

AWQPF Tech Subgroup

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, March 29, 2016 – Illinois Dept. of Ag, FFA Room, Springfield, IL 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Conclusions and Next Steps

1:00 – 2:00 pm	<p>Land Measures Table Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Acres of cover crops</i> (Kim Martin and Natalie Prince, FSA) Discussed how to define and query “cover crop”. Decided to query “Intended use: cover only”. Will query 2011 by county – by watershed if possible and 2015 and 2017 by watershed. Prior to 2015, cover crops reported as individual crops. After 2017, there will be 4 categories and we will capture it all as a “cover only”. ➤ <i>Number of bioreactors and acres treated</i> (Trevor Sample, Illinois EPA and Eric Gerth, NRCS) Trevor Sample provided a map that includes 19 bioreactors and their acres treated. Moving forward, NRCS and IEPA (via 319) could give us future ones. LICA may know others. ➤ <i>Number of acres of buffers and wetland practice</i> (Kim Martin and Natalie Prince, FSA, and Mike Chandler and Lisa Beja, IDNR) These include: CP9, CP23, CP23A, CP27, CP30, ,CP32, CP38B, CP39, CP21, CP22, CP28, CP29, CP33, and CP38A. ➤ <i>Acres of perennial/energy crops equal to pasture/hay acreage from 1987 and on 10% of tile-drained land</i> (Kim Martin and Natalie Prince, FSA) Similar to cover crop, there was a question as to what is considered perennial/energy? The group decided to pull out foraging, grazing, and left standing (FG, GZ, LS). CRP is also taking crops out of production, so will capture the perennial/energy acreage numbers as well: CP1, CP2, CP4D, CP8A, CP10, CP15A, CP15B, CP25, and CP38E. ➤ <i>Adding drainage management practice to table</i> (Warren Goetsch, IDOA) Warren will talk to Mark David to ask about this. In the meantime, can check with NRCS to ask for numbers. <p>TARGET DATE FOR REPORT: Get baseline data by next meeting (June 14, 2016). It will capture 2011 and 2015.</p> <p>Agencies will collate information. There is still question on where it will be housed.</p>
2:00 – 3:00 pm	<p>Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Questionnaire update (Mark Schleusener, NASS) Random survey to 1,000 growers will be sent to gather information on the

	baseline year (2011) and a recent year (2015). Currently, it is being reviewed in D.C. Timetable is in the notes (below). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Plan for Communications (Lauren Lurkins, IFB) Communicators are developing a plan for joint support letter, methods and communications toolkit. IDOA are drafting the joint support letter. Campaign can raise awareness about strategy in general and if they receive the survey it'll encourage participation.
3:00 – 3:10 pm	Inputs and Humans Tables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Brief update (Lauren Lurkins) Ag Partners started capturing information based on what Iowa did. Now, IWRC will send out as part of PWG sector. Spreadsheet is addendum to report (like Iowa). There will be a summary paragraph or 2 that pulls it together. First round covered 2015.
3:10 – 3:30 pm	Next steps and Future Meetings <p>The next meeting (June 14):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Present acreage reports. ➤ Tie up what we need for 2011 and 2015 report. ➤ Mark Schleusener will update survey information. Touch base on communications. <p>It's expected that the Oct 11 meeting will not be needed as this subgroup's charges will be completed.</p>

Mark Schleusener was not able to attend and provided the following information afterwards:

NASS has been asked to design and implement a survey of producers to measure a number of farming practices that will assist with reducing nutrient losses. The survey is designed to gather information on a baseline year (2011) and a recent year (2015). The attached document is a set of skeleton publication tables that will be populated with survey results when the survey is complete.

CURRENT STATUS: The survey plan and cost estimate are being reviewed by NASS staff in Washington, D.C.

SAMPLE DESIGN: The current plan calls for a total sample size of 1,000 farms in Illinois. The sample will be composed of producers that raise corn, wheat, and soybeans. A stratified random sample will be drawn to ensure coverage of small, medium, and large farms.

SURVEY TIMETABLE:

- July 1, 2016 will be the first mailing
- August 1 will be the second mailing, to non-respondents
- August 15 through September 1 will be phoning to non-respondents
- September 1 through 15 will be data analysis
- September 15 through October 15 will be tabulation, summary, and disclosure review to ensure no individual responses are disclosed inadvertently.
 - Some items will be quite rare. The state total may be very close to the total from one operation. We must not publish any statistics that discloses an individual farm response
- October 15 through December 1 will be the preparation of the final publication.

