



Natural Resources Conservation Service
359 East Park Drive, Suite 2
Harrisburg, PA 17111



State Technical Committee
AGENDA
PA State Technical Committee
Tuesday, July 16, 2019

- 1:00 Welcome – Denise Coleman, State Conservationist
- 1:10 Women Caring for the Land – Margot L. Mays, MidAtlantic Conservation & Stewardship Program Manager, American Farmland Trust
- 1:40 Hispanic Farmers in PA – Abigail Appleman, Hispanic Outreach Coordinator for PA NRCS, Capital RC&D Council
- 2:10 Overview of the Crop Insurance Program – Edward Gregory, Risk Management Agency
- 2:30 NRCS Technical Guide Report:
 - Dan Dostie, State Resource Conservationist
 - Pete Vanderstappen, State Engineer
- 2:40 Financial Programs Reports:
 - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) – Ed Sanders
 - Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) – Noel Soto
 - National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) and Source Water Protection – Ashley Lenig
- 3:00 Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) Report – Hathaway Jones
- 3:15 Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) Report – Susan Marquart
- 3:30 Committee Input: Do the State Technical Committee members have any suggestions for topics or agenda items for future meetings?
- 4:00 Next State Technical Committee Meeting Wednesday, October 16, 2019

Dates for 2019 State Technical Committee Meetings:

Wednesday, January 23, 2019
Thursday, April 18, 2019
Tuesday, July 16, 2019
Wednesday, October 16, 2019

Listen in/participate by calling:

Toll free 888-844-9904
Access Code: 6941559

Helping People Help the Land

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

State Technical Committee

July 16, 2019

Meeting Notes

Denise Coleman, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) opened the meeting promptly at 1pm. She welcomed those who were joining the meeting by using the Toll-Free Number and asked them to introduce themselves. She then asked everyone physically present at the meeting to introduce themselves also. At that point there were 8 partners on the phone and 20 persons physically present, for a total of 28 partners participating. Denise commented that we are constantly trying to "get out the message" of the State Technical Committee Meetings, and that today Susan Parry, of the Civil Rights Committee is testing two new ways of communicating remotely with partners. First by using "WEBEX" and secondly using "UTUBE Live". We will keep you advised of our success in the creation and use of these platforms.

Denise announced that August 1st was the deadline for nominations for the Aldo Leopold Conservation Award. The Leopold Conservation Award Program recognizes agricultural landowners actively committed to a land ethic. Working with prominent state conservation partners, the Heinz Foundation presents the prestigious honor, which consists of \$10,000 and a crystal award, in settings that showcase the landowners' achievements among their peers. She requested that all who knew of a farmer/producer that should be nominated with this award, to secure and submit an application which she had placed on the table at the entrance to this meeting room.

Margot L. Mays, MidAtlantic Conservation & Stewardship Program Manager for the American Farmland Trust (AFT) was introduced and presented a program concerning "Women Caring for the Land". (Handout attached.) She noted that the American Farmland Trust was founded in 1980 as a non-profit and encouraged by the Rockefeller family. It is the only national organization that takes a holistic approach to agriculture, focusing only on the land itself, agricultural practices and those farmers and workers who do the work. In addition to water and climate initiatives, AFT also works with Farms Under Threat, the National Agricultural Land Network, Farmland for a New Generation and the Farmland Information Center. "Women for the Land" pertains to a new era of ownership and conservation, and a national shift in agricultural land ownership. It should be noted that over 300 million acres of US land is now farmed or co-owned by women and at least 97 million additional acres are in the hands of women landowners. It is predicted that the percentage of women who own land is expected to increase in the next decade as more women inherit farmland from their relatives. Women for the Land is focusing nationally on women non-operating landowners. 31% of land on farms in the 48 contiguous states is owned by people who do not farm (Non-operating landowners). 37% of those non-operating landowners are female and own 46% of that farmland. It is noted that women landowners are particularly interested in conservation, are deeply committed to healthy farmland, and are under represented in farmland conservation programs. AFT's objectives are to address the obstacles that women landowners face in accessing conservation programs and resources. To support women landowners in taking action to protect their farmland, adopt environmentally sound farming practices and to enhance farm viability. Women Landowner Conservation Learning Circles were established by AFT in 2012. These Learning Circles focused and provided information on whole farm planning, farmer landlord relationship building and farmland protection. They have spread across 9 states so far. Recruiting for Learning Circles is currently happening in Pennsylvania and Virginia. For Technical Assistance, resources, and templates, contact American Farmland Trust's Farmland Information Center at <https://www.farmlandinfo.org/>. Margo announced that upcoming MidAtlantic Learning Circles recruitment will occur in Pennsylvania during the

fall of 2019 and spring/summer of 2020. Dates announced are as follows:
Lancaster County - November 6, 2019; Chester County - Oct 22, 2019;
Berks County, October 23, 2019. Additional information concerning these
events will be published sooner to the dates indicated. To participate in a
MidAtlantic Learning Circle, contact Janice Wiles at
mid-atlanticoutreach@farmland.org or Margot Mays, mmays@farmland.org.



Who is American Farmland Trust?

Saving the land that sustains us by:





Who is American Farmland Trust?

Since our founding in 1980 as a national non-profit organization, AFT has helped permanently protect over 6.5 million acres of agricultural lands, advanced environmentally sound farming practices on millions of additional acres, and supported thousands of farm families.

**No Farms
No Food**

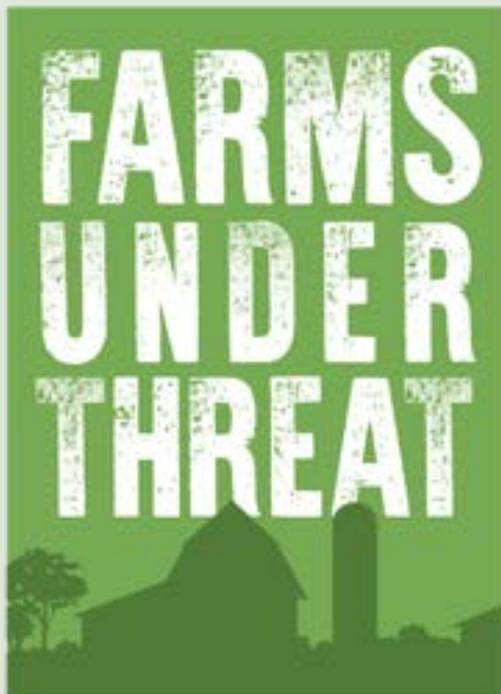

American Farmland Trust

No FUTURE?



