State Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
July 28, 2021

Kasey Taylor, NRCS State Conservationist
Kasey opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the virtual meeting and introducing Leon Tillman, Chesapeake Bay Coordinator.

- State Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) Engagement
  The Delaware State Technical Committee has and continues to be a vital part of Farm Bill implementation. We here at NRCS depend on your knowledge and expertise to implement Farm Bill programs that are locally-led. To ensure that mission delivery has been achieved, we have collaborated with the committee for the state program management for our policies and procedures. This has been outlined in the strategic plan for technical assessments and implementation of the prioritized conservation practices. Your feedback and input on technical programmatic recommendations, identification of prioritized statewide natural resource concerns, development of ranking criteria, technical guidance for conservation practices that will include new innovative practices and reviewing financial assistance rates, incentive payments to ensure equitable allocation of funds to treat and sustain the resource base. Delaware has three (3) sub-committees to date with the newest addition being urban agriculture:
    - State Soil health Sub-Committee
    - State Wildlife Sub-Committee
  o Urban Agriculture sub-committee (committee members will be contacted after the meeting – in the event that you are interested in serving on the committee, please send a request to Ivy with a cc to me) As a reminder, all sub-committee nominees will need to be current members of the STAC. To join a subcommittee, you must be a member or affiliated with the STAC. (See membership link: Delaware State Technical Committee)
  o Beginning in FY22, we will move from a four-meeting structure to a three-meeting format within the year.

- Bog Turtle
  o An initiative established through the Working Lands for Wildlife, partnering with the Fish and Wildlife Service in 2012 for the protection of the Northern population of the Bog Turtle listed as an endangered species in 1974.
  o We established a partnership goal to create a recovery plan for the protection and management 185 occupied wetlands to be protected within the designated recovery units.
  o We prioritized through EQIP and WRP/WRE funding throughout the states participating states, CT, DE, MD, MA, NJ, NY, and PA.
  o We will carry the responsibility for the long-term management of the sites, less than 3 in the state.
  o This will continue to be updated and reviewed through our strategic plan along with the Black Duck Initiative and the Northern Bob White Quail.
WLFW has been successful in achieving habitat protection through WRP/WRE on 45% of wetlands identified in the species recovery plan in the seven state NE Region (CT, DE, MA, MD, NJ, NY, and PA.) While DE is listed as a participating state, due to there being less than 3-4000 acres in the state where the ideal soils would be in place/available to address the needs and or the acres in question are not associated with ag lands, there has been minimal to no engagement for this initiative.

As such, the initiative will be managed from the NRCS and FWS state offices to simplify coordination of location data. We will carry responsibility for the long-term management of the sites supporting bog turtle populations. We will fund landowner sign-ups from the state allocated WRE budget and will add this to a wildlife goal for the state that will be addressed through the strategic plan in FY22 and the outlying years.

Wetland easement programs generally prioritize listed species and the WLFW partnership, while positive, has not been found to be a major factor in driving easements to bog turtle occupied sites.

Science & Technology staff have provided programmatic support for WLFW regulatory predictability for bog turtle and are currently nearing completion of a renewed agreement for the northern range.

CEAP has funded a range-wide study of sites in the north and south to assess the efficacy of using prescribed grazing to maintain site vegetation suitability for bog turtle occupancy and this study will be completed by 2023; two previously completed smaller studies had favorable conclusions on this question and grazing could reduce considerable costs of easement management.

Chesapeake Bay Resilient Farms Initiative (CBRFI)

As the Chesapeake Bay region continues to work diligently to address the 2025 deadline to have all the practices and programs in place to achieve a healthy Bay, we recognize the work ahead to reduce another 50 million pounds to reach its goals.

In 2019, each Bay jurisdiction finalized their “Phase 3” Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP), setting a roadmap for achieving the 2025 deadline. Agricultural practices are generally some of the most cost-effective for nutrient reductions. Agricultural reductions are largely driven by financial incentives and technical assistance.

When more resources are made available to growers, implementation goes up. As such, the Chesapeake Bay Commission has made a request to Secretary Vilsack to establish a Chesapeake Resilient Farm Initiative (CRFI). This initiative would build on the CEAP analysis of acres needing conservation treatment.

Across the watershed, USDA conservation programs are working. Adequate funding levels are needed that better matches the needs of our region.

