

Agriculture Water Quality Partnership Forum

Minutes

Tuesday, May 17, 2016 – Springfield IDA FFA Room

1:30 – 3:30 pm

Conclusions and Next Steps:

Develop other tools as needed

Review of other tools discussed during NLRS development – Brian Miller

- Gave overview of AWQPF charges and contextualized the expectation to “develop other tools as needed.”
- Discussed policy elements acceptable to most sectors as identified in the last year of notes.
 - Need to move conversation about incentives for practice adoption forward.

Conservation cropping systems – Mike Baise

- “Cheat sheet” of white paper on conservation cropping systems (CCS) conducted by AFT was distributed.
- Introduced term of “fugitive nutrients”—nutrients that are not where they are supposed to be.
- Outlined why a CCS may be the best approach to nutrient loss reduction from Illinois ag non-point sources
 - Flexible, voluntary, can leverage funds, soil benefits, reduced fuel use, reduced time costs
- Groups in this room need to be involved in CCS implementation if it is to be a success.
- Group discussed CCS and the white paper:
 - IDOA puts on CCS seminar series around the state featuring researchers and practitioners. Will be done again in January 2017.
 - IDOA is behind CCS 1,000%
 - Reminder that group should keep the focus on water quality as that is the measure being watched. Soil health is a great way to “sell” methods that also improve water quality, but this group needs to keep the focus on water quality.
 - Concern was expressed that CCS is a good fit for prime farmland, not marginal land.
 - Because this is a systems approach, however, CCS could be seen as still applicable. CCS is the approach, but the suite of practices that will result in being implemented may differ for prime vs. marginal land.
 - How can a farmer adopt CCS? What is the recipe for CCS?
 - Technical assistance is needed.
 - Groups need a way to package the information that they can present to farmers they work with.
 - Need to highlight those that are following these practices as much as possible.
 - The focus is on nutrients now, but CCS is the future as a more holistic approach.
 - The key to CCS is flexibility. Not advocating for a specific management practice in any one place.
 - What’s the score card for soil health? What gets measured gets done.
 - Not sure we have one right now.
 - NRCS does have one, but more work needs to be done.

Recap of other state’s certification programs – Carol Hays

- Outlined typical design of certainty programs: voluntary, confidential, incentive based, locally led, scientifically sound, includes verification, provides certainty in the face of future regulations.

- Outlined steps for development: establish requirements, develop farm-specific conservation plans, educate, verify, recertify and incorporate adaptive management.
- Discussed potential incentives: exemption from future regulation, cost-share opportunities.
- Highlighted importance of verification and clear performance metrics.
- Discussed lessons learned from existing programs: set high standards with consensus, rely on scientifically sound practices, have extensive outreach, incorporate producers from the start, account for all BMPs regardless of funding, recognize the power of stewardship in the marketplace, be as simple and harmonious with other programs as possible.
- Mentioned that Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District is working on a program like this and welcome participation.
- Group discussed certainty programs
 - Simplification is key and will be even more important in the future. Practices have to meet supply chain needs as well as nutrient needs. Have to find the sweet spot and have consistent, harmonious messages.
 - Many producers will not participate in a federal or state program.
 - Illinois crops may set it apart from states where some of these programs have been implemented.
 - May not be the best use of outreach time and org resources to focus on signing people up for a program.
 - Existing property tax program for filter strips may be a place to start. Could that be expanded to other practices?
- More discussion would be needed to identify what policies would be needed to support a CCS that accomplishes NLRs goals.
 - Reminder that no steps can be taken toward incentivizing actions until we know what resources we have to dedicate to programs.

BMP tracking

Priority watersheds map update – Brian Miller

- Presented updated NMC watershed map.