American Farmland Trust

SAVING THE LAND THAT SUSTAINS US



Farmland for a New Generation



FARMLAND INFORMATION CENTER



Women for the Land

A New Era of
Ownership and
Conservation

Why Women for the Land? A National Shift in Agricultural Land Ownership

- Nearly **301 million acres (1/3) of U.S. land** are now farmed or co-farmed by women & at least **87 million additional acres** are in the hands of women landowners
- Percentage of women who own land expected to increase in the next decade as more women inherit farmland from their relatives



Women for the Land: Focusing Nationally on Women Non-operating Landowners



- 31% of land on farms in the 48 contiguous states is owned by people who do not farm (non-operating landowners)
- 37% of those non-operating landowners in the U.S. are female and own 46% of that farmland



Insights On Women Landownership

- Women are particularly interested in conservation
- Deeply committed to healthy farmland and healthy farm communities
- Under represented in farmland conservation programs

AFT's Women for the Land Program

Objectives: Address the obstacles women landowners face in accessing conservation programs and resources. Support women landowners in taking action to protect their farmland, adopt environmentally sound farming practices, and enhance farm viability.

Three key components:

- Research (Women Non-operating Landowner Survey)
- Conservation Learning Circles
- Technical assistance & policy reform





Women Non-operating Landowner Survey

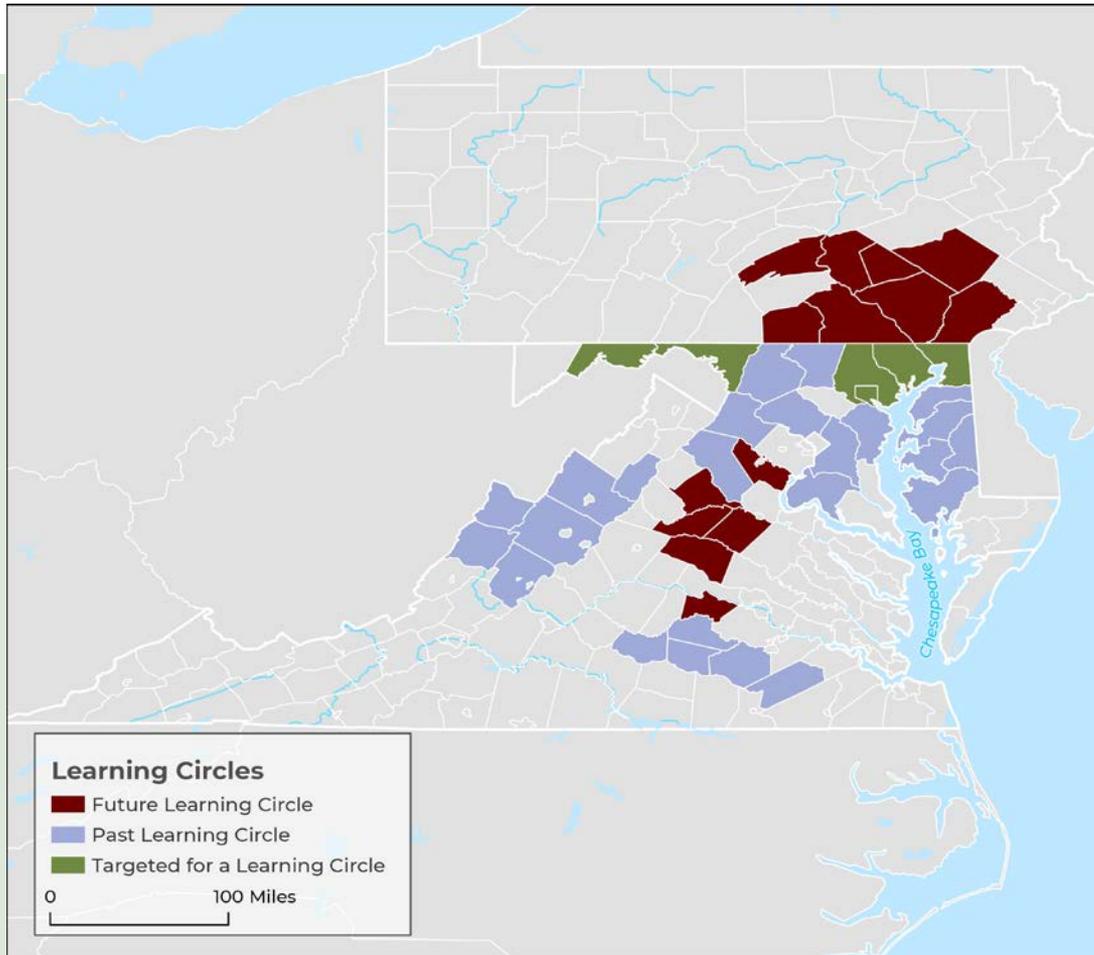
- Developed 5 years ago and sent out (through Dr. Peggy Petrzelka, Utah State University) to women non-operating landowners in 11 states
- Goals:
 - Increase knowledge and awareness of women non-operating landowners
 - Identify the most effective ways to support women landowners in achieving long-term goals around conservation
- The Survey has not yet been distributed in the MidAtlantic

Women Landowner Conservation Learning Circles

- Nationally, since 2012:
 - Learning circles across 9 states
 - Topics: Whole farm planning, Succession planning, Farmer-landlord relationship building, Farmland protection
- In Mid-Atlantic:
 - Currently recruiting for Learning Circles in PA and VA
 - Fall 2019 in VA and Fall 2019/Spring 2020 in PA



In Which Counties have the MidAtlantic Learning Circles Been?



- 2014 to Present in VA
 - Excellent partnership with VA FSA
- 2017-2018 in MD
 - With funding from DNR, Learning Circles highlighted Riparian Buffers
- 2018-2020 in PA
 - With funding from NRCS and NFWF



• Community

• My Land

My/Our Plan

• Conservation

Legacy

• ACTION

Technical Assistance & Policy Reform

- Technical assistance, resources, & templates: American Farmland Trust's Farmland Information Center; <https://www.farmlandinfo.org/>
- Strong conservation policies & programs

Faces of MidAtlantic Women for the Land Participants



Montgomery County, MD



Headwaters FSA Region, VA

More Faces of MidAtlantic Women for the Land Participants

Prince George's and Charles Counties, MD



Frederick and Carroll Counties, MD



Upcoming MidAtlantic Learning Circles



PA Fall 2019

Lancaster, Chester, and Berks

PA Jan – Oct 2020

Dauphin, Lebanon, Perry, Adams
and York

VA Fall 2019

VA District 7 - Spotsylvania, Orange,
Culpeper, Louisa

VA Spring 2020

Powhatan, Prince William, Amherst

To participate in a MidAtlantic Learning Circle contact

Janice Wiles, mid-atlanticoutreach@farmland.org

Margot Mays, mmays@farmland.org

AFT's MidAtlantic staff



Margot L. Mays
MidAtlantic Conservation &
Stewardship Program Manager
mmays@farmland.org

Jacob A. Gilley
Rappahannock Project Coordinator
(540) 219-5015
jgilley@farmland.org



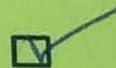


American Farmland Trust
SAVING THE LAND THAT SUSTAINS US



Caroline Wade
MidAtlantic Regional Director
(309) 231-7440
cwade@farmland.org

Please rate your overall satisfaction with the Women For The Land Learning Circle? (Please check response.)



