

**Ag BMP TAC Cover Crop Sub-Committee Meeting**

**October 4, 2018**

**Va Farm Bureau**

**12580 West Creek Parkway, Richmond, VA 23238**

**Opening:** The meeting was called to order at 9:32 by Sub-Committee Chair Robert Waring.

**Attendees:**

Robert Waring, Chair, DCR	Claire Hilsen, John Marshall SWCD
Ben Rowe, Vice Chair, Va Farm Bureau	Keith Burgess, Monocan SWCD
Alston Horn, Chesapeake Bay Foundation	Wayne Davis, DCR
Spencer Yager, VA SWCD Employees Association	Amy Walker, DCR
Jim Tate, Hanover-Caroline SWCD	Carl Thiel-Goin, DCR
Allyson Ponn, Lord Fairfax SWCD	Nick Moody, DCR
Kristal McKelvey, Tidewater SWCD	

**Members not in Attendance:**

Glenn Dye, Producer

**Introductions and Housekeeping**

Robert Waring opened the meeting and began introductions. The Sub-Committee meeting agenda and member roster was provided to all present. Ben Rowe provided additional welcome on behalf of the Virginia Farm Bureau.

**Cover Crop Sub-Committee Member List**

The member list was reviewed. Allyson Ponn noted that she would be the permanent member, not the proxy for Lord Fairfax SWCD. Alston Horn noted Matt Kowalski would be his proxy for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

## Review of Cover Crop Matrix recommendations

Chair, Robert Waring, reviewed the process for proceeding with the matrix of recommendations, to Advance to the TAC, Amend, or Table. When sending recommendations forward to the full TAC it was suggested that documentation should accompany the sub-committee's recommendation, this may require tabling an item until the documentation is acquired. Votes of the sub-committee would be recorded as aye, no, or abstain.

### Review of the recommendations was led by the Chair and Vice Chair, by matrix item #

- 1C. Recommendation was read. **Sub-Committee voted 8:0:0 to Table and forward to the Programmatic Sub-Committee.**
- 2C. Recommendation was read. General discussion regarding the need for more information to be brought to the next sub-committee meeting and to invite the submitting District to attend the next meeting. Sub-Committee voted 8:0:0 to Table the item until further information was provided.
- 3C. Recommendation was read. General discussion to have turf producers/specialists and vegetable producers provide input, gather information on carry-over implications, and to consider crop failures. Sub-Committee voted 8:0:0 to Table the item until further information could be reviewed by the committee.
- 4C. Recommendation was read. Discussion was had regarding why SL-8 was not in the listed priority practices. The current SL-8 does not require a nutrient management plan and does not receive model credit. General discussion regarding the implications of requiring a nutrient management plan, incentive rates, and impact on other practices. Additional input of vegetable producers regarding the requirement of a nutrient management plan for the practice will be sought. Sub-Committee voted 8:0:0 to Table the item and request the Nutrient Management Subcommittee review the item in regards to a Nutrient Management Plan requirement for the SL-8.
- 7C. Recommendation was read. There was general discussion regarding germination rates versus time of planting, planting conditions, as well as current verification requirements and dates. Growing day maps were provided by Keith Burgess, Monocan SWCD, and viewed by the members. Discussion regarding the various definitions of weed, noxious weed, and species now acceptable in multispecies cover-crops. SL-8H and SL-8B specifications were reviewed. **Sub-Committee voted 8:0:0 to recommend to the TAC the following Amendments to SL-8B and SL-8H:**

**AMEND/REPLACE – SL-8B – B. Policies and Specifications #6. Seeding rates shall be adjusted based on germination rates.**

~~**STRIKE - SL-8B – B. Policies and Specifications #6. All seed must be free of prohibited noxious weed seed, have a minimum germination rate of 80% and have no more than 16 restricted noxious weed seeds per pound. If the grower elects to use home grown seed, it must be tested for purity, germination and noxious weeds prior to seeding by a recognized seed laboratory.**~~

**AMEND/REPLACE – SL-8H – B. Policies and Specifications #13. Seeding rates shall be adjusted based on germination rates.**

~~**STRIKE - SL-8H – B. Policies and Specifications #13. All seed must be free of prohibited noxious weed seed, have a minimum germination rate of 80% and have no more than 16 restricted noxious weed seeds per pound. If the grower elects to use home grown seed, it must be tested for purity, germination and noxious weeds prior to seeding by a recognized seed laboratory.**~~