Logic model

- Land measures table/Tech subgroup
 - FSA data update – Kim Martin and Natalie Prince
 - 2011 will be reported at the county level and then assumptions will be made, but 2015 forward will be reported at the HUC8 level.
 - FSA is changing how they report cover crops: can choose from four categories and reported only as cover crops.
 - NASS survey update – Mark Schleusener
 - Survey has been approved by HQ.
 - First mailing is July 1. Second to non-responders on Aug. 1 Telephone calling Aug. 15-Sept. 1. Disclosure review begins Oct. 15. Anticipate results Dec. 1

- IRB review still needs to happen
- Published results will be at the state issue. Some analysis may be able to be done at the county level.
- NASS survey communications plan – Becky Clark
- Drainage water management (aka controlled drainage) – Laura Christianson
 - Not currently in the strategy, but Iowa and Minnesota suggest percent reductions in the 30s.
 - Science team is currently reviewing this practice.

Coordinate cost share and targeting update

NRCS and State Tech Subcommittee – Ivan Dozier

Next steps and future meetings

- AFT will share NRCS-developed conservation first steps with the group for when working with a producer who just wants to know what to do (ex. plant cereals if interested in cover crops). These will be shared via IWRC with the meeting notes.
- Steve Chard, IDOA will investigate the use of the property tax program for filter strips and report back.
- IWRC/Illinois EPA/IDOA will consider and/or explore the following items for future meetings:
 - Groups that have conducted program audits.
 - Other states with technical support systems.
 - NLRs practice acceptance procedure development.

In attendance:

Anjanette Riley, Illinois Water Resources Center; Katie Hollenbeck, Illinois Water Resources Center; Brian Miller, Illinois Water Resources Center; Ivan Dozier, USDA-NRCS; Jennifer Tirey, Illinois Pork Producers; Amy Roady, Illinois Soybean Association; James Herkert, Illinois Department of Natural Resources; Lauren Lurkins, Illinois Farm Bureau; Laura Christianson, University of Illinois Extension; Amy Walkenbach, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency; Lisa Martin, Illinois Certified Crop Advisor Board of Directors; Mike Baise, American Farmland Trust; Caroline Wade, Corn Growers; Woody Woodruff, Illinois Stewardship Alliance; Rodney Weinzierl, Illinois Corn Growers Association; Carol Hays, Prairie Rivers Network; Julie Armstrong, Nutrient Research Education Council; Chuck Crawley, Illinois Department of Agriculture; Mark Schleusener, USDA-NASS; Trevor Sample, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency; Kim Martin, Farm Service Agency; Natalie Prince, Farm Service Agency; Doug Bailey, Farm Service Agency; Jen Filipiak, American Farmland Trust; Liz Hobart, Growmark; Richard Lyons, Illinois Association of Drainage Districts; Ryan Arch, ILICA; Steve Chard, Illinois Department of Agriculture

Brian Miller: Good afternoon. A little bit of background to start. We have seven committees and lots of people in attendance. Lots of progress has been made. The slides show all the members. I would like to let everyone know that I will pass around the attendance list and everyone who is here, please sign it. I will start introductions with Steve.

Introductions

Brian Miller: There were four charges. 1. Steer and coordinate outreach and education. The group felt like we had this in hand and has been focusing on next three agenda items. 2. Tracking BMP implementation. We did that with a group, the Agricultural Water Quality Partnership Forum Technical Subgroup. We will get a report and get all of the data. 3. We also had a group working on coordinating cost share and targeting. 4. And the last item was developing other tools as needed. One of the things that you know that was in there was to think about as we are moving forward is what are those additional action items or tools that we would like to develop. This goes back to fall 2013. We had an exercise where we went through a continuum and the exercise was to talk through things that might go in a strategy and stakeholder groups. Which things did we not want to consider and want to consider? We went back through the minutes and tried to pull out conclusions of dialogue and felt that nutrient management is a systems approach and each producer has to make their own decisions. Voluntary approaches were preferred and incentives were needed to put things into place and maintain BMPs. We are hoping to move that dialogue forward too. They need to see that it is also worth investment and keeping it in place. So how do you operationalize this? And there were some states that had been exploring conservation certification and it was worth merit. And what kind of incentives do you put in place? At the last meeting, we had a discussion and thought it might be worth discussing further. Mike Baise volunteered to present findings of a white paper they had been working on. Carol Hays offered to explore incentive options and give us an update. We can hear what Carol and Mike have to present and move on to dialogue.

