

State Technical Committee Meeting – 3/7/19

ALL POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS ARE ON THE WEBSITE.

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(There is a 3m blank time from the start of the recording to the beginning of the meeting, also unfortunately we lost service for a small period & there are 2 recordings. You can pause by pressing 8, fast forward by pressing 9 & rewind by pressing 7.)

Attendees: Craig Derickson, Aaron Hird, Neil Dominy, Brad Soncksen, Tami Nordman, Sam Kazda, Britt Weiser, Brian Barnes, Carla McCullough, Mike McDonald, Ryan Lodge, Scott Luedtke, Mark Brohman, Walt Schacht, Misha Mazurkewycz, Georja Kriebs, Doug Jones, Burdette Piening, Larry Hudkins, Ed Hubbs, Scott Merritt, Craig Romary, Dave Griffith, Lavaine Moore, Doug Klein, Mike Murphy, John Erixson, Terry Julesgard, Annette Sudbeck, Mike Sousek, Dustin Wilcox, David Potter, Nicholas Streff, Rick Rasby, John Hansen, George Cunningham, Elbert Traylor, J. Scott Sobotka, Kent Zimmerman; **via phone:** Boone McAfee, Erica Gnuse, Vernon Waldren, Dan Frazee, Marcia Trompke, Denise Jensen; Ansley Mick.

**WELCOME AND THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE! – Craig Derickson,
State Conservationist, NRCS**

- ❖ Review of the State Technical Committee Handout
 - NRCS would like to meet with tribes to help with the understanding.
- ❖ Introductions
- ❖ Discussion on:
 - June will be a bigger meeting because of clarification on a lot of Farm Bill information with the Programs.
 - High priority Conservation practices – EQIP (higher cost share rates)
 - Water conservation & Water quality (NEW)
 - On farm innovation trials
 - Source water protection portion of the NEW Farm Bill
 - Change in fund codes, there have to be changes in software, so we are building up to the area of some concern for field staff for new obligations.
 - Let us know if there are recommendations or suggestions for the future STC Meetings!

“UNDERSTANDING SOIL HEALTH AND THE COMPOUNDING EFFECTS OF COVER CROPS” – Aaron Hird, State Soil Health Specialist, NRCS

- ❖ Extreme Weather
 - Cover Crops vs No Cover Crops
 - 40yrs of soil erosion in one-night w/ 15 inches of rain
 - COVER CROPS = Resilient Soil

- ❖ Soil Health Defined:
 - The continued capacity of the soil function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans.
 - Soil Health Principles
 - Provide continuous Living Roots
 - Minimize Disturbance
 - Maximize Soil Cover (cover Crop is active agent)
 - Maximize Biodiversity
 - Photosynthetic materials are important.

- ❖ Is the Soil Health?
 - Soil Health is changed through time with Management Practices & Natural Processes.
 - Every Soil has Unique Physical Properties developed by the 5 Soil Forming Factors:
 - Time
 - Aspect
 - Parent Material
 - Climate
 - Biology
 - Soil Function is influenced by biology which is impacted by management.
 - Supporting the biological activities can improve the function of the Soil.
 - 90% of Soil Function is mediated by soil microbes

- ❖ Soil Health Assessment is based on Dynamic Soil Properties
 - As the Dynamic Soil Properties go, so goes soil function
 - Soil Function
 - Nutrient Cycling
 - Water (infiltration & availability)
 - Filtering and Buffering
 - Physical Stability and Support
 - Habitat for Biodiversity
 - Dynamic Soil Properties
 - Biological Activity
 - Bulk Density
 - Infiltration Rate
 - Structure
 - Color
 - Aggregate Stability
 - Smell

- ❖ Soil Resiliency is achieved by taking “Step 1” to care for the Soil’s Health.
 1. Reduced tillage, increased biomass with more rooting, higher diversity, surface cover
 2. Soil organic matter increases, reduced compaction from rooting, decreased erosion
 3. Aggregates rebuilt
 4. Available water holding capacity increases
 5. Infiltration increases, erosion by wind and water decreases
 6. More soil organic matter, nutrients, and top soil built
 7. Less energy and tillage needed, more water stored, better rooting, more nutrient access, greater soil organism diversity, less disease
 8. Field conditions are more resilient and consistent
 9. Crop yields increase lower cost, lower risk
 10. Resilient Functioning Soil

- ❖ Structure = Function, but... Where are we Starting?
 - Hybridized?
 - Rooting Pressure Tolerance

- ❖ Root Restrictive Bulk Density
 - No Tillage planting systems Retains this soil structure.
 - Biology Regenerates soil structure.
 - Roots aren’t accessing nutrients very well due to bulk density.
 - 1.33g/cu cm is ideal/standard

- ❖ The Compounding Effects of Applying the Principles
 - 2016
 - 12in
 - 1.25 Bulk Density
 - 2017
 - 5
 - 2018
 - 1.22 reduction
 - Howard County – Sack
 - Converting to no-till
 - On Farm Research Study

- ❖ Incentives during the Learning Curve
 - The USDA/NRCS is offering conservation incentives for you to use cover crops which reduce the financial risk during your “Start Up” years.
 - EQIP – Up to 3 years of 50% cost share to apply cover crops within your crop system.
 - CSP – 5 years of Stewardship Payments providing cost share for applying cover crops in your cropping system.
 - CTA – Advice and Cover Crop Mix Designs.
 - WHY ARE WE PLANTING COVER CROPS?
 - WHAT SPECIES CAN WE BRING IN?