The CRFI funds for financial and technical assistance would be targeted to watersheds that have been deemed the “most effective” for reducing the impacts of excess nutrients on downstream water quality in the Chesapeake Bay as well as practices that have dual benefits in terms of increasing farm resiliency to weather extremes while reducing greenhouse gases. In Delaware’s response to Mr. Tillman and Regional Conservationist, Terrell Erickson, of the annual $73.7M, Delaware proposed that $5M in funds to increase staffing capacity of up to seven (7) full-time employees per year.
- Funding for Delaware has been adjusted to make sure that we equitably meet and exceed the needs in question. If approved, we will be looking at $3.5M versus the original request of $5M.
- Leon reiterated that this is a new request to the Agency and is still early in the talks. They are looking to establish specific designated funds for the bay.
- Chris stated that he has not been tracking this but, it has been going through the Department to be endorsed by the Secretary but that the pitch was mainly focused on Pennsylvania.
  - Kasey said in the original request, there was a concern for PA. we want to make sure that they have the need and impact for the equitable distribution of funding through the state or federal levels.
  - We want to make sure we are leveraging funding throughout MD, DE, NJ, WVA, VA, NY, and PA and not just focusing on PA.
  - Leon said the commission was looking to prioritize a bulk of the funding for Pennsylvania based on the model they are seeing. They are still looking at the need to spread funds across multiple states with PA being a high priority.
  - Lindsey Thompson, DE-MD Agribusiness Association stated that the Maryland stakeholders will be having a briefing from the Chesapeake Bay Commission this afternoon to talk about the current state of the proposal and Maryland’s share of that. She said they can set up a proposal for Delaware through an individual discussion with the commission to discuss Delaware’s goals and desires.
  - Kasey replied that that would definitely be welcomed and appreciated to discuss a good plan of attack looking at that $3.5M in funding to support conservation efforts in the state.

- **Subcommittees**
  - **Urban Ag – Karri Honaker, Assistant State Conservationist, Programs**
    - Urban Ag is a high priority and we will develop a committee to analyze challenges and opportunities.
    - NRCS has developed a list of participants to reach out to for their interest in joining the committee.
    - Information will be compiled, and an email invitation will be sent out in the coming months to set up a kick-off meeting
    - Richard Wilkins said he will provide someone from the Farm Bureau to serve on the subcommittee.
    - It was noted that anyone serving on the committees will need to be STAC members
  - **Soil Health - Jayme Arthurs, State Resource Conservationist**
    - There is a Soil Health committee already established with Debbie Absher and Jenn Nelson as members.
    - If anyone is interested in becoming a member, please reach out to Jayme.
    - Jayme would like to have a kickoff meeting in the near future.
    - This subcommittee coincides with climate smart ag.
    - Richard will provide someone from the Farm Bureau to serve on the subcommittee.
Kasey asked him to forward names to Ivy McBride. If nominee is not a STAC member, they will need to complete the application on the Delaware NRCS website to join the committee. Link below as well as added to meeting chat group. https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/de/technical/stc/

Delaware Poultry Pilot – Jayme Arthurs

- As part of the 2018 Farm Bill, the verbiage provided an opportunity to address new or expected resource concerns. For Delaware, this would be the new poultry operations coming into place and being able to work with those individuals ahead of getting birds to start their operations.
- Currently, they have to have a resource concern on the farm with birds in place to be eligible for application. To address this concern, we are looking at the Delaware Poultry Pilot.
- We are working with our national office to develop and environmental assessment to requisition a contractor to develop an assessment to look at specific locations in Delaware. For the pilot, we are looking at the southwest corner of Sussex County.

Criteria for the pilot

- Must have a signed contract with a poultry integrator and an approved loan for the construction of new poultry houses by an eligibility deadline
- Must install a practice within the first 12 months
- Birds must be scheduled to be placed in the poultry house within the first 6 months of program application deadline
- Eligible practices: manure storage facilities, composters, heavy use area protection pads, poultry wind breaks
- All other EQIP program eligibility requirements must be met

Contractor applications have been submitted and are being reviewed.

Richard said when looking at the criteria, was there interface with the integrators to make sure the criteria is doable?