Mike Baise: I went to Jacksonville and the newspaper arrived. Jacksonville headlines were "Less fertilizer in Illinois, good for the gulf." It is an eight piece story from University of Illinois and it is good news. We did a white paper. It is being passed around. It's about 26 pages. What's coming around is a cheat sheet of the 20 something odd paper and I wanted to talk about why American Farmland Trust thinks a systems approach makes sense. Also no tillage, strip till, and the 4 R's all make sense. There are actually 6 R's including right tillage, right stuff, right dose, right place, right time, right cover crops. I'm also pedaling the idea of the term "fugitive" nutrients. Fugitive nutrients are those that get away from where they are supposed to be. So what is a conservation cropping system? Tillage, nutrient management, and cover crops. This is something that I stole from folks in Indiana. They had a project going on for 5-6 years, and it was successful with a reduction in nutrients. So, in attending these meetings, we don't know what we are going to do next. Does a CCS make sense as a construct for addressing nutrient loss? It can be targeted, incentive based, and utilize existing programs in USDA and EPA. We talked about how they can complement one another. They can be bundled and use matching grants. So why should we do this in Illinois? I work for American Farmland Trust. It was organized on the east coast and was worried about the loss of farmland as a quantity issue. In the Midwest, we have farmland. Quantity isn't as critical, but quality is. There are prime soils in Illinois, Indiana, and Iowa. It is a critical strategic national resource. It is not just about the next crop, but the next 1,000 crops. The prairie soils have been burning organic matter for decades and we would like to stabilize and build those back. If you do it right, it makes soil healthier and more nutrient efficient. So why would Illinois farmers want to use CCS? There is a better root system and fewer fugitive nutrients. In 2012, it would have been nice to have more water

available. Healthy soils, better water, and keeping soils covered with a living roots system builds organic matter. It can improve yields and farmers are interested in more yields. Who needs to be involved? Everyone in this room. I didn't want to take a whole lot of time in order to have a conversation about CCS for implementing the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy in Illinois. Does anyone not understand what I mean by CCS? Does anyone think it is a bad idea?

Brian Miller: We have 10-15 minutes to talk about CCS. The 20 pages were really well done. Questions for Mike?

Dick Lyons: The Department of Agriculture put on CCS for Illinois. Farmers and ag businessman come forward and listen to us. A young lady came from Oregon and she gave a presentation about what is going on in soil biology. If you have the opportunity, you can go and listen to CCS concepts and have good presenters and have a panel at the end. How many have attended? Okay, almost half of you. For the other half, I think you should attend one of these and listen to what works and hear the stories.

Mike Baise: We did have a talk.

Woody Woodruff: The next dates are in January.

Steve Chard: We endorse CCS with our CCP project.

Laura Christianson: We are very supportive of CCS. My caution is that we want to be careful. We want to stay focused on water quality, and be judged on water quality improvement, not on soil health improvements. It is important to stay focused on that.

Woody Woodruff: It is a different approach on marginal land. It is targeted at prime farmland, not really targeted at marginal land.

Mike Baise: Point taken.

Amy Walkenbach: Was the white paper made available?

Mike Baise: It is almost ready.

Brian Miller: It is a different approach for non-prime farmland. What doesn't apply?

Woody Woodruff: On marginal land, there are other issues as well. In a marginal situation, it is not your best quality soil to begin with. Location is not always the perfect place. It might be in a flood zone or might need more protection. The key goal is nutrient capture. It might be next to a stream. Obviously will have a different approach and is not the same. It has other issues involved other than a flat field.

Jen Filipiak: It is still a systems approach.

Woody Woodruff: Yes, there are other options. FSA and filter strips, food grade crops, etc. I agree with your approach is perfect for prime farmland.

Mike Baise: In the white paper summary, this is in-field. We do talk about edge of field practices more in the white paper.

Jen Filipiak: I disagree, Woody. It is a systems approach. It applies to any farmland, capabilities, and equipment. What approach will work best given resource center? The point is systems and management. It is not easy for a farmer to adopt something like this. It changes management. It is sustainable over the long term.

Lauren Lurkins: How do you go from no one that does this to an "A" student in CCS. What is the recipe to end up?