Satisfied

Very Satisfied

I loved this fabulous
learning circle.

THANK YOU!

ANY QUESTIONS?

Abigail Appleman, Hispanic Outreach Coordinator for PA NRCS, Capital RC&D Council was introduced and provided a presentation concerning Hispanic Farmers in Pennsylvania. (Handout attached.) Abigail explained that according to the NASS AgCensus 2017 data, Hispanic producer participation in PA NRCS program is very low. Farms operated by Hispanic producers did increase from 550 in 2012 to 619 in 2017; 373 farms with Hispanic principal producers has increased to 512; Hispanic producers increased from 652 to 759. Financial assistance to Hispanics has increased over the last 3 years. Emphasis has been placed on providing public announcements in the Spanish language wherever possible to include the Spanish Web pages on the PA NRCS Website. She indicated that help is being provided by Capital RC&D, Berks County CD (as well as other districts), PA WAgN, Penn State Extension, Chambersburg Hispanic American Center and many more. Barriers for Hispanic farmers are: language culture, traditional lens of agriculture, scale of production, land agreements, knowledge of USDA Services, complicated process to obtain assistance (forms, payment at end, etc.), access to markets and time. Abigail did a phone interview with a Hispanic producer during her presentation. The farmer that she spoke with is employed by a large scale producer but is also a landowner and produces and markets crops on his owned small farmland. The producer's comments were interpreted by Abigail. She went on to discuss the crops that the majority of Hispanic producers grow and market in Pennsylvania.

NRCS in PA: Hispanic Outreach

Abigail Appleman, Hispanic Outreach Technician



Why Outreach to Hispanic Producers?

- Participation in NRCS programs very low (2015 = 1/0)
- NASS AgCensus 2017 data

Hispanic Producers in Pennsylvania

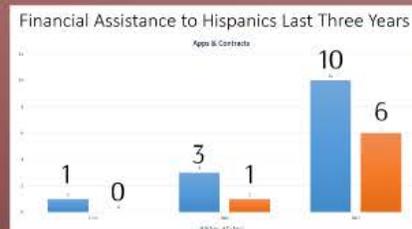
- Farms operated by Hispanic producers **increased to 619** in 2017 (up from 550 in 2012)
- **512 farms** with Hispanic principal producer(s) (was 373)
- Hispanic producers **increased to 759** (up from 652)
- Map breaks it down by county

Steady increase over time...

What we've accomplished

- Materials & products
- Forms of outreach
- Partners

Evidence



Evidence

Financial Assistance to Hispanics Last Three Years



**GRANJAS GRANDES
O PEQUEÑAS . . .
¡TODAS PUEDEN!**



No importa el tamaño de su granja, el Servicio de Conservación de Recursos Naturales (NRCS) puede ayudarle a producir sosteniblemente.

OFRECEMOS:

- Asistencia Financiera
- Asistencia Técnica
- Asistencia con la agricultura orgánica y agricultura urbana



El Departamento de Agricultura de los Estados Unidos
www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov
El USDA ofrece igualdad de oportunidades

**BIG OR SMALL . . .
CONSERVATION FITS ALL!**



The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can help address your farm needs regardless of your operation's size.

WE OFFER:

- Financial Assistance
- Technical Assistance
- Help with organic farming + urban farming



United States Department of Agriculture
www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov
USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

010-570-1888

PRODUCTORES AGRÍCOLAS

¿Produce vegetales, frutas o animales y necesitas tuberías/tanques para agua, mejorar el suelo, controlar plagas, un tunel plástico para extender la producción? El Departamento de Agricultura (USDA) tiene programas de asistencia financiera para ayudar con esto y mucho más. La asistencia es libre de costo y hablamos español.

Para más información llámanos libre de costo al 1-866-232-0690 o llama a Abigail Appleman al 570-415-6463. USDA es un patrono que ofrece igualdad de oportunidad.

Estamos anunciando la nueva página web de NRCS en español

Si usted maneja una granja, finca pequeña, huerta o es dueño de tierras, usted pudiera beneficiarse de los programas de asistencia financiera y técnica que ofrecemos. ***Para aprender más...***



Popular Topics

- > [Financial Assistance](#)
- > [Information for PA Farmers](#)
- > [Soils](#)
- > [PA Civil Rights](#)
- > [Employee Information](#)

Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Email, and Flickr icons. Sign up for email updates: [Go](#)

In the News

Events & Deadlines

- USDA-NRCS Advancing to CUSTOMER SERVICE TOOLKIT, Version 9
- NRCS Accepting Applications for Conservation Programs
- NRCS, Partners Showcase Efforts to Protect Warbler

Highlights

- [Become an Earth Team Volunteer](#)
- [Conservation Training](#)
- [NRCS Publications](#)
- [Find Your Local NRCS Office](#)



En Español



Get Started with NRCS

Best regards,
Abigail Appleman
Hispanic & Historically Underserved Outreach Technician
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Office: 570-524-2549 x103
Call/Text Cell: 570-415-6463
abigail.appleman@pa.usda.gov

[Para información en español para productores agrícolas, haga clic aquí.](#)
[For Information for Pennsylvania Farmers, click here.](#)

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.
El USDA es un patrono que ofrece igualdad de oportunidad en programas, préstamos, y empleo.

**BIG OR SMALL . . .
CONSERVATION FITS ALL!**



The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can help address your farm needs regardless of your operation's size.

WE OFFER:

- Financial Assistance
- Technical Assistance
- Help with organic farming + urban farming

USDA



United States Department of Agriculture
www.pa.nrcs.usda.gov

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.





Oportunidades en la Agricultura y la Conservación

Para Productores Agrícolas Hispanos, Afroamericanos,
y Otros de Baja Participación

¡Acompañanos el 9 de Abril!



¡La hibernación ha terminado!

Capital RC&D y el Servicio de Conservación de Recursos Naturales del USDA, le invitan asistir y comenzar una temporada de crecimiento con herramientas nuevas, ideas frescas, y con el apoyo de un equipo en producción y conservación.

Aprenda sobre: oportunidades para agricultores de manos de otros agricultores, programas de asistencia financiera, becas, compra de tierra, y además que tu opinión es importante para los demás. Conozca a profesionales en la producción y conservación, que están dispuestos a echarle la mano.

Todos los productores agrícolas están bienvenidos, y la inscripción cuesta solamente \$10. Si el costo es una barrera que impide su participación, llame a Abigail al 570-415-6463 o envíele un email a abigail.appleman@usda.gov. ¡Inscríbese hoy! Los asientos son limitados. Habrá personas intérpretes presentes.

Se puede inscribir a través de <https://bit.ly/2C36E2y> o llamando al 570-415-6463.

April 9, 2019, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Lugar:
Pine Forge Academy
361 Pine Forge Road
Pine Forge, PA 19548



United States
Department of
Agriculture



USDA
United States
Department of
Agriculture

**WELCOME!
¡BIENVENIDOS!**

RC'D

To
**Farming and Conservation
Opportunities**

for
Hispanic, African American
and Other Underserved Farmers

USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services.