- Jayme replied that he talked to a few in the industry.
- They will need to set guidelines to coincide with contracts.
- Richard said there may be issues with integrators for the noted 6 months timeframe and would like them to reconsider that timeframe.
- Kasey replied that there have been conversations across the partnerships for the criteria to ensure compliance with state and federal provisions.
- Chris Brosch, DDA asked if the practice must be installed within the first 12 months, is this an NRCS policy?
  - Kasey replied that this is part of the program policy.
  - Chris reiterated, so this is not part of the criteria and Kasey replied, that is correct. Chris said, he wants to make sure that producers on the waiting list are eligible.
Local Workgroup (LWG) Input – Karri

- It is the responsibility of the State Technical Committee to –
  1. Provide information, analysis, and recommendations to USDA on conservation priorities and criteria for natural resources conservation activities and programs, including application and funding criteria, recommended practices, and program payment percentages.
  2. Identify emerging natural resource concerns and program needs.
  3. Recommend conservation practice standards and specifications.
  4. Recommend State and national program policy based on resource data.
  5. Review activities of the local working groups to ensure State priorities are being addressed locally.
  6. Make recommendations to the State Conservationist on requests and recommendations from local working groups.
  7. Assist NRCS with public outreach and information efforts and identify educational and producers’ training needs.

- The State Technical Advisory committee should incorporate from the local level, the needs and concerns from the local level, review these recommendations, and add any additional priority items for the consideration of the State Conservationist on an annual basis. The State Conservationist will review and update the Delaware Strategic Plan on an annual basis and use this as a guiding factor along with input from the STAC.

- Local work group minutes should be provided for review during STAC. Recommendations will be reviewed, and responses provided.

- Local Work Group Recommendations & Responses from the previous LWG meetings. We received 18 recommendations (see presentation). Below are our responses.

1. (Karri) - Needs clarification.
   - (Debbie) Having to get estimates from certain practices seems to take a couple years to get funded and they are getting tired of getting the estimates year after year when they are not getting the work.
   - Karri - the cost estimate is not directly a part of our ranking process. There may be some extra work that needs to be done to get a cost estimate, but this is not a requirement of ranking.

2. (Jayme) - ShoreRivers is looking to hold field day to show how practices are being implemented for drainage water management.
   - David asked how long the contract is with ShoreRivers. Jayme will follow up with Ann (as lead contact).
   - Kasey – Per Ann’s note, the agreement is for three years but will continue until the work is completed.

3. (Karri) - We are looking at a separate funding pool for FY22 through EQIP.

4. (Karri) - Needs clarification.
- (Debbie) - The Districts are more flexible with getting funding out without the flexibility of a contract, like the RCPP animal mortality.
- (Karri) - Our agreements with the Districts allow us to explore these opportunities.
- (Richard) RCPP transition is working well. It can get the dollars in place with less the bureaucracy and makes appropriations available for more localized interaction and better functioning stewardship.
- (Karri) good idea to consider for RCPP and other funding opportunities.

5. (Jayme) - Replacing plastic is considered maintenance of the practice. The payment scenario does not include maintenance of practices.

6. (Jayme) - In discussion for high tunnel payment scenarios. Looking to adopt in FY23.

7. (Jayme) - Will research cover crop mixing options. Requests are approved on case by case basis.

8. (Jayme) – We have offered alternative mixes for similar situations in the past using our planting guides.
   - Need to address a resource concern.
   - Will follow-up with Danielle Bauer.

9. (Jayme) - Delaware has reduced cover crop seeding rates.
   - Continuing to work with Land Grant Universities to make changes.
   - FY22 practices scenarios submitted and are being reviewed by the national payment schedule team and due April/May 2022.

10. (Jayme) - Will reach out to states that have implemented CPS 400 Bivalve Aquaculture Gear and Biofouling to adopt in Delaware for next fiscal year.

11. (Karri) - Needs clarification. Is this referring to specific practices?
   - Marcia said a request came in from SCD LWG and referred to David.
   - David replied this is addressing overall drainage need in Kent and Sussex Counties for resources that can be used to expand funding access.
   - Marcia said they can meet to discuss this further.
   - Karri agreed to plan to meet to discuss further and move forward.
   - David said, think about opportunities they have now with the amount of investment that's been made at the state level on the drainage side. There are a lot of matching resources available to leverage funding.
– Kasey said there is an opportunity to discuss this at the August 10th partnership luncheon.
– Ann added a note to the Chat - The Conservation Drainage Workgroup made up of representatives from interested agencies and partners continues to look for funding opportunities.

