

St. Tech. Committee Meeting – 6/16/16

Attendees: Bill Armbrust, Bob Bettger, Victor Bohuslavsky, Fred Christensen, John Duplissis, Boone McAfee, Carla McCullough, Lavaine Moore, Burdette Piening, Greg Reisdorff, Rich Torpin, Elbert Traylor, Eric Zach, Kent Zimmerman, Neil Moseman, Mary O'Donohue, Nate Blum, Craig Derickson, Brad Soncksen, Neil Dominy, Jamie Petersen, and Tami Nordman

Welcome and Thank you for being here! – Craig

NRCS Programs – Brad Soncksen (Slides)

Recommendations that have been submitted

EQIP Fund Allocations in 2016

State Initiatives:

Forestry = \$500,000

Wildlife = \$870,000

Monarch Butterfly = \$100,000 (we will far exceed this)

Tribal = \$100,000

AFO = \$1,000,000

NE WQI = \$400,000

State/National Initiatives:

Organic = \$200,000

Energy = \$25,000

High Tunnel = \$100,000

CAP-CNMP = \$200,000

Climate Change = \$1.8 million

Soil Health – Demo Farm = \$TBD

Dates to consider:

- Determine Special Initiatives and Fund Pools in July
- Revise FY17 ranking tools in August
- Complete Practice Payment Schedule in September
- FY17 application cutoff date is October 21, 2016
- Application ranking deadline - TBD
- Single cutoff date, 3rd Friday of October – 14 LWG's
- Single cutoff date, 3rd Friday of November – 4 LWG's

- Two cutoff dates, First of August/September and Second of January/February – 1 LWG
- Multiple cutoff dates for AFO's and CNMP CAP's only. Monthly or Bimonthly – ECS Staff
- Utilize FSA electronic mailing list for notifications.

These cutoffs are just merely to get what we have into the system, I encourage you all to continue to submit.

Require 5 years previously irrigated for irrigated to dry payments; unless it's 5 years, its low priority.

Add screening criteria on applications for Brush Management (314), to remove cedars. Tag as low priority unless a prescribed burn is implemented I subsequent years to control cedar regeneration

? Elbert – Require to follow-up, is this something they would agree to do it on their own?

A. Brad= It would be in the same contract.

! Marsha – (CPP) – if they are having to replace the pivot and go to a drip system, maybe it would be okay.

Add Soil Health Livestock Integration Initiative. “Build Soil Health through diverse rotations on their cropland and re-integrate livestock back into their operation”.

? Elbert – Is this something we can add additional points to rather than a separate initiative?

! Craig – I do believe there is a lot of interest and incentive to incorporate livestock into our operations more.

Livestock Shelter Structure:

? John D. – The real is issue is with Solid base, something more porous would be better.

Sprinkler System

Remove scenario 3 “System Renovation Renozzle.

Irrigation System/Pipeline

? Marsha – I don't see a big difference between the two; I'm neutral.

Irrigation Water Management

Eliminate scenario for basic technique

! Elbert – I agree with this.

Structure for Water Control

Pumping Plant

Revise policy to allow new solar system pumping plants to be installed on existing livestock wells only when a well test confirms the well is viable and would be feasible when converting to a solar system.

Water Well

? Elbert – Viability of the well when it's ready to collapse?

? Bernadette – How long does the system have to be in place?

Brad – They would have to maintain until the life of the permit. We don't have any way to enforce it after the life of the contract.

Payment Rate is greater than 100ft. deep.

Delete scenario 3 "Shallow Well. 100 ft. deep or less.

Cover Crop

Reduce payment Cap to \$5,000/yr from \$15,000/yr.

Decrease payment rates. Recommended \$30/Ac for single species

Limit payments to a maximum of 2 years

Fence

Eliminate Portable Fence, scenario #11 (Doesn't meet NE Practice Standard)

Could be eliminated

Access Control

Add scenario to exclude animals for a partial year prior to prescribed burn (Currently March 1st until after burn is completed in following year). Recommend scenario for early Spring grazing of cool season grass with Livestock removed by June 1st, 2016.