It Takes Collaboration...

Capital RC&D

Berks County CD & other Districts

PA WAgN

Penn State Extension

ACLAMO

PASA

Mosaic

Chambersburg Hispanic American Center

...and lots more!

The Hispanic Producers

Berks	Beginning	~75 acres	Forest, tillable, pasture, CREP
Franklin	Beginning		Vegetables
Montour	Beginning	~10 acres	Pasture
Perry		~10 acres	Vegetables
Snyder		50+ acres	Forest, pasture

Both
Spanish
English
Both
Both+



Barriers

- Language, culture
- Traditional lens of agriculture
- Scale of production
- Land agreements
- Knowledge of USDA services
- Complicated process to obtain assistance (forms, payment at end, etc.)
- Access to markets
- Time



Barriers

- Language, culture
- Traditional lens of agriculture
- Scale of production
- Land agreements
- Knowledge of USDA services
- Complicated process to obtain assistance (forms, payment at end, etc.)
- Access to markets
- Time



Abigail Appleman

abigail.appleman@usda.gov

570-524-2549 x103

Edward Gregory, of the Risk Management Agency, joined the meeting by telephone from his office in Raleigh, NC and provided an overview of the Federal Crop Insurance Program. The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) is a wholly owned government corporation managed by the Risk Management Agency of the United States Department of Agriculture. FCIC manages the federal crop insurance program, which provides U.S. farmers and agricultural entities with crop insurance protection. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) has three program areas: Insurance Services, which provides federal crop insurance to American farmers; Product Management, which develops and reviews crop insurance products to ensure actuarial soundness; and Compliance, which monitors federal crop insurance programs for fraud, waste, and abuse. He explained that his office is the safety net for farmers who produce crops that are not covered by FSA Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), such as corn, tobacco, soybeans, fruits. The FSA NAP Program provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters. Insurance coverage policies are available for each individual crop grown. Also available is a Whole Farm Revenue Program (WFRP) which protects the overall harvest revenue, not the individual crop itself. Coverage levels for revenue can be purchased for 50 to 75%. One of the major NRCS programs that we work with is their Conservation Compliance Program. We use this program as a checkbox to make sure that producers are following the prescribed conservation practices and environmental concerns to be eligible for RMA protection programs. The bottom line is that if the producer is not in compliance with conservation practices and environmental requirements, they are not eligible for RMA benefits. If the producer is already participating in an RMA program and falls below the compliance requirements, they will be dropped from RMA. The cost of the RMA insurance is subsidized, so that the producer would pay approximately 60% of the insurance premium. This subsidy is paid without regard to the size of the producers' farm, property or crop production. If a producer grows a particular crop that is not covered under RMA or FSA, it would be covered under the WFRP policy. For instance if the producer was growing Zucchini, Squash or Cabbage, crops that are not covered by either FSA or RMA, would be covered under the WFRP as it would be considered under loss of revenue. He continued to cover the insurance coverage in detail.

Dan Dostie, (NRCS) was introduced and provided a Technical Guide Report update. (See attached Handout) He indicated that there has only been one update since the last State Technical Committee Meeting, that being: FOTG Notice #373 which releases the Windows Pesticide Screening Tool (WIN-PST) Hazard Rating Reference Guide for commonly used Forestry Herbicides. He went on to explain the details of that Notice. In addition, Dan reviewed the National Handbook of Conservation Practices Notice 168, dated May 9, 2019, and explained the details of that notice and how it relates to NRCS Conservation Practices that are must be adopted by the state of Pennsylvania within a period of one year. Next, he drew attention to Federal Register Notice 2019-04290 which was published on March 11, 2019 and prior to our last State Technical Meeting. It announced that NRCS will review all Conservation Practice Standards and invited the public to provide their comments prior to April 25, 2019. They reported that over 100 comments were received, that National discipline leads are working their way through the comments and that a contractor has been hired to complete literature reviews. Dan reminded all of the 74th Soil, Water and Conservation Service (SWCS) International Annual Conference that is being held in Pittsburgh, PA July 29th ,2019 thru July 31st , 2019. He included information regarding the conference. (See attached Handout)



United States Department of Agriculture



Pennsylvania
**Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service**



NRCS Technical Guide Report

Dan Dostie, SRC, Pete Vanderstappen, SCE ; Yuri Plowden, State Soil Scientist

July 16, 2019

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

nrcs.usda.gov/



Changes since STC meeting 04.18.2019

Field Office Guide Technical Guide NOTICES

Documents (5)

Document Title	Type	Pub Date	Subject	Keywords	Abstract	Size (kB)	Actions
Technical Guide Notice 273		2019-5-14	Forestry and Agroforestry	Win PST, Forestry, Herbicides	This notice releases the WIN-PST Hazard Rating Reference Guide for Commonly Used Forestry Herbicides (Agronomy Technical Note No. 5-PA Supplement 1) content to the Pennsylvania NRCS FOTG	270	



FIELD OFFICE TECHNICAL GUIDE

Support

Help

Login

Welcome to NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)

Select a state for documents.

State:

SUBMIT

<https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/>



Conservation Planning/Ecological Sciences Update

FOTG Notice #273 releases the WIN-PST Hazard Rating Reference Guide for Commonly Used Forestry Herbicides:

- This reference guide is a PA supplement to Agronomy Technical Note 5. The guide lists the commonly used forestry herbicides in PA that pass all WIN-PST evaluations due to Low (**L**) or Very Low (**V**) toxicity.
- Referencing this guide saves planners the time to redundantly run the evaluations each time a low or very low toxic herbicide is used to reduce excessive undesired plant pressure in forested communities.
- For use with Brush Management, Herbaceous Weed Treatment, Tree & Site Prep, Forest Stand Improvement practices.



Conservation Planning/Ecological Sciences Update

NATIONAL HANDBOOK OF CONSERVATION PRACTICES, May 9, 2019, NOTICE 168 transmits the following for adoption within one year in Pennsylvania:

- Combustion System Improvement (Code 372)
- Dust Control on Unpaved Roads and Surfaces (Code 373)
- Pest Management Conservation System (Code 595)
- Nutrient Management (Code 590)
- Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (Code 395)
- Subsurface Drain (Code 606)
- Waste Facility Closure (Code 360)
- Wildlife Habitat Planting (Code 420)

USDA Seeks Public Comments on Conservation Practice Standards



USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced today it is seeking public input on its existing national conservation practice standards as part of implementing the 2018 Farm Bill. NRCS offers 150-plus conservation practices to America's farmers, ranchers and forest landowners to help them meet their business and natural resource needs on their working lands. NRCS is requesting public comments on how to improve conservation practice standards that support programs. The comment period ends April 25, 2019.