- ❖ Nebraska NRCS Soil Health Initiative
 - Partnerships are our central focus. We need you to form an action plan of support.
 - Geographically distributing key outreach and educational resources.
 - Fund and monitor a network of Demonstration farms across the state.
 - Developing skilled employees with knowledge and tools to be local contracts.
 - Providing local advice and an on arm, an in-person soil health assessment.

- The Goals of the EQIP Demonstration Farms
 - Focus on outreach, education, training and partnership opportunities
 - Provide a local source of information to answer common questions
 - Validate Soil Health Management Systems locally via field days & publications.
 - Demonstrate using the Key Soil Health Principals.
 - 5-year long projects to implement the comparison of cover crop treatments.

- ❖ Demonstration Farms
 - A 5yr, field scale, comparison of two cover crops adaptive management activities.
 - A system comparison throughout a 5yr expanded crop rotation.
 - Randomized and Replicated Plots
 - Soil Health Assessments, Soil Lab Analysis Reports and Economic Evaluations
 - Opportunity to include partners, including NE on Farm Research Network

- ❖ 17 In Field Projects – 21 Comparisons =
 - All Farms are collecting Economic Data – 2016-18 Results
 - Cover Crop vs No Cover Crop (5)
 - Cover Crop mix comparisons (4)
 - Grazed vs Not Grazed (3)
 - Drilled vs Broadcast (2)
 - High Carbon Cover Crop vs Low Carbon Cover Crop (2)
 - Nitrogen Study, When and How much from the Cover Crop (1)
 - Companion Cover Crop vs Dormant Seeded Cover Crop (1)
 - Monoculture Cover Crop vs Multispecies Cover Crop (1)

- ❖ Nebraska NRCS Soil Health Initiative EQIP Demonstrations Fields
 - Highlighting studies today in Nemaha County, Knox County, & Franklin County.
 - 5 – 2017 Demonstrations Fields
 - 12- 2016 Demonstration Fields
 - Nemaha County – Daryl Obemeyer – in Partnership with the UNL on Farm Research Network
 - 2018 Corn Following Winter Terminated Cover Crop vs Winter Hardy Cover Crop
 - Field 1C
 - Summary
 - In 2017, there were no differences in soybean yield, moisture, test weight, or harvest stand counts when cover crops were winter terminated or winter hardy. Harvest stand counts were notably lower than the planting population.
 - In 2018, there were no differences in corn yield, moisture, test weight, harvest stand counts, or net return between the winter terminated or winter hardy cover crop treatment. Corn following winter terminated cover crops stayed green longer
 - 8-2-18 was in a drought

- 2018 Soybeans Following Winter Killed Cover Crop vs Winter Hardy Cover Crop
 - Field 1A
 - In 2018, soybeans planted after winter terminated cover crops had a higher yield, lower test weight, and higher net return than the winter hardy cover crops. There were visible differences between the winter terminated and winter hardy cover crops, with the winter terminated having a darker green appearance longer.
- Knox County – Doug Steffen – in Partnership with the UNL on Farm Research Network
 - 2018 Wheat after Grazed vs Non-Grazed Cover Crop
 - Graze bs un-grazed Grazing difference every 1/3rd
 - Organic Matter increase
 - 0 – 4% in 3 years
- Franklin County – Dennis Bauer - in Partnership with the UNL on Farm Research Network
 - 2017 Nitrogen Application to CORN Following Cover Crops
 - A Maximum Nitrogen rate of 22lb N/ac was selected with a goal of providing an excess of Nitrogen so that the plateau of yield response to Nitrogen could be identified. However, results indicated that the highest Nitrogen rate resulted in the highest yield; it is unknown if higher Nitrogen applications would have resulted in greater yields.
 - 2018 Nitrogen Application to Corn Following Cover Crops
 - Soil Samples were taken for each plot in June 2018.
 - At a corn price of \$3.23/bu and Nitrogen price of \$0.35/lb, the optimum Nitrogen rate was 191 lb/ac.
 - There was no yield difference between the 0lb N/ac rate which was preceded by cover crops and the 0lb N/ac rate that did not have cover crops.