Brush Management

Establish annual payment cap (concern with high cost when in WIN contract)

Obstruction Removal

Eliminate from EQIP eligible practice list

Watering Facility

Decrease payment rates (Steel Bottom Tanks)

Upland Wildlife Habitat Management

Implement payment cap of \$5,000/yr. on scenario 4 "Wildlife Habitat Enhancement – Former Cropland – Foregone Income

NE Water Quality Initiative will continue

Ogallala Aquifer Initiative will continue

? Elbert – Can these dates line up with the October dates?

Brad – Yes, let's discuss this as this would be convenient

CSP

We will be going to a new ranking system in 2017

Training will be rolled out to NRCS this summer, with signup this fall

Questions:

Bob – National Funding Pool, what was the interest?

Brad – This will mainly effect Iowa and Missouri

FSA – Greg Reisdorff (Slides)

2007 – 1.3 million acres

Today – 782,171 acres

Within two states we have over half of the CRP acres.

Changes from GRP:

Eligible Land must have a grass cover.

Ineligible Land:

Forestland, woodland, land under EQIP or CSP

State Technical Committee Consultation:

CRP Notice 805 requires State Office Review of CRP Management for all CRP practices.

Current Missing Practices: CRP Tree Practices and CP 8A – Grass Waterways

CP 8A Management Activities Optional Treatments will become required:

Prescribed Burning

Incidental Grazing with Crop Residue

No haying permitted

Other options/ideas?

Dormant Interseeding

Integrate more livestock (Bob Bettger)

Greg – they would only have 60 days on the site

CRP turned 30; thinking of an Anniversary Party – more to come later this summer

HEL Compliance Update & Soil Health Demo – Corey Brubaker

Soil Health Demo Farm Initiative Purpose:

To establish 12 demo farms across the state and the farms will be used to evaluate the benefits of establishing a soil health management system.

To receive 5 years of payment the producer must be willing to implement a soil health management system that meets the criteria:

Sheet and rill erosion or wind erosion must be controlled to T or less and all gully erosion must be controlled

The Soil Conditioning Index must be greater than 0 and greater than the current system

The crop rotation must include a cool season crop at least once during the contract.

Funding Pools; six funding pools will be established to facilitate distribution of the demo farms across the state. Panhandle, North Central, South West, South Central, North East and South East.

Project Timeline:

Application Cutoff is tomorrow June 17, 2016

Ranking Deadline is July 1, 2016

Soil Erosion and Conservation Compliance:

Types of Water Erosion

Sheet Erosion

Rill Erosion

Ephemeral Gully Erosion

Classic Gully Erosion (can't cross with machinery)

Streambank Erosion

Wind Erosion:

Saltation

Suspension

Surface Creep

Soil Health Initiative and LiDAR Purchasing – Neil Dominy

Soil Health Initiative Approach:

Local Connection, Producer to Producer (most important), Local Field Days, and Continued Partnership Development

New Soil Health Specialist – Aaron Hird

We are looking for a Partner Employee that can work with our local partners and employees to get the word out to more people

Next Steps:

Soil Health Initiative Summit – July or August

Steering Committees for Observation Farm Areas

Partnership Employee Progress

Soil Health Training Internal and External

Any questions, please contact myself (Neil Dominy), Britt Weiser, Corey Brubaker or Aaron Hird.

LiDAR – Shandy Bittle

Handout on LiDAR Update 2016 Project, estimated costs and benefits.

Project Area = 18,111 sq. miles and costs estimated at \$3.8 million

Leveraging is 5 to 1

DNR is trying to get this way more accessible, hopefully out soon.

No snow or standing water for the criteria; we will revisit the areas that were wet this spring.

State and Local Partners Contact: Nathan Watermeier (State GIS Coordinator) at 402.471.3206 or by email at Nathan.watermeier@nebraska.gov

Bob – This is great, it is invaluable product!!!

Next Meeting is September 1st, 2016 at the UNL – Extension Office