Federal Register Notice

[2019-04290](#)

Published on March 11, 2019 announcing that NRCS will review all Conservation Practice Standards and invited the public to comment by April 25, 2019.

- 100 comments received
- National discipline leads are working their way through the comments
- Contractor hired to complete literature reviews



Conservation Engineering Update

No report



Soil Science Update

No changes to Section II of the FOTG since the last meeting



United States Department of Agriculture



Questions?



NRCS Pennsylvania Technical Guide



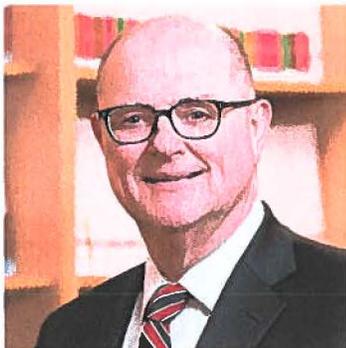
Natural Resources Conservation Service

nrcs.usda.gov/



Urban and Agriculture Leaders to Kick Off Soil and Water Conservation Society 2019 International Annual Conference

May 1, 2019



(Ankeny, Iowa – May 1, 2019) The Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS) 74th International Annual Conference, to be held July 28-31, 2019, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, will feature conservation leaders whose work emphasizes the importance of engaging both urban and rural communities in efforts to protect natural resources. **Registration** is open through July 17, 2019.

The theme of this year's conference is "Bridging the Divide: Uniting Rural and Urban Landscapes for Conservation."

"The Soil and Water Conservation Society is looking forward to convening hundreds of conservation professionals researching and practicing conservation in urban and rural landscapes to learn from one another, forge new and stronger connections, and increase our ability to protect our soil and water resources," says Clare Lindahl, CEO of SWCS.

Sponsor Spotlight: USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Courtesy of Dan Dostic, NRCS

NRCS and Partner Projects Help Farmers in Rural and Urban Communities Build Resilient Landscapes in Pennsylvania

NRCS field staff and partners help farmers conserve natural resources and build resilient landscapes no matter if the farm is in a rural or urban community.

The makeup of local partnerships delivering assistance may look different from place to place but they all have mutual interests in achieving multiple outcomes.

Conservation practices improve natural resources on each farm as well as provide clean water and wildlife habitat for communities near and far.

Throughout Pennsylvania farmers along the rural urban interface have adapted their operations to changing population dynamics, economic upswings and downturns, and changing land uses of forestry, agriculture, coal and natural gas extractions, post-industrialism and ex-urban development.

Conservation programs have also adapted to meet new needs. With less farmers each census, educating the next generation is often the most important local priority. During the 2019 SWCS Annual Conference, NRCS and partner projects were featured on two tours, a full day Agriculture in an Ever-Changing World tour and a half day Growing Urban Agriculture in Post-Industrial Communities tour.

Attendees of the full day rural tour visited a multi-generational dairy continuously adapting their conservation system and now preparing to supply electricity to the local community through a methane digester, a mead wine producer educating the public about the value of pollinators, and an organic farm direct-marketing nutritious grass-fed beef to customers and restaurants in Pittsburgh. Additionally, the tour featured the Amish village of Volant, and a review of scientific studies (based on research conducted at Gargas's farm) that examine why grass-fed beef is considered healthier due to varying ratios of fatty acids.

During the half-day urban tour attendees visited projects funded by a NRCS and NACD grant to the Allegheny County Conservation District including a one-acre farm in the shadow of an active steel mill growing produce and educating youth, the Homewood Historical Urban Farm where the Black Urban Gardeners and Farmers Co-Op (BUG_FPC) installed a high tunnel and efficient irrigation to fight food apartheid, and Hilltop Urban Farm where a season of soil remediation and cover cropping have been piloted.

NRCS in Pennsylvania supports farmers and communities to improve soil, water, and wildlife resources on working lands at any scale from a quarter-acre urban agriculture plot to 1,000's of acres of rural dairy crop land. To learn more about the challenges of conservation along the rural urban interface and the work of NRCS, visit our website at www.nrcs.usda.gov.



Grassycrest Farm – A four-generation dairy milking around 350 cows. Photo courtesy Geri Montgomery, NRCS



Grass-fed Cattle at Ronald Gargas's Organic Beef Farm



BUG_FPC members volunteer in early spring to begin managing high tunnels in an urban environment. Photo courtesy of Raqaueeb Bey



ACCD staff test resident soil for lead and other heavy metals. Photo courtesy of ACCD.

The keynote Pritchard Lecture, "Bridging the Urban Rural Divide for America's Drinking Water," will be delivered by G. Tracy Mehan III, Executive Director of Government Affairs for the American Water Works Association. A widely respected expert in environmental policy and an insightful and thought-provoking writer, Mehan has been on the forefront of advocating for national water policy and projects through the Farm Bill and Regional Conservation Partnership Program. He will provide insight on what is being described as "an unheard of opportunity" to scale up partnerships between urban stakeholders and agriculture for the protection of our water supplies.

On Tuesday, July 30, the general session will open with remarks from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Chief Matthew Lohr. A fourth-generation farmer from Virginia, Lohr provides leadership for NRCS and its mission to support America's farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners in their voluntary conservation efforts through a network of more than 3,000 service centers in communities nationwide.

Also on Tuesday morning, a farmer panel will showcase the work of farmer leaders who make a difference in agriculture and conservation across the nation and within their communities. As farmers first, they bring a unique knowledge and skill set to their leadership positions. Each will provide his or her predictions for the future of farming and share strategies for preparing organizations and farms for what lies ahead.

In addition to hearing from leaders in conservation, conference attendees will have the opportunity to learn about the newest conservation research, projects, policies, technologies, partnerships, and programs. Specialty tracks will foster dialogue about unique collaborations in watershed planning and implementation, engagement of the private sector in conservation, and the challenges of adapting the landscape to a changing climate. An exhibit hall, poster session, and professional development tracks round out the conference. Attendees can also opt into tours that show conservation in action in the local area.

Continuing education units will be available for certified crop advisors, professional agronomists, professionals in erosion and sediment control, and others.

To learn more about activities at the SWCS International Annual Conference and the connections between rural and urban conservation, or to register, visit <http://www.swcs.org/19AC>.

For More Information:

Clare Lindahl, CEO

Soil and Water Conservation Society

clare.lindahl@swcs.org

515-289-2331, ext.113

Noel Soto, (NRCS) was introduced and provided updates on the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG), and The Grassland Conservation Initiative (GCI) which is a newly developed program. Noel stated the following:

CIG - Proposals had to be submitted by July 7th, 2019. At this point 5 proposals have been received and are under review. Once the review is completed they will be sent to us for implementation.

CSP - 145 applications have been received and are under evaluation. Once reviewed, all contracts must be obligated by September 9th, 2019.