- December 1, 2016 results will be published and results will be mailed to respondents that request them

In attendance: Lauren Lurkins, Illinois Farm Bureau; Kim Martin, Farm Service Agency; Natalie Prince, Farm Service Agency; Doug Bailey, Farm Service Agency; Warren Goetsch, Illinois Department of Agriculture; Steve Chard, Illinois Department of Agriculture; Trevor Sample, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency; Mike Chandler, Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Lisa Beja, Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Jean Payne, Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association; Chuck Cawley, Illinois Department of Agriculture; Brian Miller, Illinois Water Resources Center; Eliana Brown, Illinois Water Resources Center; Katie Hollenbeck, Illinois Water Resources Center

Brian Miller: Let's get started. Does everybody know each other? Do we need to do introductions? No? Okay, let's quickly review the charges. AWQPF looks at how to identify BMPs in the state and how to track progress and future practices. Some sub goals they needed help with are we needed to help with. There are three things to share and aggregate. We wanted to identify what BMP parameters will be tracked and talked about broad categories, what counts as a cover crop/buffer. 2011 is the baseline year. Lauren will give us update on "inputs" and "human." We are working on "land" as a group, and NMC is working on "water". Looking at the homework assigned last meeting, there are five actions to tackle. Teams were formed to tackle and based on teams who had data. 1. Acres of cover crops (Kim and Natalie), it's all yours, and you had some questions?

Kim Martin: The strategy doesn't define what is or isn't a cover crop. We at FSA have definition. We don't want to include or exclude things. We ran into some data issues. Our data is only as good as our county offices put in there.

Trevor Sample: Do we have the spreadsheet? Can we bring it up on the screen? Dr. Christianson has only used grasses, rye and oat. I don't want to be that narrow. The literature review supports nitrate reduction and phosphorus, as far as holding soil in place. I say we count it as a cover. That can be perennial cover crop/hay, energy crop, etc.

Doug Bailey: FSA defines every crop in the intended use category, grasses, and radishes etc. Cover is only a designation for some, as well as forage or grazing or whatever. It won't be captured as cover only, but will have intended uses as a crop identifier. It only covers the designation. The problem with cover only, it is reported as the initial crop. Then it is planted with corn/soybean or cover only with grains. Done away, it counts as a seed. It tells the system that it is not the initial crop. For 2017, we have done away with crop for intended use. Cover-only crop will be reported.

Natalie Prince: It's all in this handout that we gave to you. It is reported as cover only. Then we changed it to cover only with coat of seed. We will start recording differently in 2017.

Doug Bailey: For the cover crops, it will not be identified as rye, wheat, or alfalfa or cover, so you'll never know if it's a cover, etc. If it meets definition as brassica, you'll never know if it is turnips or radishes, only that it is a brassica as a cover crop. We had three definite types of cover crops reported in the last few years. FSA is all using the same definition of a cover crop.

Warren Goetsch: Going back to 2011, if we wanted summary numbers for cover only, or cover only and green manure, you could lump it together and give it to us?

Doug Bailey: Yes. Do you want info down to field level?

Warren Goetsch: County level.

Natalie Prince: 2015 forward will be different. Data in 2011 was by county, but does not include the whole county. For a HUC, it includes all acres for the county even though only half the HUC is in county.

Warren Goetsch: We can try to get statewide numbers for 2011.

Trevor Sample: We can break up each county by number of acres.

Natalie Prince: We could do HUC 8 for 2015, which will be more accurate.

Warren Goetsch: HUC8 for 2015 and beyond.

Doug Bailey: 2011 is just a base year.

Brian Miller: The next years looked at will be 2017, then 2019.

Warren Goetsch: But the report will not be reported as radishes?

Natalie Prince: No, the break down will be by crop, grasses, brassicas, legumes, etc.

Trevor Sample: For pasture, not permanent, how do we capture perennial energy crops?

Doug Bailey: Go to intended use, like oats, the intended use of grazing or forage. We capture perennials as orchard, forage, grazing, etc.

Trevor Sample: Perennial crops are equal to pasture and hay, pasture with animals on it, or just a hay crop. CRP ground is not in production.

Doug Bailey: Look at alfalfa, the 2nd crop. We report it as intended use code. Cover only is the intended use, versus grazing.