Jen Filipiak: You need technical assistance to do that. There is not enough technical assistance.

Mike Baise: What about "try one thing?"

Lauren Lurkins: That's soybean. Warren said to try one thing and get good and then go down the spectrum. We would need a way to package this. I look for a recipe. What is the practice that I do first? Walk down a table in strategy?

Jen Filipiak: Four pillars.

Brian Miller: Some states do a pilot and come up with a score sheet. If you think of it as a systems approach, I am very interested in the farm management idea. Look at what is already in place. Minnesota had a data sheet with a scoring system, etc.

Dick Lyons: I have been doing CCS for many years. And it is working for me. My sales are increasing. My neighbors and brothers have been watching me. They have cover crops and made that movement in two years. Another gentleman is making moves. Find individuals that are well respected by other farmers. When they make the move, they go to coffee shop and talk and others will follow and make to move. It is working well for my area. It started to snowball a little bit at a time.

Mike Baise: In the white paper, lots of farms have a production plan and some have a conservation plan. We think CCS melts together production and conservation.

Rodney Weinzierl: We are here talking about nutrients. This is where puck is today, and this is where puck will be tomorrow. It will take something like this. We do something over here and it causes problems over there. It tries to take a holistic approach and try to balance it. So this is where we are going.

Amy Roady: The sweet spot is where the farmer addresses multiple needs. We want to not only focus on productivity, but also ensure that the environment is a better place.

Mike Baise: We don't advocate this practice. We want flexibility. Different approaches, different abilities.

Brian Miller: We talked about nutrients but soil health is the place. Soil health will give you the most benefits.

Mark Schleusener: What is a scorecard for soil health? We have scorecard for productivity. Now we have a scorecard for water. What is the scorecard for soil health? If we have one, then it's not a suite of practices, it's a goal. Not everyone knows the field scorecard.

Ivan Dozier: This is crux of conservation planning. No practice is a stand-alone practice. What it is all about is addressing resource concern. What is our focus going to be? Can the soil health approach help water quality? As we fix one thing, we can negatively affect an unknown thing. Can we address multiple things with single practice? Sure. What's your goal with conservation practices? For every farm, you have to write a prescription specific to those conditions out there.

Jen Filipiak: NRCS has a soil health scorecard.

Ivan Dozier: If their goal is to stay in line with programs, then that is their prescription. Make science meet law. You can have all sorts of conditions and if the objective is to stay in compliance, then what is the best way to do that?

Mike Baise: When I worked here before for my supervisor, he was a huge proponent of CCS and conservation tillage. He was a believer and that is when spending for conservation ramped up. We didn't get there but we made significant progress. I would maintain that a systems approach will make progress. This is long term.

Brian Miller: Read the whole paper. I would like to toggle over to Carol. Some questions are how you operationalize this, flexibility, etc. Carol looked at other states.

Carol Hays: I wanted to give a background of what would happen. It could look different from one farm to the next, and could look very different within a farm. How do we get someone started and encourage or incentivize if they have a completely different system currently. There is wide variation from one county to the next, and how will we approach one component of the sector that will be later adopted and passed down. The question is how to target people when they are all ready for it. We can think about that strategically, build their readiness, and meet them when they are ready. Early adopters can be our model and attract others to it. I want to talk about certainty programs and certification that can come out of it. What is a certainty program? They provide regulatory certainty in the face of current regulations. They are confidential. They are voluntary. A system of practices is agreed to. It is important that verification is built in. The basic principles of all certainty programs out there include voluntary, confidential incentive based, verifications, etc. Characteristics are designed to achieve a conservation outcome. For sage grouse, people have come together to protect those species. Creating an agreement to take certain steps to protect them is important. Set a target that is flexible and voluntary for those participating. Many are locally led. Often they rely of soil and water conservation district. They are identifying their own resource priority. Again, it is another kind of conservation ability. We need to rely on scientifically sound practices. These things will result in water quality benefits. There can be a farm specific environment risk assessment. Here are the states that have something that looks like a certainty