- ❖ HOW SOON DO WE NEED HEALTH SOIL?
- ❖ WHEN IS IT GOING TO BE TOO LATE?

QUESTIONS & Comments

- Soil Health Conference in Beatrice – Thank you for the sponsorship & was the best one has been to with great information.
 - Aaron stated next years will be in Hickman.
- Rick Ras – Are all Cover Crops drilled?
 - Yes, in the studies that were covered today.
 - There are 2 studies which do include drilled vs broadcast comparisons.
- Need to have more research on Aerial/Broadcast seeding & In season planting.
- Craig state we are seeing results from producers & getting data/#'s.

“WATER QUALITY IMPAIRMENTS IN NEBRASKA” – Britt Weiser, State Resource Conservationist, NRCS

- ❖ How do we Measure Water Quality?
 - Physical Indicators
 - Water Temperature
 - Electrical Conductivity
 - Total Suspended Solids
 - Turbidity
 - Total Dissolved Solids
 - Odor
 - Taste
 - Chemical Indicators
 - pH
 - Dissolved Oxygen
 - Nitrate
 - Phosphate
 - Pesticides
 - Biological Indicators
 - E.coli
 - Coliform bacteria
- ❖ Water Quality Depends on how the Water will be used
 - Can measure it, but all depends on how it will be used.
- ❖ Common Impairments for Nebraska Streams
 - Bacteria
 - Atrazine
 - E. Coli and Atrazine are 2 main causes of impairments that NRCS will focus on.
 - Aquatic Community
 - Fish Consumption
 - Mercury and other hazardous compounds
 - Low dissolved oxygen
 - Can be addressed by reducing phosphorous and shading stream
- ❖ TMDL Priorities: 2 pages – all but ONE are E. Coli
 - All mammals have E. Coli
 - If you look at water quality E. Coli is a big factor – impairment
 - Manure
 - Waste water treatment facility
- ❖ NRCS NWQI FY18 Implementation Watersheds and Readiness Projects
 - Bazile – E. Coli, Nitrates
 - Wahoo Creek – E. Coli
 - Big Sandy – E. Coli, Atrazine

(See PowerPoint for the following pages)

- ❖ FIGURE 4. SHIFTING TO GROUNDWATER.... Map of the High Plains aquifer identifying the Ogallala Group
- ❖ FIGURE 9. Statewide Number & Median of Nitrate Analyses 1974-2016
 - All 117,049 analyses and median nitrate-nitrogen levels for Nebraska, 1974-2016.
 - Generally, nitrate trends up
 - 1970': 4, now: 6
 - Leveling off lately so making some progress
- ❖ FIGURE 10. Statewide Number & Median of Nitrate Analyses 1997-2016
 - All 89,144 analyses and median nitrate nitrogen levels for Nebraska, 1997-2016.
- ❖ FIGURE 11. Most Recent Nitrate-N Concentrations
 - Most recent recorded Nitrate-N concentrations of 18,160 wells from 1997-2016.
 - Empty areas indicated no data reported, not the absence of nitrate in ground water.
 - GREEN = Good
 - YELLOW = Impaired
 - ORANGE =
 - RED = Above twice the Impairment
- ❖ NRD Fertilization Requirements
- ❖ FIGURE 14. Reducing nitrates in Drinking water will be expensive for many communities
 - Smaller communities have a problem with spending money on treatment plants.
 - Community Public water supply systems with requirements for nitrate.
 - The MCL for nitrate-nitrogen is 10mg/l, but PWS systems with wells or intakes testing over 5mg/1 may be required to perform quarterly sampling. Of the nearly 550 groundwater-based community PWS systems in Nebraska that supply their own water, 86 of those must perform quarterly sampling for nitrate. If a PWS exceed the nitrate-nitrogen MCL two times in a rolling 12m period, an AO will be issued. A nitrate AO will mandate that the PWS take steps to bring their nitrate results consistently below the MCL such as drilling a new or deeper well, hooking on to a neighboring water system, blending, or building a water treatment plant.
- ❖ 2018 FARM BILL
 - Sec. 1244 Administrative Requirements for Conservation Programs.
 - (n) SOURCE WATER PROTECTION THROUGH TARGETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES. —
 - (1) IN GENERAL. — In carrying out any conservation program administered by the Secretary, the Secretary shall encourage practices that relate to water quality and water quantity that protect source water for drinking water (including protecting against public health threats) while also benefitting agricultural producers.
 - (3) RESERVATION OF FUNDS. —
 - (A) IN GENERAL. — In each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023, the Secretary shall use to carry out this subsection not less than 10 percent of any funds available for conservation programs administered by the Secretary under this title (other than the conservation reserve program established under subchapter B of chapter 1 of subtitle D).
 - It is up for interpretation where the 10% of the funds come from?
 - Possible Pilot "CLEAR 30" Program has to do with water.