CGI - This is a newly developed program and is part of CSP. To save money in the Commodity Title of the 2018 Farm Bill, Congress suspended commodity program payments on base acres that have been in grass (and not planted to a commodity crop) for the past 10 years. Producers with these base acres are not losing them, but payments will be suspended for the five-year life of the 2018 Farm Bill. Producers with these acres now will have the opportunity to enroll in a new Grasslands Conservation Initiative as a part of CSP for an \$18 per acre payment each year. In this program, eligible producers will have a single opportunity to enroll in a five-year contract. All eligible producers will be accepted into the initiative and their applications will not need to be ranked. By signing the contract, producers agree to meet or exceed the stewardship threshold for one priority resource concern by the end of the five-year contract. This is significantly different than the rest of CSP, where a producer must meet or exceed two priority resource concerns before they can apply. Noel stated that this program is still in the sign-up phase with a submission deadline of July 19th, 2019.

Ed Sanders (NRCS), was introduced and provided an update on EQIP. In discussing the status of Financial Assistance Contracts, there was \$400 million in AMA to be obligated and only one contract is yet to be signed. EQIP had 7 early contracts signed for a total of \$30,000. Later there were 370 contracts accounting for about \$19.5 million. RCP is almost wrapped up which accounted for about \$.5 million dollars. Overall in those three areas we had 402 contracts which accounts for \$20.4 million on the contract side and we effectively treated approximately 41 thousand acres of land. He noted that there is an additional \$2.5 million approved that we are in the final stages that is currently under final review awaiting signatures.

Ashley Lenig (NRCS), was introduced and provided an update on the National Water Quality Partnership Program (NWQI). With available monies available, we are working in two areas, Upper Kishacoquillas Creek in Mifflin County and Yellow Creek and Beaver Creek in Bedford and Blair Counties. We are in the readiness phase area wide conservation plans for these watershed areas. There are stakeholder meetings in process to determine what the priorities are and what we should be focusing on and the critical areas and to improve pollution of ag-impaired streams in those areas. New watershed areas we have are: Warrior Run in Northumberland County; Swatara Creek in Dauphin and Lebanon Counties; Maiden Creek in Berks and Lehigh Counties. The Swatara Creek and Maiden Creek are the Sourcewater Protection pilots to protect our drinking water.

Hathaway Jones, (NRCS) was introduced and provided a report on the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE), and Agricultural Land Easements (ALE). (See attached Handout) WRE applications for FY 2020 will be due the third week of October. This is a change from prior years where applications were due in the spring. This will assist NRCS in being able to determine eligibility and due diligence prior to funding being released nationally. For ALE, PA NRCS plans to meet with key partners to discuss completing the ALE application in the fall from October to December to get parcels ready for enrollment sooner in the Fiscal Year. Hathaway noted that currently there are 5 WRP projects in the restoration process and 22 WRE's that we are trying to fully restore.

WRE UPDATE:

WRE applications for FY 2020 will be due the third week of October. This is a change from prior years where applications were due in the spring. This will assist NRCS in being able to determine eligibility and due diligence prior to funding being released nationally.

ALE UPDATE:

For ALE, PA NRCS plans to meet with key partners to discuss completing the ALE application in the fall from October to December to get parcels ready for enrollment sooner in the Fiscal Year.

FY 2019 EASEMENT ENROLLMENT AND CLOSING UPDATE:**ALE APPLICATIONS FY 2019**

Entity	County	Acres	Funding Requested
The Land Conservancy of Adams County	Adams	661.79	\$1,200,000.00
The Lancaster Farmland Trust	Lancaster	116.00	\$116,000.00
The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture	Lancaster	75.00	\$102,000.00
The Land Conservancy of Adams County	Adams	153.02	\$199,691.00
The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture	Lancaster	68.00	\$108,800.00
The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture	Lancaster	89.72	\$148,038.00
		1163.53 acres total	\$1,874,529.00 Total

WRE APPLICATIONS FY 2019

Team	County	Est. Easement Cost	Acres
W1	Crawford	\$256,093.00	82.12
SE1	Cumberland	\$113,590.80	23.10
Total Funding:		\$476,613.80	Total Acres 105.22

ALE CLOSINGS FY 2019

No.	Acres	County	Reimbursement Amt \$
1	60.10	Centre	\$83,875.00
2	72.22	Chester	\$261,472.52
3	128.73	Chester	\$354,007.00
4	142.67	Adams	\$180,000.00
5	80.16	Adams	\$101,000.00
6	82.75	Schuylkill	\$82,750.00
7	182.23	Chester	\$900,000.00
Total Acres:	748.86	Total Dollars:	\$1,963,104.52

WRE CLOSINGS FY 2019

Agreement No	Final Total Acres	County	Easement Amt \$
542D371701MNC	18.44	York	\$72,137.00
542D371701MXG	30.98	Cumberland	\$172,474.00
552D371801NQP	41.46	Berks	\$255,281.00
Total:	90.88	Total:	\$499,892.00

Susan Marquart, (NRCS) was introduced and provided an update on Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). (See attached handout) Susan discussed the different Pennsylvania Projects that are shown on the attached document. When asked about the NEW RCPP, she indicated that it is still being formulated and we have no news on it as yet. Denise noted that we will not be extending any Conservation Stewardship Programs (CSP) agreements because there is a major overhaul in process for that program. And in RCPP agreements Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), we are doing no-cost extensions. All of our money is obligated.

There being no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned.

Pennsylvania Projects
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP)

1. Fiscal Year: FY 2014 and FY 2015
Name: Productive Farms and Clean Streams for Berks and Chester Counties
Lead State: Pennsylvania
Lead Partner: Stroud Water Research Center
Area: Selected Watersheds in Berks and Chester Counties
NRCS Funding: \$1,500,000

2. Fiscal Year: FY 2014 and FY 2015
Name: Delaware River Watershed Working Lands Conservation and Protection Partnership
Lead State: Pennsylvania
Lead Partner: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
PA Area: Selected Watersheds in Berks, Chester, Lehigh, and Schuylkill Counties
NRCS Funding (PA): \$7,213,750

3. Fiscal Year: FY 2014 and FY 2015
Name: Comprehensive Watershed Conservation in Dairy and Livestock Landscapes of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed
Lead State: Pennsylvania
Lead Partner: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
PA Area: Selected Watersheds in Bradford, Lancaster, and Juniata Counties
NRCS Funding (PA): \$4,520,000

4. Fiscal Year: FY 2014 and FY 2015
Name: Mason-Dixon Working Lands Partnership
Lead State: Maryland
Lead Partner: Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
PA Area: Franklin County
NRCS Funding (PA): \$750,000

5. Fiscal Year: FY 2014 and FY 2015
Name: Cerulean Warbler Appalachian Forestland Enhancement
Lead State: West Virginia
Lead Partner: American Bird Conservancy
PA Area: Identified Habitat Area
NRCS Funding (PA): \$4,013,334 + \$400,000 = \$4,413,334

6. Fiscal Year: FY 2017
Name: Soil Health: Improving Land, Water, and Producer Profitability
Lead State: Pennsylvania
Lead Partner: Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Area: Center, Clinton, and Lycoming Counties
NRCS Funding: \$420,847