12. (Jayme) – Technical assistance is historically provided.
   – Will continue to implement drainage water management practices.
   – Will discuss at next partnership meeting.

13. (Karri) - Payment schedule team is aware of this.
   – Looking to realign with Urban Ag practices.
   – Considering adding additional scenarios
   – Urban Ag subcommittee to help with specifics on scenario needs.

14. (Jayme) - Will provide feedback to national headquarters for that need.
   – Use Urban Ag subcommittee to develop enhancements.

15. (Karri) – we have noted this and discussed with planners.
   – The RCPP ranking questions are developed in conjunction with the partners.
   – Will continue to look at prioritizing for FY22.
   – We did prioritize those applying for CP561- Heavy Use Area Practice (HUAP) to have a higher probability of funding last year.

16. (Jayme) – We can still provide payments as long as it’s over and above the integrator requirements.

17. (Karri) – Yes, we already have subdivided ranking pools.

18. (Karri) – Yes, we can take this into consideration to look at and prioritize folks that have been on list for several years.
   – We will begin to have our ranking pool meetings within the next couple weeks for next year and will look into the backlog.
   – Kasey said we will look at what has been tied back to goals and timelines to align with the budget.
   – Mrs. Pierce stated that she would like someone from the New Castle Conservation District participate on committees.
   – Kasey replied that Kevin Donnelly and Madison are focusing on Urban Ag and asked her to reach out to her counterparts for their interest.

Farm Bill Updates – Karri Honaker, Assistant State Conservationist, Programs
  o Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
    ▪ Slide 38 - 100% obligated for EQIP and AMA obligations for FY21.
EQIP/AMA: 87 applications were funded, and 225 applications were unfunded statewide.

Slide 39 - $6.8M was allocated in FY20 which was decreased to $5.8M in FY21.

Slide 40 - Ranking pool comparison shows the level of funding per ranking pool as they relate to each other from FY20 to FY21.

Slide 41 - EQIP 2021 funding levels is divided out by county across the funding pools.

Slide 42 – Nationally Mandated Funding allocated:
- 64% beginning farmers
- 39% socially disadvantage
- 81% livestock
- 2% wildlife, opportunity for additional funding
- 3.2% veteran farmers

Slide 43 - Funded versus unfunded applications countywide - filtered data/duplicates removed
- Overall, $4.8M unfunded and $5.8M funded
- Sussex – unfunded $3M and funded $3.9M
- Kent - unfunded $1.6M and funded $1.2M
- New Castle - unfunded $158,000 and funded $536,000
- As a note, the Conservation Assessment Ranking Tool (CART) Select Application Tool (SAT) brought in changes for synthesizing this data and how we rank our applications. Applications were given the opportunity to compete in all ranking pools that their application was applicable to. Therefore, data pulled could appear skewed since many applications show up in several funding pools (creating overlap in some numbers).

Slide 44 shows same as above but with unfiltered data. Does not show fully funded applications.

Slide 45 – Available fund pools for FY20 (17)

Slide 46 – Available fund pools for FY21 (14) Noted that states are encouraged to decrease the number of fund pools. Regardless of the number of fund pools, the limiting factor is funds- the more fund pools you have, the less money is allotted to each pool

Slide 47 – fully funded ranking pools for EQIP 2021, Cover Crop Sussex, Wildlife, Forestry, Urban Ag, and Livestock (Note there were no applications for Organic Fund pool)

AMA

Slide 48 –AMA FY21 funded/unfunded applications
- Funded – 18 and unfunded – 78 applications statewide

Slide 49 – RMA/AMA funding opportunities
- We received additional RMA funds. We requested $400,000 and were given $150,000.
- Initial AMA allocation was $92,000
- Risk Management Assistance (RMA) and Agriculture Management Assistance (AMA). AMA retains its identity for RMA funding. We work in conjunction with
the Risk Management Agency and receive funds from them to incorporate into our funding cycle for AMA. There are policy differences for AMA vs. EQIP requirements. For EQIP, specifically irrigation water management requirements and irrigation history. There are also specific practices that are available for each program
  ➢ All EQIP practices are not available through RMA/AMA.