program; Arkansas, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, Oregon, Wisconsin, and Vermont. What are the steps to develop a program to accomplish these objectives? Does there need to be a management plan? In some states, they need to go through master farmer plan, ongoing education programs, etc. Other states certify trainers and planners and invest in that as a state. They make sure that the performance standards are clear. How do we set the standard for how those things perform? Who does the verification? The soil and water district? Or someone else? And how do we keep records of that? We want to make sure we incorporate adaptive management. We will learn a lot as weather changes, and land changes, and land use changes. A systems approach allows us to do that. Also, we want to establish a recertification timeframe. These steps would need to be considered for a program development. There are going to be incentives. Farmers ask how they can pay for this. There is the cost of rent and the future that they face. If we are asking them to change what they do, is there the idea of being exempt from future regulation? What about additional cost share? How can we incentivize through EQIP? We know that through EQIP, do three practices to quality? What do those practices look like? How to take advantage? Think about incentives through revenue? There is 319 funding to take advantage of. And then there are locally available cost share incentives. It is important that verification is built in to ensure standards are being met. Certain producers are receiving a premium for corn and beans. Growers have extinguished themselves. Is the number of producers advancing along path of adoption? Do we have stacked BMPs adopted complementing one another? Are we assessing environmental outcomes? There could be wildlife benefits. Public recognition for adoption is important. Doing the right thing, seeing that they are doing the right thing, and rewarding them is important. Is there some way to create marketplace rewards? Reduced property taxes, reduced cost, and the tax approach is another way of thinking about it. Lessons learned: it is important to set high standards. Making sure you are relying on scientifically sound systems. You have to have experts in the field ready to help, regardless of how you got paid for. Make producers part of the program from the start. They will have a greater buy and more likely to work for them. It is important to point out that marketplace is flooded with these programs. It is flooded and all very different. We are seeking harmonization. I wanted to also say, that Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District is experimenting with this sort of program. How do we encourage that kind of adoption over time, learning, etc? With the idea of a scoring rubric, talk about what is going on in their land, talk about a plan, etc. If they need to tell anyone about it, just sharing that is an early opportunity!

Brian Miller: Questions for Carol?

Amy Roady: As I listen to these programs, I think that right now we are getting farmers to adopt BMPs. There is opportunity to long-term simplify things. They have to meet farmer needs, etc. Long term, how do we simplify, how we harmonize? Farmers are going to get confused. If we don't have a simple or consistent message, farmers are going to get confused. We need to do all of these things, but they need to be simple. There are pieces out there that address the various same things.

Caroline Wade: I echo that. Coordination will help unify the programs.

Amy Roady: Where are the synergies? Some premiums are in place. How do we help address consumer concerns as well?

Lauren Lurkins: I look at it from farmer perspective. Guys just say “tell me what to do.” Some of my guys would never go into a federal or state program. We want to let them do their own thing. They work their people, pushing their program. Numbers start to fade. I worry about different crops. I wonder how our resources are spent. Should we sign them up for a program, or should we simplify message to make it easy?

Jen Filipiak: Promoting soil health and has some easy things to get started with this. Quality no-till and cover crops. I can pass those along to the whole group. I can pass this along as a prescription. It’s not great for every farm, but it is somewhere to start.

Lauren Lurkins: How are we effective in this domain with keeping up with all of the other things? I don’t want to push a program that may not benefit the environment at end of the day.

Jen Filipiak: Phase into it.

Mike Baise: Property tax credit for filter strips. How are the certifications of that done? Property tax payer checks a box?

Steve Chard: Soil and Water Conservation District verifies that.

Mike Baise: Does it have to be a filter strip, in the future, or could include other practices? For absentee land owners, what’s going to trip their trigger? How many land owners took advantage of that property tax reduction as result of filter strip? Can we provide that?

Steve Chard: We can provide that. It’s gone down but we don’t know why.

Lisa Martin: At the last meeting, a guy on our board went to the office trying to get something done. We can submit it but we don’t know if it will work. It’s something that’s out there available. The certified crop advisor board said it would be nice to have an education system to help them learn. How do you put together a training? It is different in every county. It is all different. How can they help the growers? It can be a huge benefit, but not all have resources out there.