7. Fiscal Year: FY 2018
Name: CCCD Partnership for Chesapeake Bay Water Quality
Lead State: Pennsylvania
Lead Partner Chester County Conservation District
Area: Chesapeake Bay Watershed in Chester County
NRCS Funding: \$3,600,000

8. Fiscal Year: FY 2018
Name: Implementing Conservation Practices and CNMPs on Pennsylvania Preserved Farms
Lead State: Pennsylvania
Lead Partner: Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture
Area: Franklin, Adams, York, Cumberland, Perry, and Dauphin Counties
NRCS Funding: \$6,370,000

STATE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
ATTENDANCE

NAME	ORGANIZATION/ AGENCY/ COMPANY	E-MAIL ADDRESS (if different/changed since last meeting)	MAILING ADDRESS or PHONE # (if e-mail not available)	How did you hear about this meeting?		
				e-mail	newspaper	other (specify)
Kate Ombalski	Words and Maps Consulting			-		
PATRICK BOWLING	PA DEP - BSDW			✓		
Curtis Schreffler	PA WSC US65			✓		
Lauren Shaffer	PA Farm Bureau	lshaffer@pfb.com		✓		
Abigail Appleman	NRCS			✓		
Dorothy Rosterich	PRWA					
Priscilla Schneider	SCC			✓		
Kelly O'Neill	CBF	koneill@cbf.org				
Grant Lubov	PA Farm Bureau					
RON RAMSEY	TNC			✓		
A. Lenig	NRCS					
ED SAUNDERS	NRCS					
Mark Dudic	UND	mdudic@damd.edu		✓		
Susan Marquant	NRCS					

PRESENT
DENISE COLEMAN
DAN DOSTIE
NOEL SOTO
HATHAWAY JONES
SUSAN PARRY
CHERYL BURNS
RC&D
TED EVANS

PRESENT - 21
PHONE IN - 8

29

PHONE IN
JEN FARABAUGH
MARGOT MAYS
JILL WHITCOMBE
JOHN CLUNE
LESLIE WELLER
KRISTIN HUGHES-EVANS
TITUS MARTIN
ED GREGORY

State Technical Committee

July 16, 2019

Meeting Notes

Denise Coleman, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) opened the meeting promptly at 1pm. She welcomed those who were joining the meeting by using the Toll-Free Number and asked them to introduce themselves. She then asked everyone physically present at the meeting to introduce themselves also. At that point there were 8 partners on the phone and 20 persons physically present, for a total of 28 partners participating. Denise commented that we are constantly trying to "get out the message" of the State Technical Committee Meetings, and that today Susan Parry, of the Civil Rights Committee is testing two new ways of communicating remotely with partners. First by using "WEBEX" and secondly using "UTUBE Live". We will keep you advised of our success in the creation and use of these platforms.

Denise announced that August 1st was the deadline for nominations for the Aldo Leopold Conservation Award. The Leopold Conservation Award Program recognizes agricultural landowners actively committed to a land ethic. Working with prominent state conservation partners, The Heinz Foundation presents the prestigious honor, which consists of \$10,000 and a crystal award, in settings that showcase the landowners' achievements among their peers. She requested that all who knew of a farmer/producer that should be nominated with this award, to secure and submit an application which she had placed on the table at the entrance to this meeting room.

00-07-00 Margot L. Mays, MidAtlantic Conservation & Stewardship Program Manager for the American Farmland Trust (AFT) was introduced and presented a program concerning "Women Caring for the Land". (Handout attached.) She noted that the American Farmland Trust was founded in 1980 as a non-profit and encouraged by the Rockefeller family. It is the only national organization that takes a holistic approach to agriculture, focusing only on the land itself, agricultural practices and those farmers and workers who do the work. In addition to water and climate initiatives, AFT also works

with Farms Under Threat, the National Agricultural Land Network, Farmland for a New Generation and the Farmland Information Center. "Women for the Land" pertains to a new era of ownership and conservation, and a national shift in agricultural land ownership. It should be noted that over 300 million acres of US land is now farmed or co-owned by women and at least 97 million additional acres are in the hands of women landowners. It is predicted that the percentage of women who own land is expected to increase in the next decade as more women inherit farmland from their relatives. Women for the Land is focusing nationally on women non-operating landowners. 31% of land on farms in the 48 contiguous states is owned by people who do not farm (Non-operating landowners). 37% of those non-operating landowners are female and own 46% of that farmland. It is noted that women landowners are particularly interested in conservation, are deeply committed to healthy farmland and are under represented in farmland conservation programs. AFT's objectives are to address the obstacles that women landowners face in accessing conservation programs and resources. To support women landowners in taking action to protect their farmland, adopt environmentally sound farming practices and to enhance farm viability. Women Landowner Conservation Learning Circles were established by AFT in 2012. These Learning Circles focused and provided information on whole farm planning, farmer landlord relationship building and farmland protection. They have spread across 9 states so far. Recruiting for Learning Circles is currently happening in Pennsylvania and Virginia. For Technical Assistance, resources, and templates, contact American Farmland Trust's Farmland Information Center at <https://www.farmlandinfo.org/>. Margo announced that upcoming MidAtlantic Learning Circles recruitment will occur in Pennsylvania during the fall of 2019 and spring/summer of 2020. Dates announced are as follows: Lancaster County - November 6, 2019; Chester County - Oct 22, 2019; Berks County, October 23, 2019. Additional information concerning these events will be published sooner to the dates indicated. To participate in a MidAtlantic Learning Circle, contact Janice Wiles at mid-atlanticoutreach@farmland.org or Margot Mays, mmays@farmland.org.

00-09-13 Abigail Appleman, Hispanic Outreach Coordinator for PA NRCS, Capital RC&D Council was introduced and provided a presentation concerning Hispanic Farmers in Pennsylvania. (Handout attached.) Abigail explained that according to the NASS AgCensus 2017 data, Hispanic producer participation in PA NRCS is very low. Farms operated by Hispanic producers did increase from 550 in 2012 to 619 in 2017; 373 farms with Hispanic principal producers has increased to 512; Hispanic producers increased from 652 to 759. This shows a steady increase. Financial assistance to Hispanics has increased over the last 3 years. Emphasis has been placed on providing public announcements in the Spanish language wherever possible to include the Spanish Web pages on the PA NRCS Website. She indicated that help is being provided by Capital RC&D, Berks County CD (as well as other districts), PA WAgN, Penn State Extension, Chambersburg Hispanic American Center and many more. Barriers for Hispanic farmers are: Language culture, Traditional lens of agriculture, scale of production, land agreements, knowledge of USDA Services, complicated process to obtain assistance (forms, payment at end, etc.), access to markets and time. Abigail did a phone interview with a Hispanic producer during her presentation. The farmer that she spoke with is employed by a large scale producer but is a landowner and produces and markets crops on his own small farmland. The producer's comments were interpreted by Abigail. She went on to discuss the crops that the majority of Hispanic producers grow and market in Pennsylvania.

