

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

September 5, 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
Steph Drzal, Co-Chair, DCR
Ben Rowe, Vice Chair, VA Farm Bureau
Spencer Yager, VA SWCD Employees Association
Alston Horn, Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Beck Stanley, Virginia Agribusiness Council

Jim Riddell, Producer
Glenn Dye, Producer
Keith Burgess, Monacan SWCD
Amanda McCullen, Culpeper SWCD
Amy Walker, DCR
Blair Gordon, DCR

Members not in Attendance

Allyson Ponn, Lord Fairfax SWCD
Jim Tate, Hanover-Caroline SWCD
Tim Sexton, DCR

Carl Thiel-Goin, DCR
Scott Ambler, DCR

Guest

Mike Rigdon, Lake Anna Civic Association

Opening and Housekeeping

Robert Waring opened the meeting. Spencer Yager reviewed housekeeping items and welcomed everyone to the Old Silk Mill Building. The Co-Chair, Robert Waring, reiterated that the cover Crop and Nutrient Management Sub-Committees had been combined and that the Chairs would remain as Co-Chairs, co-chair voting logistics were discussed should both Co-Chairs be in attendance. Members all introduced themselves.

Approval of the Minutes

Minutes from the July 22, 2019 meeting were distributed and reviewed, the Minutes were approved as submitted, 8:0:0

Review of the Matrix of Cover Crop Recommendations presented to the TAC on August 14, 2019

Co-Chair, Robert Waring, reviewed items from the Cover Crop Matrix that were presented to the full TAC:

2C. Tabled; A number of the matrix items were considered to be similar and/or duplicative, 2C, 3C, and 7C; Item 7C will be used to move the topic forward

3C. Tabled; A number of the matrix items were considered to be similar and/or duplicative, 2C, 3C, and 7C; Item 7C will be used to move the topic forward

5C. The sub-committee previously motioned to remove 'pure' from the specification and insert 2 bu/ac planted to meet the minimum requirement for the rye cover crop. There needs to be a conversation with the EPA to ensure this change would not have negative impacts on rye cover crop acres counted for the Bay Model. The subcommittee will refrain from a vote at the TAC. The sub-committee will move forward with the previous motion to increase the early bonus payment by \$5.00, for a rate of \$30 dollars, and increase the rye bonus payment by \$2.00, for a rate of \$10.00; to further increase the incentive to plant cover crops early, with an added incentive for rye cover crop.

6C. Tabled, with the large number of acres that are broadcast, the incentive may not increase drilled acres from broadcast acres enough to create a separate incentive.

10C. Add Dura to the list of rye cultivars in the Ag BMP Manual. The variety is a winter hardy, indeterminate growth, tetraploid rye and could be listed in the small table in the Ag BMP Manual as it would be covered under item 4. ii 'OR, any other indeterminate growth tetraploid rye cultivar'.

11C. Tabled, The current language in the manual for the SL-1 has 3 lifespans with varied payment rates.

12C. Strike the last sentence from the SL-3, C. Rates, paragraph 1. The first four sentences explain the rates and that the 'state cost-share payment, alone or when combined with any other cost-share program, will not exceed 75% of the total eligible costs'. This would allow for piggy-backing with other funding sources such as NRCS, for the practice and components as long as the cost-share did not exceed 75%. The last sentence could limit piggy-backing on components of the practice.

Next, items from the Cover Crop Matrix that were still under consideration by the subcommittee were addressed:

1C. The subcommittee is still awaiting additional information, this item will be discussed during the next meeting

4C. This item is being worked on in conjunction with 1C and will be discussed during the next meeting.

7C. This item is being used to address all recommendations to allow fall cover crop with nutrients applied. Further discussions have been had, and it has been noted that the Bay Model will not accept commercial/ inorganic fall nutrients on cover crops at this time. There needs to be research on the subject, discussions need to begin to set up studies between Virginia Tech and Districts to lay groundwork for research early.