  o Environmental Quality Incentives Program-Conservation Incentives Contracts (EQIP-CIC)
    ▪ The following states have been selected to pilot the EQIP-CIC program for FY21: AZ, CA, CO & OR. Delaware was not included.
    ▪ We will be moving forward with the program once the pilot year has been completed.
    ▪ We have completed background work for items including identifying resource concerns to anticipate the program if we moved forward with it this year.
    ▪ The purpose of EQIP CIC is to incentivize additional conservation around locally established resource priorities. The producer does not have to enroll the entire operation but does have to address at least one PRC.
    ▪ EQIP CIC blends the EQIP “classic” element of implementing practices with the CSP element of adopting enhancements that support increased levels of conservation.
    ▪ The goal is to have high priority areas roll into EQIP-CIC and will target cropland as a land use.
    ▪ Resource Concern Categories:
      Field Sediment & Pathogen Loss
      Source Water Depletion
      Field Pesticide Loss

  o EQIP High Priority Practices
    ▪ We have the opportunity to set up to 10 practices that can receive a higher payment rate.
    ▪ High Priority Practice must meet one of the following criteria:
      ❖ Addresses specific causes of impairment relating to excessive nutrients in ground or surface water.
      ❖ Addresses the conservation of water, to advance drought mitigation and declining aquifers.
      ❖ Meets other environmental priorities and other priority resource concerns identified in habitat or other area restoration plans.
      ❖ Is geographically targeted to address a natural resource concern in a specific watershed.
      ❖ Under-utilized practice with high potential for conservation benefit, State specific.
    ▪ FY21 High Priority Practices are:
      329- Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till
For FY22 we’d like to hear STAC input on which practices we should consider for next year. Are there other practices that fit the requirements that may benefit us from having a higher incentive rate? (No additional input received from STAC)

**STAC Strategy**
- For the upcoming year, we will commit to three meetings for the year: January, May, and August. Specific dates have not been set yet.
- Meeting Details:
  - **January**
    - This meeting will be used to kick off the year, briefly discuss previous years outcomes
    - Timelines for the year
    - Payment Schedule items
    - New info from NHQ (review any necessary items)
    - Review the recommendations for this fiscal year and impacts/changes/improvements
  - *From the January to May timeframe the Districts hold Local Work Group meetings*

  - **May**
    - Review recommendations submitted by the LWGs
    - Solicit other input

  - **August**
    - Provide responses to the recommendations (any changes to be implemented the following fiscal year)
    - Review pending items and decisions needed for next FY (HP Practices, etc.)
USDA – NRCS
Natural Resources Conservation Service
STATE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, July 28, 2021
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>9:00 – 9:10</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Kasey Taylor</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:10 – 9:30</td>
<td>Committee Engagement Initiatives: Bog Turtle, Chesapeake Bay Resilient Farms Initiative</td>
<td>Kasey Taylor</td>
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<td>9:30 to 9:45</td>
<td>Subcommittees</td>
<td>Karri Honaker, Jayme Arthurs</td>
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<td>9:45 to 10:00</td>
<td>Delaware Poultry Pilot Environmental Assessment, New and Expected Resource Concerns</td>
<td>Jayme Arthurs</td>
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<td>10:00 to 11:00</td>
<td>Responses to LWG and STAC Feedback/Input</td>
<td>Karri Honaker</td>
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<td>Break</td>
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<td>11:00 to 11:35</td>
<td>Farm Bill Program Check-In &amp; Feedback</td>
<td>Karri Honaker</td>
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<td>11:35 to 11:45</td>
<td>STAC Strategy FY22</td>
<td>Karri Honaker</td>
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<td>11:45 to 12:00</td>
<td>Committee Member Reports Guest Reports</td>
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9:10 am-9:30 am

Committee Engagement Initiatives: Bog Turtle Initiative, Chesapeake Bay Resilient Farms Initiative

Kasey Taylor
State Conservationist
Delaware State Technical Advisory Committee

Committee Engagement
Bog Turtle Initiative

Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW)
Bog Turtle
Bog Turtle Initiative

NRCS/WLFW Role:

• Assist partners by achieving habitat goals
• Facilitate ESA predictability (CPs/CMs)
• Adopt or refine priority geography
• Outcomes Assessments
Delaware Bog Turtle Strategy
Chesapeake Bay Resilient Farms Initiative
Chesapeake Bay Resilient Farms Initiative