00-50-10 Edward Gregory, of the Risk Management Agency, joined the meeting by telephone from his office in Raleigh, NC and provided an overview of the Federal Crop Insurance Program. The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) is a wholly owned government corporation managed by the Risk Management Agency of the United States Department of Agriculture. FCIC manages the federal crop insurance program, which provides U.S. farmers and agricultural entities with crop insurance protection. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) has three program areas: Insurance Services, which provides federal crop insurance to American farmers; Product Management, which develops and reviews crop insurance products to ensure actuarial soundness; and Compliance, which monitors federal crop insurance programs for fraud, waste, and abuse. He explained that his office is the

safety net for farmers who produce crops that are not covered by FSA Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP), such as corn, tobacco, soybeans, fruits. The FSA NAP Program provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters. Insurance coverage policies are available for each individual crop grown. Also available is a Whole Farm Revenue Program (WFRP) which protects the overall harvest revenue, not the individual crop itself. Coverage levels for revenue can be purchased for 50 to 75%. One of the major NRCS programs that we work with is their Conservation Compliance Program. We use this program as a checkbox to make sure that producers are following the prescribed conservation practices and environmental concerns to be eligible for RMA protection programs. The bottom line is that if the producer is not in compliance with conservation practices and environmental requirements, they are not eligible for RMA benefits. If the producer is already participating in an RMA program and falls below the compliance requirements, they will be dropped from RMA. The cost of the RMA insurance is subsidized, so that the producer would pay approximately 60% of the insurance premium. This subsidy is paid without regard to the size of the producers' farm, property or crop production. If a producer grows a particular crop that is not covered under RMA or FSA, it would be covered under the WFRP policy. For instance if the producer was growing Zucchini, Squash or Cabbage, crops that are not covered by either FSA or RMA, would be covered under the WFRP as it would be considered under loss of revenue. He continued to cover the insurance coverage in detail.

01-01-39 Dan Dostie, (NRCS) was introduced and provided a Technical Guide Report update. (See attached Handout) He indicated that there has only been one update since the last State Technical Committee Meeting, that being: FOTG Notice #373 which releases the Windows Pesticide Screening Tool (WIN-PST) Hazard Rating Reference Guide for commonly used Forestry Herbicides. He went on to explain the details of that Notice. In addition, Dan reviewed the National Handbook of Conservation Practices Notice 168, dated May 9, 2019, and explained the details of that notice and how it relates to NRCS Conservation Practices that are must be adopted by the state of Pennsylvania within a period of one year. Next, he drew attention to Federal Register Notice 2019-04290 which was published on March 11, 2019

and prior to our last State Technical Meeting. It announced that NRCS will review all Conservation Practice Standards and invited the public to provide their comments prior to April 25, 2019. They reported that over 100 comments were received, that National discipline leads are working their way through the comments and that a contractor has been hired to complete literature reviews. Dan reminded all of the 74th Soil, Water and Conservation Service (SWCS) International Annual Conference that is being held in Pittsburgh, PA July 29th, 2019 thru July 31st, 2019. He included information regarding the conference. (See attached Handout)

01-12-11 Noel Soto, (NRCS) was introduced and provided updates on the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG), and The Grassland Conservation Initiative (GCI) which is a newly developed program. Noel stated the following:

CIG - Proposals had to be submitted by July 7th, 2019. At this point 5 proposals have been received and are under review. Once the review is completed they will be sent to us for implementation.

CSP - 145 applications have been received and are under evaluation. Once reviewed, all contracts must be obligated by September 9th, 2019.

CGI - This is a newly developed program and is part of CSP. To save money in the Commodity Title of the 2018 Farm Bill, Congress suspended commodity program payments on base acres that have been in grass (and not planted to a commodity crop) for the past 10 years. Producers with these base acres are not losing them, but payments will be suspended for the five-year life of the 2018 Farm Bill. Producers with these acres now will have the opportunity to enroll in a new Grasslands Conservation Initiative as a part of CSP for an \$18 per acre payment each year. In this program, eligible producers will have a single opportunity to enroll in a five-year contract. All eligible producers will be accepted into the initiative and their applications will not need to be ranked. By signing the contract, producers agree to meet or exceed the stewardship threshold for one priority resource concern by the end of the five-year contract. This is significantly different than the rest of CSP, where a producer must meet or exceed two priority resource concerns

before they can apply. Noel stated that this program is still in the sign-up phase with a submission deadline of July 19th, 2019.

01-19-22 Ed Sanders (NRCS), was introduced and provided an update on EQIP. In discussing the status of Financial Assistance Contracts, there was \$400 million in AMA to be obligated and only one contract is yet to be signed. EQIP had 7 early contracts signed for a total of \$30,000. Later there were 370 contracts accounting for about \$19.5 million. RCP is almost wrapped up which accounted for about \$.5 million dollars. Overall in those three areas we had 402 contracts which accounts for \$20.4 million on the contract side and we affectively treated approximately 41 thousand acres of land. He noted that there is an additional \$2.5 million approved that we are in the final stages that is currently under final review awaiting signatures.

01-25-13 Ashley Lenig (NRCS), was introduced and provided an update on the National Water Quality Partnership Program (NWQI). With available monies available, we are working in two areas, Upper Kishacoquillas Creek in Mifflin County and Yellow Creek and Beaver Creek in Bedford and Blair Counties. We are in the readiness phase area wide conservation plans for these watershed areas. There are stake holder meetings in process to determine what the priorities are and what we should be focusing on and the critical areas and to improve pollution of ag-impaired streams in those areas. New watershed areas we have are: Warrior Run in Northumberland County; Swatara Creek in Dauphin and Lebanon Counties; Maiden Creek in Berks and Lehigh Counties. The Swatara Creek and Maiden Creek are the Sourcewater Protection pilots to protect our drinking water.

01-28-18 - Hathaway Jones, (NRCS) was introduced and provided a report on the Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE), and Agricultural Land Easements (ALE). (See attached Handout) WRE applications for FY 2020 will be due the third week of October. This is a change from prior years where applications were due in the spring. This will assist NRCS in being able to determine eligibility and due diligence prior to funding being released nationally. For ALE, PA NRCS

plans to meet with key partners to discuss completing the ALE application in the fall from October to December to get parcels ready for enrollment sooner in the Fiscal Year. Hathaway noted that currently there are 5 WRP projects in the restoration process and 22 WRE's that we are trying to fully restore.

01-34-14 Susan Marquart, (NRCS) was introduced and provided an update on Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). (See attached handout) Susan discussed the different Pennsylvania Projects that are shown on the attached document. When asked about the NEW RCPP, she indicated that it is still being formulated and we have no news on it as yet. Denise noted that we will not be extending any Conservation Stewardship Programs (CSP) because there is a major overhaul in process for that program. And in Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), we are doing no-cost. All of our money is obligated.

There being no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned.