

WAPAC MEMBER'S CONCERNS ABOUT SOIL CLASSIFICATION CHANGES

2015 COOPERATIVE SOIL SURVEY PLANNING WORKSHOP

MADISON, WI

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WHO IS WAPAC?

- ▶ The Wisconsin Association of Professional Agricultural Consultants (WAPAC) was formed in 1987 to provide a unified voice for professionals advising farmers in Wisconsin.
- ▶ WAPAC's diverse membership includes crop consultants, animal nutritionists, veterinarians, farm managers, educators and a wide array of farm service industry advisors, giving the Association many sources of experience from which to tap for problem solving.
- ▶ The majority of WAPAC members make their living by providing independent advice to farmers.

HOW ARE WISCONSIN FARMERS AFFECTED BY THE CHANGES?

- ▶ Several WAPAC members ran actual SNAP14 databases through SNAP15 to evaluate the changes. The consensus was that changing T values will have a slight to moderate effect on meeting T for most farms. Some farms will have difficulty meeting T. Changing the K factor has a significant effect on the Wisconsin Phosphorus Index. A higher PI will make management much more difficult in a TMDL situation.

ISSUES WITH HYDRIC SOILS

- ▶ WAPAC Members have long felt that some soils on the “W” soils list are incorrectly designated. Example - MbA for Sheboygan County
- ▶ The 2007 list was more accurate. It appears that many of these problems are proposed to be fixed, but DNR needs to change their list accordingly.
- ▶ Listing whole soil series that only have small inclusions of hydric soils does not inspire the confidence of farmers.

CHANGING THE CORN YIELD POTENTIAL

- ▶ The corn yield potential for several Hochheim, Kewaunee and Manawa soil series is proposed to be lowered from “High” to “Medium” .
- ▶ These soil series represent 35% of Manitowoc/Calumet Counties and 39% of Sheboygan County.
- ▶ In terms of agricultural soils this easily represents half of the farmland in these counties. Many farms in these counties are comprised of 80% or more of these soil series.
- ▶ If the UW adopts these new designations, nitrogen recommendations for corn after corn will decrease from the current 190 units of nitrogen to **145 units of nitrogen.**

WHAT WE CAN SUPPORT

- ▶ Changes to T and K factors can be supported if they are driven by sound science. It would be very helpful if the science behind the changes is explained to agronomists so that we can explain it to our farmer clients. The material in the workshop booklet is a great start.
- ▶ NRCS, DNR the UW and DATCP need to utilize a sounding board of experienced agronomists to fix current glitches and to minimize bad launches. WAPAC members are a potential source of experienced advisors.

LETS AVOID THE BAD SITUATIONS

- ▶ Any change that **APPEARS** to be driven by an agenda instead of by science will quickly have the affect of losing the support and trust of your constituents.
- ▶ We are increasingly relying on models that regulate how farmers farm. We need to keep in mind that models are comprised of many assumptions that may not be accurate. It should be a goal of all of us to increase the accuracy of these models by replacing assumptions with known values.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO
COMMENT