- ❖ Nebraska Wellhead Protection Area (WHPA) Map
 - 522 Wellhead Protection Areas in Nebraska
 - Total WHPA in Nebraska: 1,414,125 Acres
 - 99% municipals rely on ground water for drinking.
 - 12 communities rely on surface water.

- ❖ Nebraska WHPA/ 10mg/L Nitrate-N Intersect Map
 - The wellhead protection areas that intersect townships with sampled Nitrate-N concentrations greater than the state limit of 10mg/L totals 200,023 acres. This information was based on domestic well samples from 1998-2017.

QUESTIONS & Comments

- Britt referenced NDEQ's integrated Report. The 2018 Surface Water Quality Integrated Report can be found here: <http://deq.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/TMDL>.

- Lots of entities that gather water quality.
 - Is there a unified place to access multiple Data in one report?
 - Carla: Ag Chemical Database (groundwater)
 - Integrative reports from multiple sites are collaborative
 - EPA Database
 - Data available to public

- NDEQ's Groundwater Quality Monitoring Report is at the end of the document above (pg. 298/376) and contains links to the Quality-Assessed Agrichemical Database for Nebraska Groundwater, or the Clearinghouse, that was mentioned during the questions. The direct link to this groundwater quality database is <https://clearinghouse.nebraska.gov/>.

- BRITT – This initiative will require a lot of partners and cooperation. In addition to working with municipalities with the wellhead protection areas, we will need to work with the NRDs and their phase 2&3 Nitrate areas.

- Lacking tribal area information for domestic wells. (Winnebago) In addition to the water quality information from public water systems (minimum of 25 people pulling water from a source or 15 water connections), NRCS needs to gather information from Domestic well samples/ quality

- NRCS needs to develop a GIS layer of phase 2&3 nitrate areas of water, these won't fit to match public water supply definition.

PROGRAM UPDATES – Brad Soncksen, Assistant State Conservationist – Programs, NRCS (Highlights)

- ❖ **NEW 2018 FARM BILL “Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018”**
 - **2018 FARM BILL PROCESS**
 - Implement programs under Transition Authority
 - Identify Key Issues
 - Develop policy options
 - Obtain leadership decisions

- Incorporate leadership decisions into draft interim regulations
 - Obtain approval from Department and OMB
 - Publish in Federal Register for 60-day comment period
 - Review comments received on interim regulation
 - Prepare final regulation and publish in the Federal Register
- **CSP**
- Funding
 - \$700 Million in FY19
 - \$723 Million in FY20
 - \$750 Million in FY21
 - \$800 Million in FY22
 - \$1 Billion in FY23
 - **NEW:**
 - **Changed acreage allocation to states to a funding-based allocation to states**
 - **Removed requirement to manage the program to achieve a national average rate \$18/ac**
 - **Conservation Activities**
 - Development of a comprehensive conservation plan (1-time payment provided)
 - Soil Health planning, including planning to increase soil organic matter
 - Activities that will assist a producer to adapt to, or mitigate against, increasing weather volatility.
 - Removed automatic 1-time renewal – provides ‘opportunity’ to renew contract. Renewal requires participant to adopt and continue to integrate new or improved conservation activities across the entire agricultural operation demonstrating continued improvement during the additional 5-yr period.
 - **Payment for Cover Crop activities:**
 - Shall not be less than 125% of the annual payment amount.
 - **Advanced Grazing Management under Supplemental Payments**
 - Payment: shall not be less than 150% of the annual payment amount
 - Definition of Advanced Grazing Management: Use of a combination of grazing practices which may include management-intensive rotational grazing that provide for:
 - Improved soil health and carbon sequestration
 - Drought resilience
 - Wildlife habitat
 - Wildfire mitigation
 - Control of invasive plants
 - Water quality improvement

- Management-intensive rotational grazing – includes objective to improve the quality and quantity of cover for wildlife
- **Grassland Conservation Initiative:**
 - Purpose: Assisting producers in protecting grazing uses, conservation and improving soil, water, and wildlife resources and achieving related conservation values by conserving eligible land through grassland conservation contracts.
 - Must meet or exceed stewardship threshold for not less than 1 priority resource concern
 - Eligible for 1, 5-yr term
 - Annual payments of \$18/ac
- **EQIP**
 - Funding
 - \$9.1 Billion (increase of \$1.17 billion)
 - \$1.75 Billion for FY19
 - \$1.75 Billion for FY20
 - \$1.8 Billion for FY21
 - \$1.85 Billion for FY22
 - \$2.025 Billion for FY23
 - Proportion of EQIP funding:
 - Livestock: 50% (reduced from 60%) of the funds under the program shall be targeted at practices relating to livestock production and grazing management practices
 - Wildlife Habitat: At least 10% (increased from 5%) of the funds under the program shall be targeted at practices benefitting wildlife habitat.
 - Clarifies that contracts entered into solely for wildlife practices can be up to 10 years in length.
 - **NEW:**
 - **Source Water Protection Program (10% all CP Funds)**
 - Increased payments: States can select not more than 10 practices to be eligible for increased payments (90% of implementation cost); Otherwise payment cap remains at 75%. Practices must:
 - Addresses excessive nutrients in groundwater
 - Addresses the conservation of water to advance drought mitigation
 - Meet other environmental priorities and other priority resource concerns identified in habitat or other restoration plans
 - Is geographically located to address a national resource concern in a specific watershed