- 8C.** Recommendation was read. General discussion regarding pros and cons of losing acreage from standard to harvestable cover crop. **Sub-committee voted 7:1:0 to Table the item with no further action.**
- 9C.** Recommendation was read. Committee requested to inquire of the submitting District how many producers ran into the acreage cap for the SL-8H and request they provide additional information. Sub-Committee voted 8:0:0 to Table until additional information could be provided.
- 11C.** Recommendation was read. Discussion regarding credit within the Bay Model regarding the application of fall nutrients. The addition of nutrients to legumes was questioned, the WQ-4 was listed. **Sub-Committee voted 8:0:0 to Table the item with no further action.**
- 12C.** Recommendation was read. The addition of starter nitrogen on cover crops has been seen as beneficial for the quick growth/establishment of the cover crop. There was general discussion regarding the bay model and credits for cover crop which currently does not provide credit for this recommendation. It was mentioned by a committee member that studies have been done on this topic, and that they will try to find the publication/study and bring to the next meeting. It was also noted that the recommendation adds nutrients to the system for a practice that is intended to scavenge nutrients. Sub-Committee voted 8:0:0 to Table the item until additional information could be provided.
- 13C.** Recommendation was read. Listed practices were not harvestable. Similar to Item 9C. **Sub-Committee voted 7:0:0 to Table with no further action. (Member excused themselves momentarily)**
- 14C.** Recommendation was read. General discussion regarding the existence of practices to encourage residue. District could encourage participation in the SL-15A or the CCI-CNT. **Sub-Committee voted 7:0:0 to Table with no further action. (Member excused themselves momentarily)**

#### **Break for Lunch (1 hour)**

- 20C.** Recommendation was read. Discussion regarding aerial application as a management decision, little difference in terms of seed application from aerial application to utilizing

a high-boy spreader. Incentive is already within the specifications with early planting date incentives. General discussion regarding experiences with drilled, broadcast, vs aerial application. **Sub-Committee voted 7:1:0 to Table with no further action.**

- 21C.** Recommendation was read. Recommendation similar to previous item. **Sub-Committee voted 7:1:0 to Table with no further action.**
- 22C.** Recommendation was read. The recommendation is very similar in nature to item 2C. Committee would like the two Districts to discuss the recommendations and provide additional information and input. Sub-Committee voted 8:0:0 to Table until additional information was provided.
- 23C.** Recommendation was read. General discussion regarding consolidation with item 3C, to be covered as a potential amendment to an existing practice. Sub-Committee voted 8:0:0 to table for further discussion.
- 24C.** Recommendation was read. Was not an actionable recommendation for an assigned practice. **Sub-Committee voted 8:0:0 to Table with no further action.**
- 25C.** Recommendation was read. The sub-committee discussed base pay rate increases, increasing rates for rye due to increased costs, consideration of restructuring the payments and incentives. The Chair requested the item be addressed later in the meeting.
- 26C.** Recommendation was read. General discussion regarding basic market drivers and management decisions. **Sub-Committee voted 7:1:0 to Table with no further action.**
- 27C.** Recommendation was read. Sub-committee members discussed similar practice in the past, great concept but was extremely difficult administratively. Questions arose regarding funding availability. Potential development of practice, extended acreage and look at 3-5 year rotations. Sub-Committee voted 8:0:0 to Table for further consideration and discussion.
- 28C.** Recommendation was read. General discussion regarding caps allowing cost share dollars to be spread among more producers. **Sub-Committee voted 8:0:0 to Table with no further action.**
- 29C.** Recommendation was read. **Sub-Committee voted 8:0:0 to Table and forward to the Stream Protection Sub-Committee.**
- 30C.** Recommendation was read. **Sub-Committee voted 8:0:0 to Table and forward to the Programmatic Sub-Committee.**
- 5C.** Recommendation was read. Sub-Committee discussed kill down dates across the state and experiences with growing season variability from March through May. Discussion regarding problems with being forced to meet kill-down dates timely during adverse weather conditions, or against management strategy when producers want to 'plant in the green'. There was general discussion regarding problems with having no kill-down date. The bay model language regarding cover crops was referenced. Sub-Committee

voted 8:0:0 to Table discussion of the early date for kill down in order to gather additional information. **Sub-Committee voted 8:0:0 to recommend to the TAC the following Amendments to SL-8B:**

**AMEND – SL-8B – B. Policies and Specifications #12.** The cover crop must be killed using mechanical or chemical means or by grazing no earlier than March 15<sup>th</sup> and no later than ~~May 15~~ **June 1** for the Coastal Plain, Piedmont, and Mountain and Valley. ....

Due to the time, the Chair announced the remaining items would be addressed during the next meeting. Committee members were asked to keep the items in mind and to bring additional information to the next committee meeting if they volunteered to do so.

#### **Public Comment**

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

**Meeting Adjourned 3:00 pm**