

State Technical Committee Meeting
September 23, 2014 at 10:00 a.m.
NRCS State Office Conference Room

A G E N D A

Welcome and Opening Remarks	NRCS - Bricker
Conservation Reserve Program (CRP & CREP)	FSA - Horsley DCR - Moore
Status of FY-14 Program Funds Easements (Handout) EQIP and CSP (Handout)	NRCS - Dunaway NRCS - Vincent
Proposed Program Offerings for FY-15	NRCS - Biddix
Agency Updates	All

Next Meeting - November 25, 2014 cancelled
JA

State Technical Committee Meeting Minutes

September 23, 2014

10:00 a.m.

NRCS State Office, Large Conference Room
1606 Santa Rosa Road, Richmond, Virginia

Attendees: Those in attendance were:

Alexander, Ebony (BFLT, phone-in)
Bowles, Betsy (DEQ)
Puckett, Marc (VDGIF, phone-in)
Cristman, Clyde (DCR)
Coffman, Seth (TU)
Costanzo, Bridgett (USFWS)
Cumbia, Dean (VDOF)
Glover, Darrell (DCR)
Horsley, Emily (FSA)
Moore, Gary (DCR)
Norris, Libby (CBF, phone-in)
Richardson, Sarah (DCR, phone-in)
Roller, Jon (Ecosystems Services)
Schonbeck, Mark (VABF)
Stansbury, Patricia (VABF and WRIR)
Sorrell, Andy (VDACS)
Bricker, Jack (NRCS)
Biddix, Wade (NRCS)
Dunaway, Diane (NRCS)
Vincent, Patrick (NRCS)
Wentz, Chad (NRCS)
Wood, Ron (NRCS)
Bowen, Barbara (NRCS, photographer)
Anderson, Kathleen (NRCS, recorder)

The meeting opened with a welcome from Wade Biddix. Everyone present introduced him/herself.

Jack Bricker briefly reviewed the present fiscal year, which will end on September 30. Some highlights include the passage of the 2014 Farm Bill, which will be in effect for five years. NRCS in VA received a good EQIP budget for \$20 million, but only fraction is left after obligation. We had almost \$35 million in requests. We requested \$1.465 million in additional EQIP at the end of year for animal waste projects. We are doing some hiring, to backfill the

people who are retiring, (such as Wade Biddix!). Jack will make the decision this week on who will fill Wade's position. (Julie Hawkins was selected as the new Assistant State Conservationist for Programs. She was the ASTC for Field Operations in Farmville. She started on November 3, 2014 in Richmond. Wade will assist her and ensure a smooth transition.)

There were reports from some of the attendees:

Emily Horsley (FSA)—She provided a handout report that showed the CREP goals, enrollment in other programs, quail, long leaf pine, continuous CRP and CREP, with significant hiatus of funding for some time. CREP in VA for 10 years, some will expire, 60-65% expiring coming up. Field staff is focusing on this, for re-enrollment. A Riparian Forest Buffer Committee which has 30 to 35 stakeholders has met several times to identify barriers for this issue, who are looking for solutions. There will be follow-up for this group. They will use the standing STC subcommittee to contribute to this issue. There will be an October 15 presentation on state leadership for proposed solutions.

Gary Moore (DCR)—Gary added that we need to remove problematic objections to encourage this to continue.

Diane Dunaway (NRCS)—Diane referred to her easement handout that was distributed at the beginning of the meeting. There were some significant highlights for FY14. There were 14 easements closed: nine FRPP, four WRP, and one GRP. Regarding WRP restorations, the national requirement to complete restorations within three years after closing and Virginia's goal is two years. Regarding monitoring, Virginia completed 100% for FY14. Thank you to Blaine, Doug and Allen, for accomplishing this. A question was raised by Mark Schonbeck (VABF) about the photo in the handout, asking if the land shown will be returned to wetland. The answer is yes, it will. This land had been grazed and hayed. A stream curves around to the left and to the right. This is flood plain, and is in the process of being restored. *[See attached handout entitled "Land Conservation Easements."]* Wade thanked Diane for a good year, and for her work with the easement programs.