$73.7 million Requested 10 Consecutive Years
9:30 am-9:45 am

Subcommittees

Karri Honaker, ASTC-Programs/Field Ops
Jayme Arthurs, State Resource Conservationist
Soil Health
9:30 am-9:45 am

Delaware Poultry Pilot Environmental Assessment: New & Expected Resource Concerns

Jayme Arthurs
State Resource Conservationist
Impacted Resources

Environmental Assessment

Pilot Project

New and Expected Resource Concerns
Criteria

• Must have a signed contract with a poultry integrator and an approved loan for the construction of new poultry houses by an eligibility deadline

• Must install a practice within the first 12 months

• Birds must be scheduled to be placed in the poultry house within the first 6 months of program application deadline

• Eligible practices:
  o manure storage facilities,
  o composters, heavy use area protection pads
  o poultry wind breaks

• All other EQIP program eligibility must be met
Responses to LWG and STAC Feedback/Input

Karri Honaker - ASTC - Programs/Field Ops

10:00am-11:00am
Thank you to the Districts for holding LWG meetings and submitting recommendations for the STAC
Recommendations
Responses
11:00 am - 11:05 am
Local Work Group Recommendations & Responses

1. Reduce the amount of work required from a producer regarding the ranking process. *Karri*
   - Clarification needed

2. Host a stakeholder summit to discuss conservation drainage needs. *Jayme*
   - NRCS has a current drainage water management agreement involving Shore Rivers
   - Field day will be held to demonstrate practices that will allow discussion and feedback
   - Invitation will be shared once the date is set
Local Work Group Recommendations & Responses

3. More funding/resources for drainage water management. *Karri*
   
   NRCS is considering a separate fund pool for drainage water management in FY22

4. District seems to be more flexible, and it would be nice if the funding could be given to the District to distribute. *Karri*

Clarification needed
Local Work Group Recommendations & Responses

5. A comment was made on high tunnels and noted the wear and tear of plastic used for the structures and the cost associated with replacing it. [It was] suggested additional funding built into the agreement to help with maintenance of plastic for the 5 year lifespan. Jayme

• Replacing plastic is considered maintenance of the practice (payment scenarios do not include maintenance of practices)
6. There needs to be more flexibility for high tunnel recipients, such as allowing container plantings. *Jayme*

- NJ is working on additional payment scenarios for High Tunnel production systems as part of the Urban Agriculture focus.
- These scenarios can be adopted in DE as well for FY23
- Additional updates to standards and specifications are underway.
7. Multispecies cover crop is too restrictive, you will have less program participation. *Jayme*

- NRCS will research additional cover crop mixing options
- Additional mixes can and have been approved by the SRC as requested
Local Work Group Recommendations & Responses

8. Utilize the 10% allocation in the Wildlife Ranking Pool to create a practice for planting a trap crop to attract white tail deer to protect the cash crop. Jayme

- We offered an alternative mix for similar situations this past year.
- When planning for these situations staff will ensure mix has species beneficial to other wildlife that would address wildlife resource concerns
- Jayme will follow up with Danielle Bauer for additional information to see how updates may be incorporated in Delaware Planting guide
Local Work Group Recommendations & Responses

9. Cover Crop Soil Health Scenario that reduces seeding rates required by other cover crop scenarios. Jayme

- Delaware has reduced cover crop seeding rates and reduced rates have also been applied to cover crop mixes.
- We will continue to work with LGU and others for continued opportunities to reduce rates when possible while still addressing Water Quality and Soil Quality resource concerns.
- Scenarios for FY22 Practices have been submitted and are currently under review with the National Payment Schedule Team. If this scenario is desired, it should be developed for submission for FY23, which will be due in the 2nd quarter of next FY (around April-May 2022).
Local Work Group Recommendations & Responses

10. Oyster Aquaculture practices to assist Inland Bays oyster aquaculture farmers. Currently there are no technical or financial assistance programs to work with this group in the [Sussex] county.