James Herkert: The acres of filter strips are declining?

Steve Chard: The acres of new filter strips are in decline.

Brian Miller: Some producers have to do management plans so there should be help for producers to look at options. The purpose of this dialogue was to look at what is out there. It will take a long time to get through as a dialogue. We prepared Mike Baise’s white paper. At the end of the list, what are potential incentives to help pay for practices? The other flip chart could help incentivize. What things would help incentivize producers to keep moving? If there are things you thought had merit, are there certain incentives that have legs?

Amy Roady: What field of market and audits are out there? I’d like to see what is out there.

Brian Miller: Do you have an audit you can provide?

Lauren Lurkins: My point being, there are other opinions, so we should be hearing and learning about it.

Brian Miller: If you were going to do incentives for BMPS, what is informative and what is not informative. I agree. We need more dialogue. These are very broad and there are more classes than anything.

Carol Hays: We need to go back to support for farmers to implement them. If we don't have training and support for farmers, we need to revisit it.

Jen Filipiak: What about providing more in depth technical incentives? If you have good resources, is it an incentive to help them try it?

Brian Miller: Just to get temperature of the room. Is this worth something to talk about in more detail? Would you like to get your thoughts together and try to move this forward at the next meeting?

Amy Roady: It depends on how it's framed.

Lauren Lurkins: What's the point if you don't have an army of resources? If we build ideas or have discussion about ideas, we can talk about and throw things at wall to see what it is. Warren would be a good source to talk about different states. He has exposure to ideas. Iowa has a lot of resources. We should educate each other. Let's hear about neighboring states. We should hear something about it.

Dick Lyons: I heard from a guy from Minnesota.

Lauren Lurkins: I'm not talking about certainty programs. I am talking about building back support groups/technical assistance that we lost.

Ivan Dozier: We reorganized. We are rebuilding our technical workforce in the field. We have three levels of planning required for promotions. We are training and focusing. We are hopeful that in the FWCDs, they do establish a training program. We are staffing back up, developing training, etc. You are seeing the surface. There is something underneath it designing to get people back in the field.

Lauren Lurkins: The things in the works right now, do we need more? Let's look to other states.

Brian Miller: We have a number of folks to report on BMP tracking. We have a priority map. If they were to focus intensively, they were interested in collecting data where BMPs were occurring. It has been on the agenda. What we have here is what results from that discussion. There are good monitoring and good activities going on. There is an interest in phosphorus reducing watersheds. We have three point source watersheds, three non-point source watersheds, and no one was ready to commit to phosphorus. We just wanted to report that back, NMC is to put this on the table. You all have seen the logic model. To focus on land measures, we looked at the strategy and which agencies had that data. Which parameters made the most sense? FSA has worked very hard on this and Kim was going to give an update.

Kim Martin: FSA does collect annual data. To be eligible for benefits, FSA must report annually. 2011 is our baseline year, for cover crops. In 2015 and 2016, we are still looking at cover only green manure.

Then producers are only reporting cover crops. Crops are certified and have a number of CRP categories. Wetlands and CRP buffers. In 2011 we cannot look at HUC 8 level.

Amy Roady: Double crops?

Doug Bailey: We are completely changing the way we will accept cover crop information. Cover crop is not a program crop. A double crop approved system. When they changed in the system, they changed to cover, excluded from earning payment. In 2016, cover crops will be reported as cover crop. There will be four categories to choose from including cereals, brassicas, legumes, and other broadleaves.

Brian Miller: So some of the data we could only get from a survey. Mark will tell us where he is at with that.

Mark Schleusener: There is a sample size of 1,900, 10% margin of error, expected response is 70%. Lauren Lurkins and the traveling roadshows helped with that. Our client will be U of I Extension. Funding is coming from NREC though CBMP back through NREC. Bottom line, the cost is \$56,000. Our timetable will encompass a July and August mailing. There will be two mailings. There will be some telephone calls. The disclosure review begins in October. The state level publication should not have any trouble. IDOA is taking care of some responsibilities, which lessens the load on us. NASS people in headquarters will help. NASS responsibilities will be doing data entry and management as we go. Part of the questionnaire will be mailing back out results. The next steps will be U of I review board.

