

Ag BMP TAC Cover Crop/Nutrient Management Sub-Committee Meeting

November 7, 2019

USDA Service Center – Orange , VA

325 B North Madison Rd, Orange, VA 22960

Opening

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Sub-Committee Co-Chair Robert Waring.

Members in Attendance

Robert Waring, Co-Chair, DCR
Alston Horn, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Spencer Yager, VA SWCD Employees Association
Beck Stanley, Virginia Agribusiness Council
Jim Tate, Hanover-Caroline SWCD

Amanda McCullen, Culpeper SWCD
Keith Burgess, Monacan SWCD
Conner Miller, VA Grain Producers Assoc
Amy Walker, DCR

Members not in Attendance

Steph Drzal, Co-Chair, DCR
Ben Rowe, Vice Chair, VA Farm Bureau
Jim Riddell, Producer
Glenn Dye, Producer
Allyson Ponn, Lord Fairfax SWCD

Carl Thiel-Goin, DCR
Blair Gordon, DCR
Scott Ambler, DCR
Tim Sexton, DCR

Guest - None

Opening and Housekeeping

Robert Waring opened the meeting. Spencer Yager reviewed housekeeping items and welcomed everyone. Members introduced themselves.

Approval of the Minutes

Minutes from the October 3, 2019 meeting were reviewed, the minutes were approved as submitted, 8:0:0

Discussion on the proposed NM-6 (*This had to be changed to NM-7, NM-6 refers to an existing practice*)

Keith Burgess began discussion on the new practice, that it would promote best management practices utilizing nutrient management, manure management, and cover crops. By utilizing PSNTs, if Nitrogen is low, the producer could apply more fertilizer for cover crop utilization.

Co-Chair, Robert Waring offered to send the specification to all of the state Nutrient Management Specialists for their review and comment.

There was general discussion regarding the length of nutrient managements, three year plans versus shorter plans. The subcommittee discussed items 6 and 9 in spec, and annual updates for nutrient management plans.

It was clarified that the item 7 variance refers to the EAN process already established in the Manual.

There was general discussion regarding planting dates, but no recommendations.

The proposed specification had been presented to the TAC, and will go back to the TAC during the November meeting. Any proposed changes or recommendations will come back to the subcommittee in December.

Review of the draft changes to the SL-8 specification:

Subcommittee discussion began with the rates, the proposed rate was low for a competitive rate for cover crops for vegetable producer, but is low enough to not compete with the SL-8B.

The draft language of the spec was reviewed. The subcommittee discussed the listed specialty crops. Discussions included adding the language that the list 'could include but was not limited to' the crops listed, remove small grains, add 'other' and add 'preventive planting'.

High and low cost share years were discussed and how higher rates for all cover crop practices would impact cost share, contract and ranking cycles were discussed due to carryover requirements.

There was general discussion regarding the planting dates, seeding rates, and species; and if the list was comprehensive. Planting dates were discussed, with the subcommittee discussion a planting range between March 1st and November 15th in order to ensure the planted cover crop could be planted and established within a short period of time, such as 60 days. The item #12 in the specification references NRCS 340 Cover Crop, which would include a planting guide. It was noted that referencing the planting guide would be beneficial. Item #4 was discussed regarding growth and duration, should biomass or growth period be included and tied to rates. Days the cover crop would be left in the field was decided to be tied to rates. The potential for a conflict with the SL-8B was discussed due to the rates and restrictions in the SL-8B. The subcommittee reviewed dates and rates of cover crop practices and recommended 60 days - \$15/ac; 90 days - \$20/ac; 120 days - \$25/ac.

The subcommittee discussed language that maintain the SL-8 as a specialty or preventative planting practice. Depending on need in the future, a true no fallow practice could be created to catch fields in corn/soybean crop rotations. The subcommittee discussed the language for preventative planting to reduce any confusion and conflict with the SL-8B. Preventative planting was to cover crop failures, flooded fields, hail damage, tornado or hurricane damage etc. The language 'unforeseen and natural disasters' was to be included as well to include fire and other types of disasters. In order to reduce the conflict with the SL-8B, the language to limit applicability for managed corn and soybean rotations would be added.

The subcommittee motioned to move forward with the draft language for the SL-8; motion passed 8:0:0.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the combined subcommittee will be on December 5th, 10:00 am, at the Virginia Farm Bureau Building, 12580 West Creek Parkway, Richmond, VA 23238

Public Comment

The Public Comment period was opened, there being no public comment, the public comment period was closed.

Meeting Adjourned 12:30 pm