	\$152,330.00	Tree / Shrub
666	50	\$206,812.00	Forest Stand
Grand Total	1032	\$2,224,791.90	

Area IV			
Code	Count	Obligation	
590	215	\$1,510,692.00	Nutrient Mgmt
328	205	\$775,413.00	CCR
329	141	\$582,983.00	No Till
340	85	\$377,429.00	Cover Crop
612	59	\$257,924.00	Tree / Shrub
490	42	\$416,437.00	Tree / Shrub Prep
394	33	\$30,681.54	Firebreak
338	31	\$91,611.00	Pres Burn
345	26	\$46,130.50	Mulch Till
666	26	\$99,010.00	Forest Stand
Grand Total	863	\$4,188,311.04	



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative

Conservation Beyond Boundaries **CBWI**



The Need

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed is the nation's largest estuary, encompassing a vast network of streams, creeks, and rivers that covers 64,000 square miles in the eastern United States. While Bay health has improved since the 1970s, excess nutrients and sediment continue to adversely affect local rivers and streams in this watershed.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) identified watersheds with the highest concentrations of nutrients and sediment as priorities in the six-state Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Since 2009, NRCS has worked through the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative (CBWI) to provide targeted financial assistance for faster implementation of conservation practices on cropland, pastureland and private forest land in these priority watersheds. Though some form of conservation has been applied or installed on 96 percent of the Bay cropland, more gains can be achieved with additional practices in the watershed.

Goals

The Obama Administration released its restoration strategy for the Chesapeake Bay in May 2010. USDA's commitment to developing new approaches and strategies to accelerate private lands conservation in the Bay watershed is outlined in that strategy. The CBWI plays a key role in helping USDA meet its overall goal of applying conservation practices on 4 million acres of agricultural working lands in high priority watersheds by 2025 to improve water quality.

Other goals include improving water quality, enhancing wildlife habitat, sustaining fish and wildlife, and conserving natural resources in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Results/Outcomes

Overall, producers are making significant progress in reducing sediment and nutrient losses from farms. NRCS's Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) study shows that conservation practices have reduced edge-of-field losses of sediment by 55 percent, nitrogen in surface runoff by 42 percent, nitrogen in subsurface flow by 31 percent, and phosphorus by 40 percent.

In fiscal years 2010-2012, producers participating in CBWI used USDA assistance to apply and install conservation practices on about 650,000 acres of land.

In fiscal year 2012, NRCS dedicated about \$50 million in financial and technical

assistance toward a targeted restoration effort through the CBWI. Nearly 1,100 landowners in priority watersheds plan to use about \$40.3 million to apply or install conservation systems on 109,000 acres through the CBWI alone.

In addition, USDA uses other funding sources such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to help producers improve water quality in the watershed as part of USDA's overall effort to restore the Chesapeake Bay.

Programs

Congress authorized the CBWI in the 2008 Farm Bill and provided USDA with \$188 million in financial and technical assistance to help producers voluntarily implement conservation practices in this vital region. However, USDA has invested much more funding than was

originally appropriated—about \$235 million since 2008. CBWI helps producers use conservation practices that control erosion and sediment; reduce nutrient loss and protect stream corridors. Other commonly used conservation treatments include manure and pasture management.

The voluntary work completed by landowners is delivering results because they are applying the most effective conservation practices on their operations.



Fourth generation organic farmer Richard Swartzentruber of Delaware. See story on page 3.

2012 Progress Report

Delaware
District of Columbia
Maryland

New York
Pennsylvania

Virginia
West Virginia



Feature Story
Managing Nutrients for Better Herd Health and Improved Water Quality

Alex Botkin and his brother, Josh, run a dairy heifer operation in Augusta County, Virginia, on 32 acres of land leased from their father. The brothers buy Holstein heifers at about 400 pounds and feed them corn silage, grain, and hay until they reach about 1,100 pounds. Confining 325 dairy heifers in small paddocks

during this “growing period” created several resource concerns. Severe erosion in the pastures and an accumulation of excess manure were producing nutrient runoff to surface water. The livestock were subject to unhealthy foot conditions and water-borne diseases because they were constantly standing in mud and manure with no access to clean drinking water.