- **Conservation Incentive Contracts** (incorporation of CSP-like program policy)
 - Identification of not more than 3 eligible priority resource concerns for watersheds, or other appropriate regions or areas within a state
 - Producers must address at least 1 priority resource concern
 - Provides annual payments for certain incentive practices to attain increased levels of conservation
 - Provides practice payments to implement an incentive practice
 - Contract length: Not less than 5, no more than 10

- **Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)**
 - Added urban agriculture and edge-of-field monitoring as priorities
 - Increased funding for air-quality projects from \$25 million to \$37.5 million

 - **NEW:**
 - **On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials: \$25 million**
 - Purpose is to support development of new or innovative conservation approaches such as: Precision ag, enhanced nutrient management, soil health management systems, and cover crops
 - Provides financial and technical assistance to producers for implementation
 - Secretary will select geographic regions for eligibility
 - Soil Health Demonstration Trials (included in \$25 million dedicated to Innovation Trials)
 - Provides incentives to producers to implement practices that:
 - improve soil health
 - increase carbon levels in soil

- **ACEP –**
 - **WRE**
 - Increases county cap for WRE acreage from 10 to 15 percent
 - Added ‘or improving water quality’ in addition to protecting and enhancing habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife as WRE acquisition priority.
 - Included water management as an eligible compatible use
 - Grazing as Compatible Use: can follow either a WRE conservation plan or “a grazing management plan that is consistent with the WRE plan and has been reviewed at least every 5 years”
 - Allows ‘Alternative Plant Communities’
 - Must be: hydrologically appropriate native community or alternative naturalized vegetative community.
 - Eliminate the 30% restriction on restoration of alternative plant communities

- **ALE**
 - **NEW:**
 - **Added Buy-Protect-Sell Transaction**
 - Eligible entity shall hold the ALE but transfer ownership of the land to a farmer or rancher that is not an eligible entity within 3 years after the date of ALE acquisition
 - **Removed requirement of an agriculture land easement plan**
 - Still requires conservation plan only for land that is highly erodible cropland
 - **Removes requirement of 50% cash match associated with charitable donations**
 - Allows subsurface mineral development if:
 - Has limited and localized impact
 - Does not harm ag use and conservation values
 - Does not affect existing topography
 - Follows a subsurface mineral development plan
 - Is not accomplished by any surface mining method
 - Uses technologies that minimize duration and intensity of impacts to the ag use and conservation values
 - Areas impacted will be reclaimed and restored by the holder
- **VPA-HIP: – Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program**
 - Funding: \$50 million for life of FB (increase of \$10 million)
 - **NEW:** To the maximum extent practicable, Secretary shall use \$3 million of VPA-HIP funding to encourage public access to land covered by WRE.
- **Working Lands for Wildlife**
 - Codifies the working lands for wildlife conservation partnership between USDA and Dept. of Interior
 - The Secretary and the Secretary of the Interior shall continue to carry out the Working Lands for Wildlife model of conservation on working landscapes
 - “May expand WLFW through a new partnership agreement between FSA and USFWS for the purpose of carrying out conservation activities for species conservation.” Potential for to expand authority to CRP lands
- **RCPP**
 - Provides mandatory funding at \$300 million (from \$100 million)
 - 50% of available funds for state or multi-state projects
 - 50% of available funds for projects within critical conservation areas
 - Removed National funding pool.
 - Removes 7% funding contributions from covered programs
 - Adds CRP and Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act as covered programs
 - Land enrolled into the new CSP-Grassland Conservation Initiative is not eligible

- Agreements can be for longer than 5 years if longer period is necessary to meet the objectives of the program
 - A partnership agreement may be renewed for a period not to exceed 5 years.
 - Provides ability to renew partnership agreements through an expedited non-competitive process if Secretary determines that a project has met or exceeded the objectives of the project and extension is requested by the partner.
- **Watershed Programs**
 - Maintains current mandatory funding for the Watershed Programs. The bill authorizes \$50 million per year in mandatory funding for the life of the farm bill and every year thereafter (\$250 million over the life of the farm bill).
 - **Farm Bill Implementation**
 - FY 2019
 - Existing Rules and Mandates
 - FY2020
 - Phase-1 – Interim Rules
 - FY2021
 - Phase-2 – Final Rules