Jayme

• Review and adoption CPS 400 Bivalve Aquaculture Gear and Biofouling control is a priority for FY2022 in anticipation of FY2023
Local Work Group Recommendations & Responses

11. Drainage water management practices – additional practices and resources are needed in Kent & Sussex County. *Karri*

• Clarification requested
Local Work Group Recommendations & Responses

12. We are seeing an increased need for water management and drainage, there should be an increase in funding to address this. Jayme

• Delaware NRCS has historically provided technical assistance for drainage type projects when requested but funding has been focused on higher priority resource concerns. We will continue to implement Drainage Water Management practices and as additional research is completed on water quality impacts of drainage water management in this region may lead to additional financial assistance resources being focused on water management and drainage
Local Work Group Recommendations & Responses

13. We need small payouts for small projects, a lot of the small growers are slipping through the cracks. Karri

- Payment Schedule process is being utilized to consider smaller and urban type scenarios to rectify this issue
- Urban Ag Subcommittee is being formed
Local Work Group Recommendations & Responses

14. Can NRCS develop a CSP “bundle” for Urban Ag projects? Jayme

- We will provide feedback to National Headquarters for the future for Urban Needs
- Additional feedback is requested from the LWGs, through the Urban Ag Subcommittee to specific exactly what is needed for these enhancements
Local Work Group Recommendations & Responses

15. Past RCPP participants in the Animal Mortality project are having difficulty ranking high enough to get the rest of their suite of poultry headquarters practices. This should be looked at to try and rectify by giving RCPP participants additional points. *Karri*

- This has been noted and is under consideration. Note: the RCPP ranking questions are developed with the lead partner and as such we can insert ranking questions that are proposed from the partner as long as they meet policy.
Local Work Group Recommendations & Responses

16. [It was] mentioned that a local producer did not get into EQIP this year for Litter Amendment and has since expressed concern as the integrators are beginning to require it and it is costly for producers (or an unexpected expense). Jayme

- We can still provide payment for this practice as long as what we require is over and above what the integrator is providing in materials
Local Work Group Recommendations & Responses

17. [Is there a] possibility of dividing Kent/NCC and Sussex within ranking pools? 

*Karri*

- Yes, this is a possibility. Discussion and feedback requested.
Local Work Group Recommendations & Responses

18. A beginning farmer has applied for EQIP over several years and has never ranked high enough. They have added additional practices to increase ranking, yet still fall short. Could NRCS investigate adding additional ranking points for beginning farmers that have multiple years of applications and no contracts. *Karri*

- Noted and under consideration. Discussion?
Farm Bill Program
Check In, Updates & Feedback

Karri Honaker
ASTC-Programs/Field Ops

11:00am- 11:35am
## EQIP 2021 Applications

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<td>New Castle</td>
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<td>Sussex</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>103</td>
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**Total Funded Applications:** 225

**Total Applications:** 87

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**Source:** [NRCS USDA](https://nrcs.usda.gov)
EQIP 2020 vs 2021

Obligations $

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<tr>
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<th>EQIP 2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTALS</td>
<td>$3,783,451.00</td>
<td>$5,815,470.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSSEX</td>
<td>$243,946.00</td>
<td>$3,985,515.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW CASTLE</td>
<td>$2,778,860.00</td>
<td>$536,636.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KENT</td>
<td>$2,778,860.00</td>
<td>$1,293,319.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ranking Pool Funding FY 2021 vs 2020

EQIP 2021 Obligated Funds per Ranking Pool

EQIP 2020 Obligated Funds per Ranking Pool
Funding levels per Ranking Pool & County

EQIP 2021 Funding Levels

- $200,000.00
- $400,000.00
- $600,000.00
- $800,000.00
- $1,000,000.00
- $1,200,000.00

Kent
New Castle
Sussex
Nationally Mandated Funding

Nationally mandated to spend 5% of our funds in:

- Beginning Farmer/Limited Resource Farmer
  - 64% of Delaware’s allocation went to Beginning Farmers
- Socially Disadvantaged
  - 39% of Delaware’s allocation went to Socially Disadvantaged Farmers

Nationally mandated to spend 50% of our funds on livestock practices

- 81% of Delaware’s allocation went to Livestock practices

Nationally mandated to spend 10% of our allocation on wildlife practices

- 2% of Delaware’s allocation went to wildlife practices (fully funded)
Funded vs. Unfunded (filtered)

- **STATEWIDE**
  - Funded: $4,812,822.00
  - Unfunded: $5,815,470.00

- **SUSSEX**
  - Funded: $3,048,669.00
  - Unfunded: $3,985,515.00

- **KENT**
  - Funded: $1,606,797.00
  - Unfunded: $1,293,319.00

- **NEW CASTLE**
  - Funded: $158,356.00
  - Unfunded: $536,636.00
Funded vs Unfunded (unfiltered)