Natalie Prince: The reason we are using intended use is where we got confused. Cover only for 2011 and 2015 for cover crops. The focus is on intended use not on the specific cover crop. So that's why we don't have 2015 gathered.

Doug Bailey: The types of crops you can report, but all with intended uses described.

Mike Chandler: What's "SD"?

Doug Bailey: "SD" is seed, "PR" is processed, and "SO" is sod.

Brian Miller: For cover crops, are we correct in saying the intended use is cover only, regardless of what it is, calculated for all 3 years, and 2015 can get HUC 8. What about Trevor's idea of percent of county?

Natalie Prince: Lisa might have a layer and we will check with the national office to get down to the CLU layer.

Warren Goetsch: It is what it is, if you can get it, then great.

Brian Miller: County is better than guessing.

Natalie Prince: We can do by county at least.

Brian Miller: 2011 is by county, 2015 and 2017 by watershed. For 2011 and 2015, cover only know cover.

Natalie Prince: We can get down to actual crop for 2011 and 2015. For 2017, there will only be 4 categories.

Trevor Sample: Cover crops are good enough. Are we going to get picky?

Doug Bailey: There are different data sets. We should start with how we are going to end.

Natalie Prince: How do we report through different crop levels? We want to compare apples to apples not oranges. The four categories are cereals/grasses, legumes, brassica, and other grasses. For 2011 and 2015, we would have to do manually.

Warren Goetsch: I think cover only is fine.

Eliana Brown: 2015 and 2017 will be by watershed. All cover crops by future years.

Trevor Sample: We can have a narrative explaining how we got all of that. Again, we want you guys not to have to go through a 6 month process of collecting and sorting data.

Brian Miller: In the future you can pull information.

Trevor Sample: Most guys are doing rye grass.

Lauren Lurkins: Before corn/soybeans go in, they tend to follow the same practice. Do you expect to get the even years or skipping?

Trevor Sample: When do you want to do a report? Make it at the end of 2017 to capture the data; it depends on when you want to put report out.

Warren Goetsch: The end of 2017. Data is a year behind.

Natalie Prince: Data on public site is put out four times a year. It's put out in 2016, for 2015 crop data.

Doug Bailey: In 2016. It takes them a month and then they report.

Brian Miller: Are you all happy? Now let's do perennial energy crops.

Doug Bailey: Perennial crops have a reporting date of the previous fall. We already have perennial crops reported.

Warren Goetsch: Choices are forage, grazing, or left standing.

Doug Bailey: Only if I will harvest as forage or pasture. To report it, December 15 is the reporting date, would be forage and grazing.

Brian Miller: What's in left standing, CRP?

Doug Bailey: No CRP is reported as CRP. Left standing is reported so little.

Trevor Sample: What about crop versus something taken out of production?

Mike Chandler: Include it as perennial /energy.

Trevor Sample: Do we include pasture hay and perennial all lumped together?

Brian Miller: The reasoning earlier was for a different nutrient load.

Trevor Sample: How picky do we want to get?

Warren Goetsch: I'm trying to think back to science assessment and strategy document.

Lauren Lurkins: Revert back to pasture hay you had in 1980s. It is worded up there on the screen.

Brian Miller: He was calculating some sort of perennial or energy crops.

Trevor Sample: The idea was that had gone down, some sort of permanent cover.

Warren Goetsch: Grazing would be included, taken out of crop production. All combined into one is what we are looking for.

Doug Bailey: Used for erosion control. Green manure is a method, reported as cover only. My understanding is their intention is intended use will just be called "cover."

Warren Goetsch: Did you get your answer?

Natalie Prince: For perennial energy crops, pull out foraging, grazing, and left standing.

Mike Chandler: Because CRP, there are so many different practices.

Warren Goetsch: For calculation purposes, it's lumped together.

Brian Miller: It will be another bullet under this category. Is it fair to say grazing is the same as all those others?

Trevor Sample: That keeps it easy.

Eliana Brown: What do you mean another bullet point?

Brian Miller: CRP is taking stuff out of production but not perennial and energy lumped together.

Kim Martin: What we are considering a wetland and a buffer?

Trevor Sample: GZ, LS, SD, SO, FG. The whole point is to try to capture what is overwintering.

Natalie Prince: Capture any crop type used for forage, grazing, and left standing.

Brian Miller: Let's talk about CRP while you are here.