Patrick Vincent (NRCS)—Patrick stated that the FY14 EQIP budget allocation, as of September 22, 2014, is as follows: \$19,679,493 was allocated; there were 790 contracts; and \$18,769,708 in contract approvals. There were 24 pre-approvals; \$562,163 in pre-approved amounts; and \$347,622 in funds remaining. There is over one million dollars in forestry, and 112 contracts. And there is over one million dollars for Southside Virginia, for tobacco and poultry and some greenhouse operations. A question was raised by Patricia Stansbury (VABF and WRIR) about the Seasonal High Tunnel (SHT) state policy. If a landowner got funded for a high tunnel during the years of the 2008 Farm Bill, he/she is still eligible during the years of the 2014 Farm Bill. There was a question from Mark Schonbeck, asking if a person is permitted to build a larger high tunnel. Yes, NRCS will pay for the limit permitted, and the landowner can make it bigger, but they must pay for the extra size. The second page of the handout was about

the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Out of the 256 contracts that were expiring, 220 submitted for renewal. We will process these in FY15. These are not competitive, as long as they meet the criteria. (But, the other sign-ups are competitive.)

There was a question from a call-in attendee. If someone did not renew CSP, is he/she eligible to take part? Wade answered that, yes, the person can go in as competitive, as soon as a new sign up period is announced.

Wade Biddix (NRCS)—Wade showed a PowerPoint presentation at this time. There is almost one trillion dollars from the 2014 Farm Bill. Eighty percent goes for food and nutrition programs, 9% for crop insurance, and 6% for conservation. EQIP eligibility requirements stayed the same, but there are other programs that have been put into the EQIP. CSP acreage is reduced from 12.7 M acres to 10 M acres. Three programs (GRP, WRP, FRPP) are now one program, Agricultural Conservation Easement Programs (ACEP). The Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) will continue. Funds can rollover into the next year. The Secretary of Agriculture, not the OMB, will set the technical assistance ratio for NRCS.

AGI (Adjusted Gross Income) had been \$1 million, but now is \$900,000. There was a question from Patricia Stansbury, asking if this does allow as a group, or per person? Wade said that it was tracked by Tax ID number.

Veterans will not be a separate fund pool, but were added for the higher payment rate. The definition of a Veteran is “anyone serving that did not have a dishonorable discharge. To receive the higher payment rate, the Veteran Farmers must also be a New/Beginning Farmer, which is someone who has not farmed consecutively for the last 10 years.

At least 60% of the EQIP funding must go to livestock.

The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) component of Wetlands Reserve Easements (WRE) will have reduced ownership time from 7 years down to 2 years.

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) has combined the following programs together: CBWI, Great Lakes, AWEF, and CCPI.

There are federal crop insurance compliance criteria for Highly Erodible Land and for Wetland Conservation.

Pollinator protection provisions have been extended to 2018. Honey bees are now included in this. Forest service lands are now allowing forages for honey bees.

The total number of active contracts in Virginia changes daily--in fact, hourly! In the Progress Summary, we are down by numbers and by money for FY14 as compared to previous years [see slides, page 10].

Program payments to participants for FY14 (thus far) totaled \$25,929,539.

Out of \$18 million, about \$12 million went into the top ten practices; many of them heavy on the livestock side.

Wade then reviewed the proposed changes to various program offerings for FY15. He then asked for questions from the meeting attendees.

Jon Roller (Ecosystem Services)— Jon said that SAM is a difficult process. He asked if the federal government would offer any help with signing up with SAM.gov. Jon said George Mason University offers help in signing up, at locations throughout the state, so that a person does not need to travel all the way to the university. Gary Moore also said that this is a very difficult process. Jon offered to send anyone the info (PTAX). Ron Wood (NRCS) requested this info. This help with SAM.gov is free. Some sites charge over \$100 and up to \$600 for help with SAM!!

Mark Schonbeck (VABF) asked about practice 329 (no-till) and one cost component—seeding, and it does not take into account skill level, etc. Chad Wentz stated that the costs are determined at the national level; all the regions have to choose from are the various practice scenarios – no the costs. We have seen a big reduction in the no-till funding. Reduced-till has a higher payment than the no-till. Mark looked at the payment schedule. Chad agreed that no-till should be higher. Mark commented that no-till for three years without herbicides will result in too many weeds.

