

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

**July 22, 2019**

**VA Farm Bureau**

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

**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  
Ben Rowe, Vice Chair, VA Farm Bureau  
Spencer Yager, VA SWCD Employees Association  
Alston Horn, Chesapeake Bay Foundation  
Allyson Ponn, Lord Fairfax SWCD  
Jim Tate, Hanover-Caroline SWCD

Keith Burgess, Monacan SWCD  
Amanda McCullen, Culpeper SWCD  
Amy Walker, DCR  
Carl Thiel-Goin, DCR  
Scott Ambler, DCR

**Members not in Attendance**

Steph Drzal, Co-Chair, DCR  
Beck Stanley, Virginia Agribusiness Council  
Glenn Dye, Producer

Blair Gordon, DCR  
Tim Sexton, DCR

**Guest**

*None*

**Opening and Housekeeping**

Robert Waring opened the meeting. Ben Rowe reviewed housekeeping items and welcomed everyone to the Farm Bureau building. The Co-Chair, Robert Waring, announced 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.

Future meeting times and locations were then reviewed, noting that meeting locations will rotate between the Farm Bureau building and the Orange service center. All meetings will begin at 10:00 am. Meetings scheduled for later in the process will be held only if needed.

## Approval of the Minutes

Minutes from the March 7, 2019 meeting were reviewed. The Minutes were approved as submitted, 8:0:0.

## Review of the Matrix of Cover Crop Recommendations for Program Year 2021

Co-Chair, Robert Waring, read each Cover Crop Matrix to the Sub-Committee members for discussion.

**1C.** There was general Discussion regarding sod practices and rotations. Applicability of adding sod to an existing practice or creating a no-fallow practice was discussed. There are numerous benefits to be had by providing cover crop options for sod and specialty crops, which led the group discussion back to a no-fallow concept. A no-fallow concept was discussed during the last TAC cycle. There were questions from the sub-committee members regarding the dates required by the Bay Model for cover crop, the sub-committee will need to know timeframes required for Bay Model credit. Members agreed to move forward with a no fallow type of practice that could be applicable to SL-8 producers but more inclusive. Nutrient Management would be a criteria, there was discussion regarding the type of planner required for the sod farms. The group discussed seasonal restrictions on seed types, as well as considerations for payment rates.

Members will be researching additional information to bring forward for upcoming meetings. 1.C and 4.C were going to be addressed by a no fallow concept and combined by the Cover Crop Sub-Committee.

**2C.** There was general discussion regarding the creation of a practice that would allow for the application of nutrients on cover crop. In looking at the various cover crop practices, there was discussion regarding current situations with cover crop following corn. Currently no nutrients are allowed after corn, in certain situations perhaps producers should be able to add a shot of fertilizer to help establish the cover crop for the other benefits it provides (as there may not be much nitrogen to scavenge). It was questioned if a cover crop with a fall shot of fertilizer could be considered a soil loss practice. If producers are following a Nutrient Management (NM) Plan, and PSNTs are required and show that the cover crop needs N, then fertilizer could be applied per the NM Plan. The group discussed for producers that would be interested in applying an organic fertilizer, would the application be to improve the cover crop stand or to spread more manure. The sub-committee acknowledged that the Bay Model will not allow credit for the application of commercial fertilizer, so focused discussion on organic fertilizer. The group reviewed the new SL-8H specifications for Program Year 2020, which no longer requires a harvest. It was noted that organic fertilizer is already allowed with the SL-8H but the time of application was discussed. Members will be researching additional information to bring forward for upcoming meetings.

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. Item 2C was motioned to be Tabled by the Sub-Committee, 8:0:0.

**3C.** 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. Item 3C was motioned to be Tabled by the Sub-Committee, 8:0:0.

**4C.** Members will be researching additional information to bring forward for upcoming meetings. 1.C and 4.C were going to be addressed by a no fallow concept and combined by the Cover Crop Sub-Committee.

**5C.** The sub-committee members reviewed the recommendation and referenced the SL-8B, which allows for mixed species cover crop. To drop the incentive for rye cover crop, research would need to come first due to the high credit values for rye in the Bay Model. The group discussed increasing the incentives for early planting which would also benefit mixed species cover crops. Early planted and rye cover crops receive the highest Bay Model credits for the various accepted cover crop planting dates and mixes. There was general discussion regarding the Bay Model references to rye cover crop and the BMP Manual use of 'pure' rye. If a producer meets the minimum specification for rye cover crop, 2 bu/ac planted, this should satisfy the requirement for 'rye cover crop'.

The sub-committee motioned to remove 'pure' from the specification and insert 2 bu/ac planted to meet the minimum requirement for the rye cover crop. The motion was approved 8:0:0.

The sub-committee motioned 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. The motion was approved 8:0:0.

**6C.** The group discussed the acreages drilled versus acreages broadcast then incorporated. The Bay Model credits for drilled cover crop may not be substantially high enough to create an incentive, and with the large number of acres that are broadcast, the incentive may not increase drilled acreages from broadcast acres enough to create a separate incentive.

Item 6C was motioned to be Tabled by the Sub-Committee, the motion was approved 8:0:0.

**7C.** 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.

**8C.** The sub-committee discussed the seeding rates in the manual, that there would need to be research conducted prior to proposing any change to EPA. Several members mentioned conversations with Mr. Wade Thomason in the past regarding similar subjects, Mr. Thomason will be asked if there is any research on lower planting rates for rye other than the 2 bu/ac currently recommended.

**9C.** The group briefly discussed that later planting dates had already been proposed during the last TAC cycle, which would provide for a later planting date. The sub-committee is awaiting the final determination on the proposed later planting dates.

**10C.** The co-chair provided information from Mr. Wade Thomason regarding the Dura winter rye. 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'.

The sub-committee motioned to add Dura to the list of rye cultivars in the Ag BMP Manual. The motion was approved 8:0:0.

**11C.** The sub-committee reviewed the current language in the manual for the SL-1. The current language has 3 lifespans with varied payment rates. In addition, it was discussed that secondary considerations could be utilized for ranking practices with longer lifespans.

Item 11C was motioned to be Tabled by the Sub-Committee, the motion was approved 8:0:0.

**12C.** The sub-committee reviewed the language and discussed the intent of the entire paragraph, Rates C.1. As stated in the recommendation, the group also found the last sentence to be potentially contradictory to the rest of the language in paragraph. 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.

The sub-committee motioned to strike the last sentence from the SL-3, C. Rates, paragraph 1. The motion was approved 8:0:0.

The Co-Chair reviewed various items sub-committee members would bring forward to the next meeting. Mr. Waring noted that any remaining nutrient management matrix items would be discussed at the next meeting.

### **Public Comment**

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

**Meeting Adjourned 2:00 pm**