Kim Martin: CRP practices, we felt would fall into that category. Those are the practices we would get acreage totals.

Doug Bailey: It's important to know specific acres of buffers and wetland practices. If those aren't important, include all CRP with wetlands and buffers.

Trevor Sample: I think it's important to be specific.

Brian Miller: These are important because they are in the strategy.

Natalie Prince: CRP is identified with perennial crops, buffers, and wetlands.

Kim Martin: The figures are a summary number for wetlands and buffers.

Trevor Sample: This is what we want. This will go in our report.

Brian Miller: Nothing funky.

Kim Martin: CRP is pretty steady.

Brian Miller: Okay, if you are happy, happy with perennial grasses, we just did buffers and wetlands.

Natalie Prince: Do you need to know practices for wetlands and buffers? It's on the sheet.

Trevor Sample: We don't have any bioreactors, I was aware of U of I's bioreactors. I contacted Mark David and Dr. Cook. I got shapefiles and lat/longs. I made a map. I put HUC8 in and laid them over top of priority watersheds. I did have number of acres treated. Most are in Embarras. Some are in Decatur. One in Piatt County represents six in one area. As far as we know, this is what they have. There may be one out of Richland.

Eliana Brown: So the number was "one" and also "of acres treated."

Trevor Sample: U of I had that information.

Brian Miller: Was this for 2015 or 2011?

Trevor Sample: 2015 probably. I can go back and get years installed. Some of the earlier ones are ones Dr. Cook had. I can get 2011 and 2015 numbers.

Brian Miller: So we have captured 2011 and 2015. How do we capture this moving forward? Is this something that you all would detect in any way? We have a member of LICA on our committee. If anyone is putting these in, we want to capture them.

Trevor Sample: If going in through NRCS, 319, we will capture it since it is reported.

Brian Miller: 319 haven't put any in yet?

Trevor Sample: No, but it could.

Brian Miller: Through NRCS?

Trevor Sample: Yes, going forward program-wise.

Warren Goetsch: I would expect since it is a program-wise thing, it could be cost shared, etc.

Jean Payne: They were put in and studied and then abandoned.

Trevor Sample: How often do we need to replace woodchips? We guess 15 or 20 years, but it has not been in long enough to know. Are they being properly maintained?

Brian Miller: We have done four. On the 5th one, adding drainage management to list of practices might be important thing to do. NRCS has a lot going in to reduce nutrient loss. We talked about needing a formal process to add practices. We can punt this up to Science Assessment team.

Warren Goetsch: I can go to Mark David.

Brian Miller: It is time sensitive, Mark is retiring in July. Laura Christianson is a faculty member working in this area.

Warren Goetsch: In the meantime, we can check with NRCS numbers.

Lauren Lurkins: There's a whole part in strategy talked about counties doing drainage water management.

Eliana Brown: It's on page 3.34 of the strategy.

Brian Miller: Trying to follow procedure, how much is it going to cost? Now the question is, we agreed on categories and getting data, the question is how to build report. Warren, said we could get it pulled together by July of this year? The data pulled together by the end of July, and then the report by end of the year.

Trevor Sample: What about the baseline report before?

Warren Goetsch: It also depends on monitoring people. The first report may not have a lot of their information. Mark Schleusener would hope to get survey out this summer and start getting preliminary data back in the fall.

Brian Miller: Get baseline stuff done this year, published into baseline report, populate baseline stuff, worst case it sits there already written. In 2017, have a published report? Would that work? That way you don't have to write two reports.

Warren Goetsch: It depends on the timing of the survey.

Lauren Lurkins: This captures some of activity and the survey captures another component. It really has to go together to tell the whole story.

Warren Goetsch: Ag meetings and field days. Accumulating data gives something new to talk about this winter and preserves the momentum. The ag community is getting burned out.

Lauren Lurkins: We can't just talk about strategy. Farmers want to see results.

Warren Goetsch: We want to see cover crop adoption rate and incentive to do better the following year.

Brian Miller: Not a formal glossy report but PowerPoint or fact sheet, etc. FSA has data, Trevor has data, DNR has CRP enhancement data. Is there a depository that captures this to pull together? How do you want to see this aggregated? Spreadsheet?

Warren Goetsch: I always envision a similar process to how we put strategy together. NRCS programs relied heavily for their descriptions/sections. Become more data intensive to say whether we have capacity to manipulate various layers to give us map of this.