It was discussed that the SL-8H allows for fall organic nutrient application currently. The members discussed the possibility of a new practice that would require more intensive soil testing for additional application. The practice would be for better management of organic sources. The subcommittee discussed bringing the proposed practice to the full TAC for suggestions.

As a result of knowing the Bay model will not accept cover crop with fall application of inorganic nutrients the subcommittee will not be moving forward with any changes to the SL-8B or the WQ-4 at this time. The Subcommittee requests the Agency work with Extension on conducting research regarding fall application of commercial inorganic nutrients on small grain and legume cover crops. The subcommittee will be bringing forth a potential new practice for more intensive management of organic sources. The motion was approved 9:0:0.

8C. The Co-Chair, Robert Waring, discussed a conversation with Dr. Thomason regarding seeding rates. The EPA does not establish the seeding rates for cover crop, the state does. While 2 bushels/acre is a high seeding rate, it is what the state proposed and what is currently accepted. Virginia Tech would probably be able to assist with research on seeding rates, the state would need the research to back up any request for a reduction in the current cover crop seeding rates. Until then, a current fix to the problem of cost and seeding rates of rye would be to increase the cost share assistance for the increasing cost of rye seed.

The Subcommittee motioned to request the Agency work with Virginia Tech on researching a reduced seeding rate for rye that would still be effective for nutrient uptake and sediment control. The motion was approved 9:0:0.

9C. No Action

Two new items were sent to the cover crop subcommittee by the TAC:

13C. The Co-Chair, Robert Waring discussed a conversation with David Bryan, Ag Incentives Program Manager, in regards to the elimination of caps for the cover crop practices and the movement away from such caps. The subcommittee motioned to eliminate the all caps, the motion was approved 9:0:0.

14C. The subcommittee recommended the reseeding of sacrifice areas be sent to the stream protection subcommittee as this needs to be included in a grazing plan. This type of reseeding could also be included for critical areas or highly erodible areas. The subcommittee motioned to send the item to the Stream protection subcommittee, the motion was approved 9:0:0.

Review of the Matrix of Nutrient Management Recommendations presented to the TAC on August 14, 2019

Co-Chair, Steph Drzal, noted that during the August TAC several items had been voted on and no longer needed to be addressed by the combined committee. Items needing to be discussed from the matrix were addressed:

5N. There was general discussion regarding how to create, implement, and verify vegetable nutrient management plans. There was consensus regarding the benefits to having lands in vegetable production follow nutrient management plans.

The subcommittee motioned adding specialty crops, produce, grain sorghum/milo, and canola to the Section A and Section B, 2. iii. of the NM-5 N specification. This language could be matched for the NM-5P. The motion was approved 9:0:0.

6N. This item was addressed with previous action for item 5N. However it was noted that changes for specialty crops would need to be addressed in the NM-1A as well. This will be looked at and discussed at the next meeting.

7N. The subcommittee discussed an option to address the issue of the used plastics, Districts could create a recycling program similar to tire recycling events. Not applicable to VACS necessarily. The subcommittee motioned to Table with no further action, the motion was approved 9:0:0.

8N. There was discussion regarding the difference between split application and precision or enhanced nutrient management. For the NM-3C if the PSNT shows there is no need for nutrients, producers would not be going across the field. With the NM-5N, precision nutrient management, with variable rate the producer is going across the field and making passes varying the rate of application. In addition, by having a PSNT, producers could pull PSNTs on fields loaded with manure and still receive a payment.

For the NM-3C practice, the subcommittee motioned to consider adding a similar sentence from the NM-5N B. 6. , allowing a per acre rate for acres receiving a zero application; with a biosolids exclusion. The motion was approved 9:0:0.

9N. The two practices are not the same, there are additional requirements and equipment necessary for enhanced nutrient management.

The subcommittee motioned to Table with no further action, the motion was approved 9:0:0.

10N. The item will be further researched to gather information.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the combined subcommittee will be on October 3, 10:00 am, at the VA Farm Bureau Building located at 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 12:12 pm