

Agricultural Best Management Program Technical Advisory Committee
Animal Waste Subcommittee
Virginia Department of Forestry, Charlottesville
August 29, 2022; 10:00 a.m.

Voting Members Present

Amanda Pennington, Chair-DCR
Megan Dalton, Shenandoah Valley SWCD
Elizabeth Dellinger, VACDE
Zach Jacobs, VA Agribusiness Council
John Kaylor, Headwaters SWCD
Nick Livesay, Lord Fairfax SWCD
Darrell Marshall, VDACS
Phil Davis, DEQ
Kevin Dunn, Peter Francisco SWCD
Steve Escobar, VA Equine Council
Eric Paulson, VA Dairymen's Association

Non-Voting Members Present

Jason Wilfong, DCR
Gary Flory, DEQ
Hunter Landis, DCR
Sara Bottenfield, DCR
Chris Hamilton, NRCS
Josh Walker, Shenandoah Valley SWCD
Tonya Young, Blue Ridge SWCD

Amanda opened the meeting with introductions and recap of previous discussion and decisions:

- Intend to continue using risk assessment as-is (qualifying score of 120) for feeding facilities (WP-4SF, WP-4LL, WP-4LC, WP-4FP (possible feeding pad score exception – matrix item))
- Split manure into two categories, stackable and unstackable
- For WP-4 dry stacks only, use risk assessment with some type of modification (e.g. lower score)

Continued discussion of matrix item 1A (*review and examination of the water quality impacts of livestock manure, specifically the differences between the impact of poultry litter and livestock manures...review of the existing WP-4 standards and specifications, in addition to the Animal Waste Control Facility Needs Determination Worksheet for Livestock Waste Storage Facilities (Worksheet) provided by the Shenandoah Valley Soil and Water Conservation District, to determine the most appropriate method to evaluate the impacts of the manure...the Subcommittee shall also make a recommendation on whether the revised specification and standard should be implemented during FY2023*):

- Elizabeth and Megen asked if the dry stack category includes poultry – yes. Megen doesn't want to support evaluating poultry differently than it has been historically.
- What would be the justification for treating poultry differently, other than it's the way it's always been done? None, but could cause confusion, questions. Darrell- is there a reason that poultry was originally treated differently?
- Risk assessment was developed for feeding so poultry wasn't a consideration. Poultry permitting discharge restriction is not limited to man-made ditches.
- Majority of poultry operations are permitted, new producers without storage are managing mortality daily which can't be done by covering it up like litter. If mortality is the main concern, WP-4C doesn't require risk assessment. Kevin- tarp cover can work for managing mortality. DEQ says they get complaints on uncovered piles and it's challenging to cover piles within 14 days. Kevin- it is the producer's job to cover litter and mortality.
- Megen brought up nutrient management, if litter can't be properly managed. Amanda referenced a study that poultry litter piles will crust over and resist leaching.
- Darrell questioned adding a layer of bureaucracy during time of high funding.
- Stormwater runoff from poultry house roofs can carry litter, would be a conveyance for WQ impact. Amanda brought up concerns that practices are reported and may not have WQ benefit; Megen- all animal numbers are driving Bay model needs, so does there need to be a way to report that the animals have been evaluated and no WQ concern exists?
- Amanda thinks with the factors that have been raised, the facilities would qualify with the risk assessment. Kevin agrees. Eastern Shore, karst topography should easily qualify.
- Subcommittee will create guidance document for using risk assessment. Expect no issue meeting 80 points for loading. Consider adding another tier for more points since poultry is so much more manure (some cattle operations might qualify for more points too).
- Amanda reviewed information from Chad Wentz (NRCS) on risk assessment point breaks and run through some examples/test cases.
- John suggests not upping points, try for a year and see if more adjustment needed.
- Amanda suggested instead of lowering the threshold score, give points for existing infrastructure that will support implementation (i.e., manure collection).
- Nick supports the idea of increasing points for high loading. Chris- the highest loading now is already "extreme", going higher may be splitting hairs.
- Elizabeth- choose one or the other (loading or existing infrastructure) for points adjustment.
- Amanda reviewed the risk assessment form and process for completing. Josh questioned if transport feature focus is more point source pollution focus? What meets definition of concentrated flow? Discussion of features and terms.
- Elizabeth questioned accuracy of environmental sensitivity index – soil mapping may not be precise. NRCS requires on-site soils evaluation; staff can do that also if they suspect mapped info is incorrect. Slope – Amanda demoed USGS tool, will send link.