Natalie Prince: All of our data can put it all together, but we cannot release the data. I can't give that. But I can give you a summary.

Brian Miller: What were you anticipating putting next?

Trevor Sample: Tables and figures and text.

Lauren Lurkins: We are copying what Iowa did. They had agencies put together a report and page after page of table one belonged to Farm Bureau, etc. Every agency had their own set.

Brian Miller: NMC is meeting next week. It's fairly manageable. Then don't worry about managing.

Trevor Sample: One big database where everyone spits out maps.

Brian Miller: Someone check with Eric about drainage water management.

Trevor Sample: Report to me on bioreactors.

Eliana Brown: Is IEPA going to house all of the data. Our next meeting is June 14. Is that enough time?

Natalie Prince: Yes we can try to get it all together.

Brian Miller: So let's talk about plan for communications plan.

Lauren Lurkins: It is already set roughly. They are prepared for Anjanette and Eliana. We have a joint support letter. For farmers to talk about practices they have on the ground. Everybody's logo will be included.

Eliana Brown: Reviewers on list, for joint support letters. The communications toolkit, delivering the same message. Who should be reviewing the joint support letter? Those who sign the joint support letter?

Lauren Lurkins: Communicators from Growmark, Soybean, Corn, Farm Bureau, etc.

Warren Goetsch: My thought was head of EPA, head of Farm Bureau, other stakeholder heads signing the letter to underscore importance of producers filling it out. Depending upon Farm Week, monthly newsletters, and regular outreach. The toolkit was like a draft press release. Farmers get it from five or six different directions. Good outreach will help keep costs down for the follow up phone calls and second mailing.

Lauren Lurkins: Directors of agencies at a bare minimum. The producers want to tell what they are doing.

Warren Goetsch: Form logistics, two agency directors, do you think will discourage people?

Trevor Sample: I think it would. The Ag survey should be from commodity groups and farmers.

Brian Miller: Whoever signs it, they reviewed it, and it is good enough.

Lauren Lurkins: If Ag wants to draft, lay out verbage, with logistics of what you want to do, make sure you are okay with this. You're probably right.

Brian Miller: Question about June 1 active campaign, July 1 survey goes out. With an active campaign, survey only goes out to 100 people. Is active campaign going to all 100,000 people in state?

Warren Goetsch: The campaign continues to raise awareness of survey.

Brian Miller: Only 1% or less will receive survey that you are campaigning to.

Lauren Lurkins: Farm publications are broad.

Jean Payne: What if someone doesn't get the survey and wants to fill it out?

Eliana Brown: Maybe this is a role for the conservation story map?

Lauren Lurkins: There are too many guys.

Warren Goetsch: Well maybe they will not be statistically counted. They can maybe be used for another purpose, but will not be counted statistically.

Lauren Lurkins: Farmers know how NASS surveys work. Not everyone will get a NASS survey.

Brian Miller: Lauren do you want to talk about “human” tables?

Lauren Lurkins: We were collecting information at different times/different meetings. Now the information is with Anjanette and Eliana to summarize.

Brian Miller: Let’s shoot for a July timeframe.

Lauren Lurkins: It’s all online at Iowa. There is opportunity for people to report.

Trevor Sample: It is set up for people to say this is what this agency did.

Lauren Lurkins: If you have the info, you can play with that.

Trevor Sample: It goes into a text, “x” number of roadshows, see text for summary. Paragraph two of that document pulls it together.

Brian Miller: So the next step, the next meeting is June 14. Is most of our work done? On June 14, do you want to report back on what you have collected? Any other tasks for this group or are we retiring this group after these tasks are complete are we retired?

Mike Chandler: We are good on our end.

Brian Miller: Is there more to do, anything else on agenda?

Mike Chandler: Four of us are meeting a lot, fine tuning, and talking about something once a week.

Brian Miller: Okay so we will tie up the report, go over loose ends, discuss how to get data together, and do the rest by email. And we will follow up with Mark and have him weigh in on the survey and touch base on the media strategy. We will also touch base on the letter. If that makes sense, then you guys get the summer off.

Eliana Brown: So we probably don’t need October 11 meeting.

Brian Miller: Probably not. We are doing tons of work and making lots of progress. Does everybody have copy of strategy? Warren has copies. Thank you all for coming. That will conclude today’s meeting.