❖ **CSP: Conservation Stewardship Program –**

- Results of 2018 General Signup
 - Applications = 460
 - Acres in Applications = 800,000
 - New contracts = 355
 - Acres in contracts = 709,617
- Popular CSP Activities in 2018
 - Prescribed Grazing
 - Cover Crops
 - Pest Management
 - Nutrient Management
 - Tree/Shrub Establishment
 - Herbaceous Weed Treatment
 - Conservation Cover – Pollinator seedings
- SUMMARY:
 - Nationally 80M+ acres enrolled since 2010
 - Nebraska
 - 5,811 Contracts
 - 11.2M acres
 - \$406M obligated
- 2019 Payment Rates (UNCHANGED FROM 2018) **NOT 100% SURE**

- FY2019
 - Signup date for new contracts – Application Cutoff Date: May 10, 2019
 - Completing payments, contract reviews, modifications
 - Renewal Applications (2014 contracts) – SPRING 2019
 - Review and submit requests for new enhancements

❖ **ACEP: Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – ALE & WRE**

- **ALE**
 - FRPP, GRP, & WRP
 - FY17 Implementation
 - This parcel was closed prior to January 1, 2019
 - FY18 Implementation
 - RCPP – ALE
 - Appraisals will be completed once deed reviews are completed.

- **WRE**
 - Retains purpose and function of WRP
 - FY17 Implementation
 - Nineteen offers to purchase – ACCEPTED
 - 13 Easements have been closed
 - 2 Easements ready for closing by Title Company
 - Others waiting for updated environmental database search, title issues, resurveying one and the other waiting for mineral rights to be corrected.

 - FY18 Implementation
 - 11 offers to purchase – ACCEPTED
 - Selected surveyor has begun their work with a deadline of May 1, 2019 to complete the survey's.
 - Deadline to close these easements is February 15, 2020

 - FY19 Compensation
 - The basis for the compensation offers for the easement will be the lowest of:
 - Fair market value as determined by an AWMA or appraisal
 - Geographic Area Rate Cap (GARC)
 - An amount voluntarily offered by the landowner
 - PROPOSED GEOGRAPHIC AREA RATE CAPS (GARC'S)
 - Not to Exceed Rate = \$4,488.00 for all land uses

- **FY19 ACEP-WRE & ALE**
 - 2019 Market analysis and GARC Rates have been approved
 - Changes from original submission
 - Appraisals required in certain areas and land uses due to lack of similar sales

- Second FY19 application cut-off date – TBD
- Number of approvals may be limited due to the short amount of time available to process applications and make offers to purchase prior to October 1, 2019.

❖ **EQIP: Environmental Quality Incentives Program –**

- State EQIP Subcommittee meeting – May 2019
- EQIP Practice Summary: 2014-2018
 - Waste Storage Facility = 40
 - Pond = 22
 - Livestock Pipeline = 1,490 miles
 - Fence = 981 miles
 - Brush Management = 52,800 acres
 - Prescribed Burning = 65,400 acres
 - Terrace = 1,015 miles
 - No Till = 42,000 acres
 - Cover Crops = 350,000 acres
 - Irrigation Water Management = 518,000 acres
 - High Tunnel System = 73
- **2019 Statewide Fund Pools**
 - **Special Initiatives – National**
 - **NOTE: No funding for Ogallala Aquifer Initiative in FY2019**
 - **RCPP**
 - Ogallala Aquifer & Platte River Recovery – CPNRD & TPNRD
 - Regional Grassland Bird & Grazing Enhancement Initiative - NGPC
 - Cropland Cover for Soil Health and Wildlife – NGPC
 - Lower Elkhorn Water and Soil Conservation Project
 - Republican Basin Conservation Partnership – LRNRD
 - Divots in the Pivots – UBBNRD/RWBJV
 - Wahoo Creek Water Quality Sites 26 & 27 – LPNNRD
 - Papillion Creek Site WP-1 Dam – PMRNRD
- **EQIP Fund Allocations in 2019**
 - State Initiatives

• Forestry General	\$500,000.00
• Forestry Windbreak	\$100,000.00
• Wildlife	\$2,400,000.00
• Tribal	\$100,000.00
• AFO	\$1,000,000.00
• NE WQI – Long Pine	\$400,000.00
• NE WQI – Shell Creek	\$150,000.00

- State/National Initiatives
 - Organic \$100,000.00
 - Energy \$25,000.00
 - High Tunnel \$100,000.00
 - CAP \$200,000.00
 - Rangeland Health Demo Ranch \$500,000.00
 - Ephemeral Gulley \$600,000.00
 - Working Lands for Wildlife \$100,000.00
 - Advanced Cover Crop \$200,000.00
 - LENRD WQI \$50,000.00