Lauren Lurkins: Will it be mailed out July 1 and then again on August 1 to the same group?

Mark Schleusener: 1,900 will receive it July 1. Then we will remove those who responded from study and then mail again on August 1.

Jen Filipiak: Will it reflect a data reference? HUC 8? Etc.?

Mark Schleusener: Disclosure issues become more prevalent.

Doug Bailey: Is this survey annual?

Mark Schleusener: Right now, it will be given one time.

Brian Miller: In the strategy, we will report every 2 years.

Mark Schleusener: The survey will ask about 2011 and 2015.

Brian Miller: The next one will be in 2017?

Mark Schleusener: We will mail out late 2017 or 2018.

Ivan Dozier: What about other states?

Mark Schleusener: Yes, Minnesota. I'm surprised it hasn't come up along more states. It is not coming from one source. There is not one voice speaking clearly.

Jen Filipiak: Is there some postcard to give out to the meetings?

Mark Schleusener: We can talk more.

Lauren Lurkins: It is the same concept. Not all will get a survey, but if you get one, fill it out.

Brian Miller: There is a communication plan that we are working on.

Lauren Lurkins: We are on RFD Radio to promote it.

Anjanette Riley: The Illinois Water Resources Center talked to extension communicators to do the same.

Brian Miller: The recommendation that should be added. One recommendation is interest in drainage water management. We looked at it and want to evaluate it.

Laura Christianson: I will give a primer on drainage water management. Sometimes it is called drainage water management, sometimes called control drainage. The practice of control drainage, the tile is at same elevation, they have gate or controls. It artificially manages the level of your outlet. There are a couple different brands. They hold back water and nitrate in water. There are two important parts. The control structures themselves and management plan. It can raise stop logs and before you get into field, you can lower water table so drainage system is function. The storage of water can provide a little extra water during growing season. It is 31% effective but there is a range of 15-75%. The practice is not currently in our strategy. The control drainage isn't in strategy. Where does it work? It works on very flat slopes, less than 0.5%. There are NRCS programs available. The biggest problem is where does nitrate water go? What's next? Can we add practices to the strategy?

Brian Miller: It is a formal determination and the science team has to say it is a quality practice.

Lauren Lurkins: What discussions will happen?

Brian Miller: We will kick it to the science team.

Lauren Lurkins: What is their process?

Laura Christianson: If you want to submit a practice, submit to John Lawrence by July 1. He makes a subcommittee. The subcommittee evaluates, does a review, and presents it to 20 people on the science committee. John Lawrence does some filtering and everyone votes on it.

Lauren Lurkins: Is this happening?

Brian Miller: We asked if it is okay to have it evaluated. Warren and I called the science team, and we are just getting to evaluating here.

Amy Walkenbach: Is there a procedure in place? It looks like we are winging it.

Lauren Lurkins: Something a little more formal would be nice.

Laura Christianson: Paul Davidson and I are trying to make sure that we are advancing our research programs too and not just extension stuff. We are kind of winging it. Science needs to drive it.

James Herkert: Would this require Illinois data or published data?

Laura Christianson: There is some good data. We will also pull in North Carolina, Minnesota, and Iowa data.

James Herkert: Minnesota wouldn't be similar.

Laura Christianson: Some would be relevant and some not.

Amy Walkenbach: Maybe we can discuss a procedure at the next Policy Working Group meeting to do this.

Laura Christianson: As long as they know about practices, it is fair game.

Lauren Lurkins: No one will replace U of I Extension.

Brian Miller: Trying to stay on track Ivan Dozier is up next and the last one to present.

Ivan Dozier: The state technical committee has been around for many years. In recent years, it is more about dealing with programs. There is consultation and collaboration with state technical committee to get advice. There is also considerable flexibility to get funds. EQIP was only available on a water shed basis. Regulations change and have flexibility to target. We are working directly with programs and financial resources. I am looking forward to July.

Brian Miller: Okay. That is it for this meeting. The next meeting is September 27. The next Tech Subgroup meeting is June 14.