- Funded:
  - BEG. FARMER: $856,607.00
  - CAPS: $421,220.00
  - COVER CROP K/NC: $211,348.00
  - CROPLAND: $700,090.00
  - ON-FARM ENERGY: $297,298.00
  - PHQ K/NC: $43,202.00
  - SUSSEX: $1,041,558.00
  - SDF: $1,055,746.00

- Unfunded:
  - BEG. FARMER: $1,773,630.00
  - CAPS: $900,474.00
  - COVER CROP K/NC: $879,065.00
  - CROPLAND: $721,733.00
  - ON-FARM ENERGY: $1,041,558.00
  - PHQ K/NC: $1,055,746.00
  - SUSSEX: $1,055,746.00
  - SDF: $1,055,746.00

Total:
- Funded: $2,341,040.00
- Unfunded: $2,341,040.00
# Ranking Pools for EQIP FY 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 20 Organic</td>
<td>Farmstead Rotary Drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 20 On-Farm Energy</td>
<td>Forestry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Farmer/Limited Resource</td>
<td>High Tunnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Activity Plans</td>
<td>Livestock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover Crop Sussex</td>
<td>Poultry Headquarters Kent/New Castle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover Crop Kent/New Castle</td>
<td>Poultry Headquarters Sussex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cropland</td>
<td>Socially Disadvantaged Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cropland Irrigation</td>
<td>Urban Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmstead Freezers</td>
<td>Wildlife 10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# EQIP Ranking Pools for 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beginning Farmer (BF)</td>
<td>On Farm Energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs)</td>
<td>Organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cropland</td>
<td>Poultry Headquarters Kent/New Castle (PHQ K/NC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover Crop Kent/New Castle</td>
<td>Poultry Headquarters Sussex (PHQ S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cover Crop Sussex</td>
<td>Socially Disadvantaged Farmer (SDF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>Urban Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td>Wildlife</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fully Funded Ranking Pools for EQIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cover Crop Sussex</th>
<th>Wildlife</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>Urban Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RMA & AMA Funding Levels

STATEWIDE
- RMA: $138,574.00
- AMA: $85,831.00

KENT
- RMA: $33,214.00
- AMA: $9,660.00

NEW CASTLE
- RMA: $32,819.00
- AMA: $0.00

SUSSEX
- RMA: $19,798.00
- AMA: $128,914.00
EQIP-CIC: Purpose

To provide stewardship opportunities for producers through EQIP:

– Based on land use
– Must address at least one Priority Resource Concerns (PRC)
– Within an identified watershed or other area (HPA)

Steppingstone for producers from EQIP to CSP:

– Allows producers to implement elements of CSP on a smaller scale
Delaware’s FY 2021 EQIP-CIC Program

Goal: *Improve water quality by reducing sediment, pathogen & pesticide loss and source water depletion.*

High Priority Area-Entire State
- As we develop this program more for FY22 we would like the committee’s input on High Priority Areas.

Target Land Use: Cropland

Resource Concern Categories addressed:
- Field Sediment & Pathogen Loss
- Source Water Depletion
- Field Pesticide Loss
States have the opportunity to select up to 10 “High Priority” practices that may received an increased incentive rate.
High Priority Practices

A high priority practice must meet one of the following criteria:

- Addresses specific causes of impairment relating to excessive nutrients in ground or surface water;
- Addresses the conservation of water, to advance drought mitigation and declining aquifers;
- Meets other environmental priorities and other priority resource concerns identified in habitat or other area restoration plans; or
- Is geographically targeted to address a natural resource concern in a specific watershed.

• Under utilized practice with high potential for conservation benefit, State specific
FY21 High Priority Practices

- 329- Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till
- 390- Riparian Herbaceous Cover
- 391- Riparian Forest Buffer
- 393- Filter Strip
- 605- Denitrifying Bioreactor
- 604- Saturated Buffer
- 620- Underground Outlet, Blind Inlet
STAC Strategy

Karri Honaker
ASTC-Programs/Field Ops
STAC Meeting Dates and Details

January
• Kickoff the year
• Review previous year’s outcomes

May
• Accept LWG Recommendations
• Other Input

August
• Provide responses to LWG Recommendations
• Review pending items and prepare for next year
Committee Reports
Guest Reports
Wrap-up
Questions/Discussion
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