➤ **EQIP – National Initiatives \$1.8 million**

- NWQI \$1.5 million
- 3 watersheds: Bazile, Wahoo Creek, Big Sandy

Forestry Service Partnership \$328,000.00

- 3 NRD's: UNWNRD, MNNRD, ULNRD

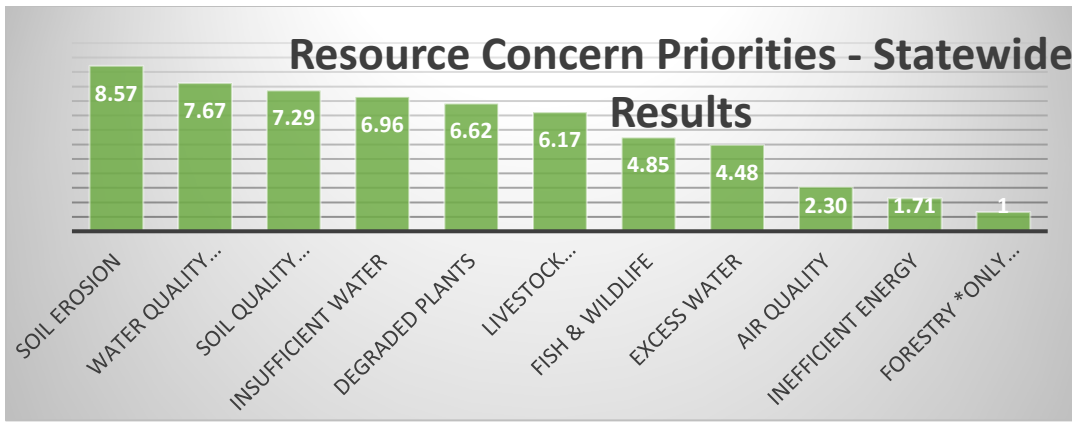
➤ **EQIP General \$22.2 million**

EQIP General Distribution

- **State Initiatives \$9.5 million**
 - Includes Wildlife 10% & HU 10%
- **Balance to LWG Fund Pools \$ 12.7 million**

❖ **LOCAL WORK GROUP MEETINGS –**

- Meetings completed in January/February 2019
- LOCAL WORK GROUP AGENDA ITEMS:
 - Priority Resource Concerns
 - Fund Pool - Ranking Tools – Screening Tools (???)
 - Revised ranking process for FY2020 – CART
 - Will not have specialized Fund Pools like we do now.
 - Practice Payment Schedule
- Will have another meeting this SUMMER!
- **SUMMARY: Priority Resources Concerns**
 - Soil Erosion
 - Water Quality degradation
 - Soil Quality Degradation
 - Insufficient Water
 - Degraded Plants
 - Livestock Production Limitation
 - Fish and Wildlife
 - Excess Water
 - Air Quality
 - Inefficient Energy



○ **FY2020 EQIP State Policy Decisions**

- FY2020 LWG/NRCS Recommendations
 - Eastern Red Cedar Policy – TBD (Not ready to move forward in any one direction yet for 2020.
 - All comments are available for your viewing if needed.
 - End option for irrigated to dry re-enrollment
 - EQIP application cutoff date - November 15, 2019
 - Applications ranked/Preapproved - Early February 2020
- Multiple adjustments to practice scenarios and payment rates
 - Integrated Pest Management (595) – Develop new scenario for a non-atrazine alternative for corn to protect surface water quality and assist with managing herbicide resistance
 - Brush Management (314) – Develop “Ultra Low Density” scenario
- FY2020 LWG/NRCS Recommendations – Continued
- Practice Payment caps
 - Establish \$10,000 payment cap for Nutrient Management (590)
 - Establish \$80,000 payment cap for Waste Storage Facility (313)
 - Establish \$10,00 payment cap for Integrated Pest Mgmt. (595)
 - Establish cap of “2” for Irrigation Water Mgmt. (449)
- Retain existing payment caps:
 - (340) Cover Crop - \$7,500.00
 - (329) No Till - \$5,000.00
 - (528) Prescribed Grazing, Adaptive Mgmt. - \$15,000.00
 - (327) Conservation Cover - \$7,500.00
 - (645) Upland Wildlife Habitat Mgmt. - \$7,500.00

❖ **PRACTICE PAYMENT SCHEDULE –**

- FY2020 – Deadlines
 - New component & cost updates – February 15, 2019
 - Regional scenario requests – March 15, 2019
 - Cost list development deadline – August 16, 2019
 - Practice Payment Schedule Completed – August 30, 2019

- [USDA Website – State Payment Schedules](#)
 - Click on NE
- [Nebraska Payment Schedules](#)
 - [Click on EQIP](#)
- Went over a few scenarios found on the PP.
 - CLICK ON Practice Scenarios
 - Practice:
 - Scenario Description:
 - Scenario Cost Unit:

QUESTIONS & Comments

Will there be more than one appraisal done? – No just 1.

Craig stated that the Cost share for Eastern Red Cedar is a huge divide. Twin Platte & Upper Loup no longer sell ERC Trees.

Need better education about Eastern Red Cedar.

Would like to have several Landowners do a show & tell tours.

Brad state that there are 5 Questions that we asked the LWG to provide input:

- 1) What resource concern(s) is/are being addressed by ERC? (Use the resource concern list that NRCS applies to the conservation planning process)
- 2) Can that resource concern be adequately addressed by another species of conservation tree? (For example, if reduced wind erosion or improved snow distribution across a field is the objective, can another species accomplish that function?)
- 3) If an evergreen is necessary to accomplish the desired outcome, what alternative species exist to replace ERC? (R.M. juniper, ponderosa pine, jack pine, etc.)
- 4) How do the issues listed above vary from one portion of the NRD to another? (For example, are there different resource concerns in cropland dominated areas vs. rangeland areas vs. woodlands or riparian corridors?)
- 5) What other program adaptations can be used to facilitate reducing the use of ERC in tree plantings? (For example, financial assistance for the construction of fabricated windbreaks, or increased payment rates for potted pine species or animal protection devices, etc.)

CRP UPDATE – Doug Klein, Conservation Program Chief, FSA

- ❖ The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorizes the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), including the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and the Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP), and authorizes two new CRP pilot programs, CLEAR 30 devoted to the Clean Lakes, Estuaries, and Rivers (CLEAR) priority of the 2018 Farm Bill and the Soil Health and Income Protection Pilot Program (SHIPP).

- CLEAR 30
 - CRP participants with contracts that expire on or after Dec. 20, 2018, may choose to enroll their land in CLEAR 30. This program prioritizes practices that help benefit water resources, such as grass sod waterways, contour grass sod strips, prairie strips, filter strips, riparian buffers, wetland or wetland buffers, saturated buffers, or other similar water quality practices. Contracts under CLEAR 30 are enrolled for 30 years.
 - Participants will receive 30 annual payments equal to what they would have received under continuous GRP.

- SHIPP
 - Eligible land must be located in the prairie pothole region and have a cropping history, have been planted in the three previous years before enrollment, and be less-productive than other land on the farm.
 - Land that was in CAP during these three previous years is not eligible. Subject to certain conditions, harvesting for seed, haying, and grazing outside the primary nesting season is allowed.
 - No more than 15 percent of eligible land per farm may enroll.
 - Contracts are from 3-5 years.
 - Annual rental payments:
 - 50 percent of the average county rental rate for the applicable county, and
 - 75 percent of the average county rental rate for the applicable county for beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged, or veteran farmers.
 - There is no cost-share for practice establishment except for beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged, or veteran farmers.
 - Enrollment ends on Dec. 31, 2020.

❖ Received higher 23-27 Million by 2023

- 8.6 million acres devoted to continuous practices
- 2 million dedicated to Grassland
- 40% 3.4m continuous CRP tied to “Clear 30” Initiative (Pilot Program)

❖ 2018 – There was 1Million Acres in NE

❖ Annual rental rates

- CRP – Annual Rental Payment & Incentive payment: Per Person or Legal Entity Annual Payment or Acreage Limitation under the 2018 Farm Bill - \$50,000.00.
- 85% Annual
- 90% Continuous

❖ Cost-Share Payments

- Pays 50 percent of the cost of establishing practices.
- Limited to 50 percent of the actual cost of seed.

- ❖ Re-Authorized Practice & Signing Incentive Payments
 - PIP
 - For new continuous enrollment, an incentive payment is required of no more than 50 percent of the actual cost of establishing all measures and practices, including seed costs related to the establishment of cover.
 - SIP
 - For new continuous enrollment, an incentive payment is required at time of enrollment equal to 32.5 percent of the amount of the 1st year annual rental payment.
- ❖ Transition Incentive Program – Carried over – no details.
- ❖ No sign-up yet for General or Continuous

QUESTIONS & Comments

Describe how the Transition Incentive Program works?

Answer – We are waiting for the national office provide how this will apply going forward with implementation of the Farm Bill

LBB – Are the base acres of the NE Buffer strip program going to be there?

Answer – we haven't been provided with the answer at this time

Where does the guidance come from?

Answer – This guidance will come from the national office.

Central Basin & CREP? Answer – Still waiting for updates from the Farm Bill.

WRAP UP & QUESTIONS – Craig Derickson, STC, NRCS

Please send any further questions or comments to Tami Nordman @ tami.nordman@usda.gov

Future 2019 meetings will be the following dates:

June 6, 2019 @ UNL Extension Office (444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, NE)

September 12, 2019 @ UNL Extension Office (444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, NE)

December 5, 2018 @ UNL Extension Office (444 Cherrycreek Road, Lincoln, NE)