Alex and Josh sought help from NRCS because they were concerned about the health of their livestock, impacts on the local and regional water quality,

and the public image of their farm. NRCS worked with them to develop a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) and install recommended conservation practices under CBWI. The Botkin brothers built a feeding facility to move the cattle out of the impaired areas, fenced a portion of a tributary to keep the cattle out of the stream, and installed three troughs to be used as water supply for three grazing units.

This conservation system is already yielding many positive benefits for

these producers. The feeding facility captures an estimated 1,613 tons of manure each year until the Botkins can safely spread it on crop, hay, and pasture fields according to their nutrient management plan. As a result, over 24,000 pounds of nitrogen and 12,000 pounds of phosphorus are being managed so that they do not end up in the Chesapeake Bay. A riparian buffer further decreases nutrient runoff to waterways and establishes wildlife habitat.

Fiscal Year 2012 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative
 NRCS Financial Assistance (FA) and Active and Completed Contracts

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative (CBWI)			
State	Number of Contracts	FA Contract Obligations	Total Acres
Delaware	55	\$1,628,703	4,775
Maryland	183	\$7,383,139	12,087
New York	11	\$1,385,968	1,248
Pennsylvania	255	\$14,522,440	26,733
Virginia	441	\$11,931,901	51,292
West Virginia	141	\$3,400,326	13,254
Totals	1,086	\$40,252,477	109,389



Statistical source: Protracts for new enrollment, October 4, 2012.

Working with agricultural producers in high-priority watersheds to voluntarily implement conservation practices designed to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment; enhance habitat for fish and wildlife and; increase working agricultural and forest land productivity and sustainability.

Helping People
 Help the Land

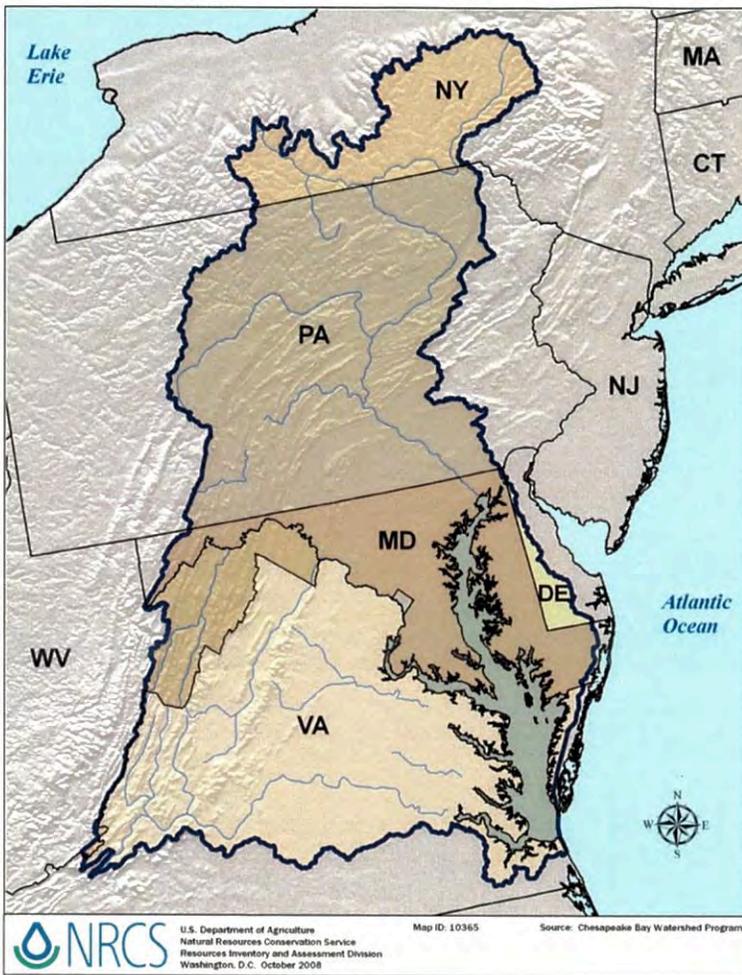
Results

In Maryland

Dairy farmers Chad and Vivian McCuller of Maryland converted 90 acres of cropland to pasture and as a result, the McCullers prevented about 180 tons of soil from eroding into a nearby stream annually. Using CBWI funds, the couple installed conservation practices that will keep 990 pounds of nitrogen and 2,160 pounds of phosphorus on their fields, preventing them from entering a nearby stream.

In Delaware

Fourth generation organic farmer Richard Swartzentruber of Delaware has seen tremendous gains from his 15-year working relationship with NRCS. He has installed many conservation practices, including a hoop structure for his poultry manure and a liquid manure storage tank for his commercial dairy operation. These practices have eliminated the potential for water to reach his manure and run off into nearby streams.



CBWI focuses on the use of conservation practices that provide:

Erosion and sediment control

- Residue and tillage management
- Cover crops
- Grassed waterways
- Terraces
- Diversions
- Vegetative cover

Nutrient loss reduction

- Nutrient management
- Feed management
- Cover crops

Stream corridor protection

- Streambank fencing
- Riparian buffers

Other commonly used practices include waste storage facilities, heavy use area protection, prescribed grazing systems and manure management systems.



For more information, visit: <http://go.usa.gov/47eY>

Conservation Beyond Boundaries

USDA is an equal opportunity employer, provider, and lender.

Active and Completed Contracts in Virginia July 23, 2013

	Contracts	Acres	Obligation	Payments
CBWI 2008	1,676	231,060	\$47,507,537.58	\$28,547,486.08
Active	917	121,964	\$30,568,350.95	\$11,608,299.95
Completed	759	109,096	\$16,939,186.63	\$16,939,186.13
CSP 2008	473	258,533	\$18,711,682.97	\$13,130,166.97
Active	473	258,533	\$18,711,682.97	\$13,130,166.97
EQIP 2008	2,135	212,285	\$53,206,103.24	\$30,063,251.50
Active	1,312	138,940	\$37,797,058.61	\$14,665,406.87
Completed	823	73,345	\$15,409,044.63	\$15,397,844.63
WHIP 2008	234	13,590	\$1,830,926.81	\$1,550,842.41
Active	78	3,852	\$744,314.12	\$464,229.72
Completed	156	9,738	\$1,086,612.69	\$1,086,612.69
Active Total	2,780	523,290	\$87,821,406.65	\$39,868,103.51
Completed Total	1,738	192,179	\$33,434,843.95	\$33,423,643.45
Grand Total	4,518	715,469	\$121,256,250.60	\$73,291,746.96

FY-14 Program Implementation Issues

State Technical Committee Input

- Meetings
 - July 23, 2013
 - September 24, 2013
- Subcommittee Meetings in August and September

FY-14 Sign-up and Ranking Deadlines

- First Application Sign-up Period will end November 15th
 - First ranking deadline will be December 13th
- Second application sign-up period will end January 17th
 - Second ranking deadline will be January 31st.
- Third application sign-up period will end on February 21st
 - Third ranking deadline will be April 7th.

Training Schedule for Field Staff and Partners

- Farm Bill Program Training will happen during the October JED Training.
 - Harrisonburg – October 8th
 - Smithfield – October 10th
 - Farmville – October 15th
 - Christiansburg – October 17th

CBWI or Not – Some Program Possibilities

- Farm Bill Gets Extended
 - CBWI Funding at \$50M
- New Farm Bill Gets passes
 - Chesapeake Bay States get Special EQIP Allocation for Bay Watershed
 - States could get EQIP funding without CBWI
 - Prior Year Cost Overrun FA Account gets changed to TA funds to pay for servicing prior

Standing STC Subcommittees

- Forestry/Wildlife – Todd Groh and Jeff Jones, Co-Chairs
- Easements – Diane Dunaway, Chair
- EQIP/CBWI – Patrick Vincent, Chair
- Special Initiatives (Organic, Energy, High Tunnel, etc.) – Ron Wood, Chair

Some Potential Changes for FY-14:

- 1) NRCS Management Team Assignment
 - a. Reduce the number of rankings required per applicant (Jessie's Committee)
 - b. Recommend ways to spread the program funding more evenly across all counties/areas of Virginia. Should consider NRCS staffing and workload issues.
- 2) Pursue the development of one ranking tool that covers multiple resource concerns.
- 3) Combine the wildlife fund pools into one. Currently have 3 pools:
 - a. Upland wildlife habitat creation
 - b. Aquatic wildlife habitat creation
 - c. Wildlife Habitat Maintenance
- 4) Possibly eliminate the High, Medium and Low Priority Screening Tools. Let each application stand based on its ranking points.
- 5) Establish a minimum ranking score that will be considered for funding.
- 6) Eliminate the New/Beginning Farmer fund pool and the Socially Disadvantaged fund pool if allowed to do so by NHQ.
- 7) Remove the practice Amendments for Animal Waste from our program offerings.
- 8) Revise the assessment tool for evaluating the need for poultry pads. Focus will be on situations where there are poorly drained or somewhat poorly drained soils and/or highly leachable soils.
- 9) Deduct -75 points to applicants who are behind schedule in the implementation of their existing Farm Bill contracts.
- 10) Grazing cover crops under 340.
 - a. Grazing is preferred over mechanical harvest or removal b/c some is returned to the land with grazing.
 - b. Limit how much biomass to take off
 - c. Allow for some purposes but not others
 - d. Allow cover crops to be harvested if they provide cover/diversity/other environmental benefits but include it as a payment under 328. Conservation Crop Rotation.
- 11) Adding "enhanced techniques" for data collection and analysis under Level "C" of 580 standard
 - a. Two data collection or analysis techniques would qualify for Level C funding at \$40/acre
- 12) Adding Freezers as an Animal Mortality practice scenario under 316 for Accomack County.
 - a. If added, would we allow retrofitting of existing 316 facilities or just use it for operations that don't have existing 316 facilities? Retrofitting is allowed provided that a higher level of conservation benefit can be documented.
- 13) Forestry - Set acreage limits for 490, 612, and 666.
- 14) Payment Schedules
 - a. Include a payment schedule scenario that deals with <1 acre implementation for Irrigation Water Management. We currently use a flat rate of \$680 for <30 acres.
- 15) Easements
 - a. Revise the WRP Ranking Criteria Worksheet
- 16) From sorghum growers – Address the rapid spread of herbicide resistant weeds by 328 to encourage producers rotate to higher residue crops that will increase crop residue (increase soil health). Use grain sorghum as a new crop in rotation with cotton and soybeans.
- 17) Add 380 – Windbreak/Shelterbelt Protection to Cropland Practice
- 18) Change Program Payment Caps for Some Other Practices:
 - a. 643 for Aquaculture = Increase to \$10,000 per contract/participant
 - b. Go to an acreage cap for 612 Tree and Shrub Planting for Loblolly and Hardwood;
 - i. Currently have Loblolly at \$7,500 per contract/participant and for Hardwood at \$15,000 per contract/participant

Fiscal Year 2014
Summary of Local Working Group Meeting Responses

Resource Concerns:

- Are there any eligible resource concerns in Virginia that are currently not being addressed by the Farm Bill Programs? What additional resource concerns do you recommend that we should include in FY-14? If yes, please describe in detail below:

Responses:

- *Stream bank erosion for cropland and pasture fields*
- *Water Quantity for landowners with water shortages. Include roof runoff collection systems as an alternative.*
- *Biomass and wood resources. Recommend high density plantings.*
- *Unroofed animal feeding pads.*
- *Christmas Trees – low risk pesticides.*
- *Pollinator habitat to improve honey bee populations.*
- *Receiving-end / end-user litter storage.*

State Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG):

- In the past few years, we have prioritized soil health/soil quality for the State CIG funding. Are there other priority needs for new technology, practice adoption, innovative conservation, or demonstration activities for State CIG?

Responses:

- *Continue to support soil health as a priority*
- *Decline of honey bees*
- *Demonstrations/Farm Trials – Organic, CSP Enhancements, Hardwood & Pine Mgmt., Oyster Reef Restoration*
- *Alternatives/Innovative Topics – Controlling invasive species, uses of livestock waste*
- *Forestry /Wildlife – Effect of Agricultural practices on pollinators, effects of invasive species.*

Payment Schedules:

- Are there practices and/or scenarios which are not working well and need to either be deleted or corrected?

Response:

- *Higher payment rates are needed for:*
 - 382 – Fence,
 - 612 – Tree & Shrub Establishment,
 - 315- Brush Management
- What practice scenarios are missing and need to be added?

Responses:

- *Cut-back field borders*
 - *Woven wire for small ruminant livestock*
 - *Components for rainwater collection systems*
 - *Allow grazing of cover crops*
 - *Installation of pipeline through rocky areas under livestock pipeline practice*
 - *Add 338 – Prescribed Burning as a priority practice – not a companion practice.*
 - *Transportation of litter out of litter producing counties.*
- What payment rates pay significantly more than we should be paying or far too little to get adoption?

Responses:

- *Higher payments rates are needed for:*
 - 340 – Cover Crop,
 - 612 – Tree & Shrub Establishment,
 - 315 – Brush Management,
 - 666 – Forest Stand Improvement, esp. for Golden Winged Warbler Habitat
 - 533 - Pumping Plant,
 - 484 – Mulching,
 - 313 – Waste Storage Facility,
 - 367 - Roofs and Covers,
 - 575 – Animal Trails & Walkways
- *Payments could be lowered for:*
 - CAP 118 – TSP Payment is too high
 - 533 – Pumping Plant
 - 612 – Tree & Shrub Establishment,
 - 666 – Forest Stand Improvement

Ranking Tools:

- Are there new State or Local issues that we should consider in our ranking process? If so, be specific and describe below:

Responses:

More points should be awarded for:

- *Fencing cattle out of the streams*
- *Projects that piggyback with SWCD or other USDA programs*
- *Lands that have a conservation easement in place*
- *Structural practices that have longer lifespans*
- *Systems or practices that will encourage various storage options of Agricultural Dry Manure (solid or semi-solid)*
- *Dairy farms that convert some of their cropland to pasture for a grazing system*
- *10' setback even when they don't plant a buffer*
- *Establishing buffers on any stream, regardless of presence of T&E Species.*

Priority Screening Worksheet:

- The priority screening worksheet was developed to classify applications into High, Medium or Low categories. Applications are then ranked and funded based on the highest ranked applications within each priority category. During the first batching period, we only considered applications in the “High” category. In subsequent batching periods, we made funding decisions based on all “High” and “Medium” applications in the fund pool based strictly on ranking score – not on the priority. Do you have any suggestions for changes to this priority screening approach? If so, please be specific.

Responses:

- *Screening sheet is additional paperwork. Remove the screening worksheet and rank all the applications.*
- *Screening worksheet is unnecessary if the ranking is good enough to establish the order of pre-approvals and funding.*
- *There should be a minimum ranking score established no matter what the priority category.*
- *Screening is needed but keep it simple.*

Wildlife Habitat:

- The past few years, we have included wildlife habitat resource concerns with our EQIP funding. It appears that wildlife issues may become part of EQIP in the new Farm Bill. We have identified the following 3 priority resource concerns for wildlife:
 - Upland wildlife habitat creation
 - Aquatic wildlife habitat creation
 - Habitat maintenance for wildlife

Are there other wildlife issues not currently being met that should be included in FY-14? If so, please be specific below:

Responses:

- *Add cut back borders back into the program.*
- *Encourage deer eradication programs. Deer and geese are an increasing problem.*
- *Early Successional Habitat*
 - *More ranking points with maintenance and/or invasive species control*
 - *Expand early successional sites for all species*

Organic Agriculture:

- The Farm Bill placed greater emphasis on organic agriculture. We increased our program offerings in FY-13 but still did not fully utilize the funding that was available. Are there other practices or changes that are needed for Organic Producers? If so, please be specific.

Responses:

- *Yearly and total payment caps are too low.*
- *Certification process is too difficult and too expensive.*
- *Showcase successful organic farms that have benefited from program funding*
- *Need more TSPs for transitioning to organic plans and for Nutrient Management Plans for small specialty organic operations.*

Irrigation Water Management:

- In FY-13, we included some program offerings for irrigation practices and the demand exceeded our expectations. Are there other practices or changes that are needed for irrigation? If so, please be specific.

Responses:

- *Irrigation Water Management Plans for FY-14 and beyond should be written to cover fields that will be used in future years of the crop rotations.*
- *Sprinkler Irrigation Systems (442) should be added to the list of eligible irrigation practices in Virginia*
- *The \$10,000 cap should be raised*
- *CAP plans should cover all the fields that could be irrigated.*
- *Expand to all irrigation efficiency improvements and water management improvements such as surface water ponds.*

Energy Conservation:

- In FY-13, we received a total of \$125,000 from NHQ for on-farm energy. However, we supplemented those funds because the demand far exceeded the funding level from NHQ. This year we have 69 energy audit contracts/applications and 10 farmstead energy improvement contracts/applications for a total of \$418,300 - a 271% increase over FY-12. These energy audits will generate many requests for implementation in future years. Are there other practices or changes that are needed for on-farm energy? If so, please be specific.

Responses:

- *Increase funding significantly.*
- *Additional offerings under 374 should include attic inlets, recycling oil, solar panels,*
- *Add new practices to the payment schedule that are not currently offered and are frequently recommended in energy audits for energy savings.*
- *Include practices that allow methane capture for animal waste projects.*

Forestry Issues:

- In FY-13, we allocated over 5% of our EQIP funds for forestry practices and have approved/preapproved a record number of applications for CAP106 Forest Management Plans or Forestry Statewide practices. We also have a backlog of 85 requests that are unfunded. What suggestions or changes do you recommend for our forestry practices or offerings?

Responses:

- *Issue a blanket waiver for all forestry practices*
- *Increase forestry funding to 7% - 15%.*
- *Break funding into regional pots of money – eastern and western parts of the state.*
- *Allow DOF foresters to make recommendations on needed trees per acre.*
- *Increase emphasis on establishing short leaf pines.*
- *Emphasize converting marginal land to forest production.*

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative:

- The future for CBWI is uncertain with the new Farm Bill looming. Targeting of CBWI funds to high priority watersheds was incorporated into the CBWI Program. Do you have suggestions on addressing priority watersheds within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed – regardless of whether special CBWI-type funding is available or not? If so, please be specific.

Response:

- *Continue to put an emphasis on documented agriculturally impaired watersheds in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.*
- *Funding to address water quality issues within the Chesapeake Bay watershed should be prioritized according to existing impairment*
- *The higher priority should be given to applicants within watersheds with greater impact to the Bay.*
- *Target karst geology areas and coastal plain areas with leaching problems.*

Easements:

- In the past few years, we have improved outreach efforts and developed a backlog of applications in GRP and WRP. However, we have not received enough FRPP applications to fully utilize the available funding. What can NRCS and the conservation partnership do at both the State and Local levels to increase interest and participation in the FRPP and other easement programs?

Responses:

- *Offer more outreach – public meetings, workshops.*
- *Very difficult for local governments to find the 25% matching needed for FRPP.*
- *More applicants than funding. Discourages applicants.*
- *Develop more partnerships with non-profits, local governments, and other entities.*
- *GARC rates are not competitive.*
- *Streamline the application process.*
- *Takes too much time to close.*

Miscellaneous Issues:

- Please provide any other comments or suggestions for improvement of any NRCS Farm Bill Programs and Services. (Use additional sheets as needed).

Responses:

- *More farm bill education to the public*
- *More full-time and part-time staff needs to be hired*
- *Streamline paperwork*
- *EQIP payment rates are pretty low and seem to decrease every year while construction costs increase.*
- *Start application process earlier in the year.*
- *Increase payment rates*
- *Promote local ag. products.*
- *Go back to a Statewide cost list – not a regional one.*
- *Add more engineering staff*
- *Add a fund pool for full-time farmers that derive all their income from farming.*
- *More screening for applicants for the High Tunnel program. Some people have very little experience and do not use the high tunnel after first year.*

Soil Health Communications Update: July 2013

New soil health communications resources from USDA NRCS, other partners and the media are now available on the national NRCS website at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/soils/health/>.



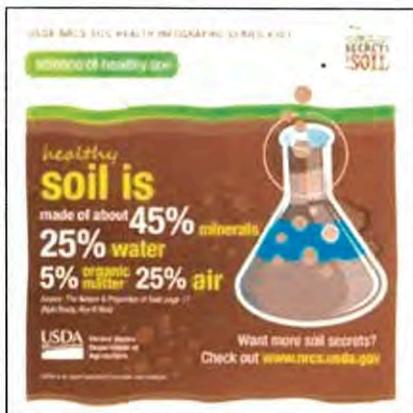
New web page provides information and education resources for stakeholders. A growing number of stakeholder groups and businesses are working side-by-side with the NRCS to help increase the adoption of soil health management systems on America's working lands. These materials can be used, copyright-free, to help you communicate the basics and benefits of soil health to your audiences.



New soil info-graphics available. Believe it or not, there are a lot of interesting facts about healthy soil. These entertaining and informative graphics provide a glimpse at just some of those secrets. Please download the files, share them on your website or in your newsletters, and help "Unlock the Secrets in the Soil." (Available on the "Growing & Sharing" page.)



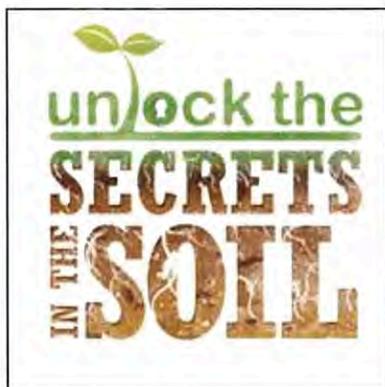
Newsletter articles now available. This series of short but informative newsletter articles, featuring experts from across the country, will help stakeholder newsletter readers better understand the basics and benefits of improving the health of their soil. Newsletter editors are encouraged to download the files, share them on websites or in newsletters, and help new audiences "Unlock the Secrets in the Soil." (Available on the "Growing & Sharing" page.)



Newspaper, magazine info-graphics now available. In addition to the series of newsletter info-graphics noted above, a new series of info-graphics designed for newspaper and magazines is also available, royalty-free, for use by any media or stakeholder organization. Click on the "Media: get the DIRT on it" icon on the main soil health page.



Soil Health Nuggets give food for thought. Did you know that more than 200 years ago, Thomas Jefferson, a farmer and conservationist, used vetch, turnips, peas, and clover as cover crops and in rotation? He used these crops on his Virginia plantation to build soil that he knew was being depleted with his tobacco cash crop. (Click on the "dig a little LEARN A LOT" icon to download the Soil Health Nuggets fact sheet and learn more fun facts about soil health.)



Web resources abound. In addition to the latest features noted above, be sure to click through NRCS' "Unlock the Secrets in the Soil" website to explore other resource and learning materials, including Ray the Soil Guy's "Soil Health Lessons in a Minute" video demonstrations, fact sheets, images and producer and subject matter expert features.



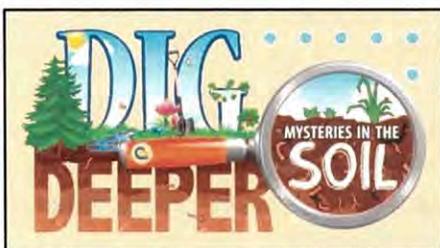
Farm Journal series helps farmers understand, improve soil health. An ongoing series of articles by *Farm Journal* conservation and machinery editor Darrell Smith highlights the basics of soil microbiology and soil structure and what it means to farmers and the crops they grow.

http://www.agweb.com/article/manage_soil_microorganisms_for_healthier_soil/



NACD campaigns educate young consumers about soil, food. The National Association of Conservation Districts has created a campaign with education materials to teach youth and adults the importance of soil in the food they eat every day. Available materials include student booklets, poster, bookmark, placemat/activity sheet, and a CD with PowerPoints for youth and adults.

<http://www.nacdnet.org/education/resources/soil-to-spoon>



Education materials carrying NACD's 2014 theme, "DIG DEEPER: Mysteries in the Soil," will be available this fall from the NACD Marketplace at nacdstore.org. These items tie into the next NACD Soil and Water Stewardship Week, April 27-May 4, 2014, and offer fun activities to help students learn about the importance of soil in their everyday lives.