Lunch 11:50-12:30

- Resumed with suggestion for adding points for existing infrastructure – rewarding already partially solving the resource concern. Propose covered facility gets more points than uncovered pad... Chris asks wouldn't resource concern still be the same? Manure outside? Eric - wouldn't uncovered be a greater resource concern? Only looking at manure storage.

- John – look at meeting goals of DEQ, DCR, nutrient management rather than making it easier to qualify. NM issue discussed at first meeting and led to stackable vs. nonstackable distinction.
- Need to make some decisions and move forward.
- Megen: two options for adjusting points/method, recognize extra-extreme loading or points for existing collection area. Kevin- there still needs to be WQ issue. Also possibility of lowering points threshold. Nick- giving points for existing facilities is opposite of how the risk assessment works otherwise (more points = worse resource concern). Will need to add poultry to the table anyway. Even the smallest permitted farm would easily exceed loading threshold.
- Any opposition to adding another line to loading table? No. With added line(s), any opposition to keeping 120 as qualifying score? No. Vote on method passed unanimously.
- Need to get more information, look at NM handbook for where breaks should occur in loading table. Distinguish this revised form (WP-4 only) from NRCS risk assessment form.
- Elizabeth requested to return to this discussion at the next meeting to allow folks time to consider, and move on to dairies/liquid manure.
- Assessment of liquid manure is simpler, it will flow downhill to sensitive feature/transport feature. Combination of distance + slope considerations. Start with slope breakdown from risk assessment? Sheet that Elizabeth created? Looking for yes/no qualification, not another form.
- Chris says risk assessment form could apply to liquid if there is a concentrated feeding area.
- Discussion towards using risk assessment for liquid as well. Lower threshold/add points for liquid?
- **Kevin moved to use one assessment form for all types of waste, Steve seconded. Passed unanimously.**
- Part of the SWCB directive is a recommendation on when to implement new procedure. Megen can see how the mid-year change would be problematic/impractical.
- Can the guidance be completed after TAC action on the spec change? Can subcommittee or another group keep working after official TAC?
- **Megen moved to recommend the change not be implemented mid-year during PY23. Passed unanimously.**

Matrix item 3A (*Recommend adding 560-Access Road to the NRCS standards list for the WP-4 suite of practices or certain WP-4 practices as determined by the Ag Waste Subcommittee*):

- NRCS pays for access roads under the scenario of relocating parts of operation to address resource concern. DEQ made this suggestion for Ag loan program purposes. Districts can address this under SL-11B tax credit practice to qualify for loan. DEQ says Districts aren't doing this but that is a training issue. DEQ loan program will cover some VACS-ineligible items like fans and curtains so are roads considered the same?
- **Kevin moved to table. Steve second. 9Y, 1N – item tabled.**

Matrix item 4A (*Include the following NRCS Practice Standards into one or more of VACS specifications: 360 Waste Storage Facility Closure, 521 Pond Sealing or Lining - Geomembrane or Geosynthetic Clay Liner, 520 Pond Sealing or Lining, Compacted Soil Treatment, and 522 Pond Sealing or Lining, Concrete. The 360 Practice is used to properly demolish an existing waste storage facility, typically liquid manure pits or lagoons. The three others are options to line an existing leaking manure pit/lagoon based on the best way to line or seal them depending on environmental and soil conditions*):

- Discussion last year needed more research which has not been done. Is there credit for this? Doubt it, Amanda will check. Usefulness of writing a spec that will be rarely used. If cleaned out and breached, is there still any WQ concern? If added to WP-4, would it be allowed stand-alone? Must be in conjunction with new pit construction?

Matrix item 5A (*Create CCI practices that provide incentives for the continued maintenance and use of animal waste practices*):

- Brief discussion, will return to this topic.