Seth Coffman (TU) asked if is prudent to raise the cap of the Streambank Stabilization practice which is not set at \$10,000 per participant. Wade replied that if there is no payment cap on this practice, a lot of EQIP dollars can be spent very quickly. Seth felt that \$25,000 or \$30,000 is reasonable. Wade said that we have not had a lot of requests for 580 practices. Bridgett Costanzo (USFWS) added that a lot of people do not have an engineering degree and ability to design and implement this practice. There is someone in southwest Virginia who does this type of work, but it is not USDA funded. Seth said that we can help with the technical aspects, but that slows things down. Wade asked for input, and said that he felt that raising this to \$30,000 is reasonable. But, we just don't have the funding for anything much higher than that. Libby Norris (call-in attendee) felt that this is a good number.

Mark Schonbeck asked about the process to review an applicant's AGI. Wade said that people self-certify.

Wade said thank you to the group for their involvement in the various EQIP subcommittees and also for their input today. We will finalize the FY15 program offerings and stated we are in good shape going into the next year.

Agency Updates

Patricia Stansbury (VABF and WRIR Radio)—There was a good turnout for the Sustainable Farms Tour. She referred to a statistician, relating how the number of farms has changed thru the years. Several members have written great books on sustainable agriculture, such as *Sustainable Market Gardening* by the gardener at Twin Oaks, Pam Dawling, and *Vegetable Growing in the Southeast* by Ira Wallace.

Andy Sorrell (VDACS) – Stated that they have about \$1.5M to for conservation easements to allocate out to local governments. The request for projects will be announced soon.

Dean Cumbia (VDOF)—There is a good seedling crop of trees this year. In Sussex, the month of May was better for this, but June was not as good--not quite as robust. Next month, at the foresters' meeting, there will be sharing of information about the new Farm Bill. He is hopeful that some funding will come through the new RCPP Program for the Longleaf Pine Critical Conservation Area. Cone harvesting is ongoing now and there is a good acorn crop this year. DCR now owns the wild stand of Longleaf Pines in Sussex; it was acquired from International Paper. DCR is taking over management of this. Dean distributed a publication he had brought on the longleaf pine. VDOF has also been working with NRCS on an Open Lands Initiative to determine what lands are good for tree planting. A number of fields are going back to natural vegetation; some are good, and some are not so good. Dean also distributed a handout on The Chesapeake Forest Fund, a private fund for tree planting. This is good for open lands in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The program will pay for all the cost of tree planting. Their field people will see this soon. The downside of this program is that is it for one season only! Spring 2015 will be the one planting season. This is a good opportunity and dovetails nicely with other tree planting. Wade asked if this is a 100% cost share. Dean answered that the landowner does not pay anything, but must agree to keep it in trees for 15 years. The goal of greenhouse gas reduction initiated this.

Bridgett Costanzo (USFWS)— There is a new riparian restoration plan, funded by the Appalachian Landscape Cooperative. She can send the link to anyone who is interested. One grad student will be at Virginia Tech with the grant. Different species mixes, and are well received in this Appalachian region. They are also working on a VDGIF grant in the Dismal Swamp.

Someone mentioned that Governor Terry McAuliffe and Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources Molly Ward both attended Agriculture Day in Harrisonburg.

Seth Coffman (Trout Unlimited)—TU received a grant for the upper James River Watershed. Outreach to landowners to sign up—cold water habit for Highland County and Bath County mostly. They have also submitted an RCPP proposal for this same area, CCA joint project, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Virginia—Virginia will focus on the upper James. There will be restoration projects this summer: eight in the valley, five tree planting projects.

Jon Roller (Ecosystem Services) - They are working with Eastern Mennonite University, with violators, and with new operators for poultry.

Betsy Bowles (DEQ)—November 16 is the effective date, (ten year term) for the new confined animal feeding operation regulations. People should start to apply soon for this new term.

Gary Moore (DCR) – There is interest at DCR to partner with federal agencies on the 100% cost share projects for stream exclusion. DCR is looking at what they will do after June 30, 2015 with their funding. They normally offer 75% cost share. Should the cap be increased? Should the rates be increased? He asked for suggestions from the group.

Marc Puckett (VDGIF) – The Quail Recovery Program is 5 years old. NRCS has been very proactive and we share the costs of 5 private land biologists. They have made 2,000 site visits and assisted landowners with 34,000 acres of early succession habitat. The General Assembly passed a quail bill –requested that a new Task Force be formed. There is tremendous interest and support for this effort. VDGIF also partners with VDOF on some quail habitat projects. They appreciate their support of the program. This is available only in the 15 counties in the quail plan. VDGIF is developing their Wildlife Action Plan and it is undergoing a review process at this time. Go to their website to comment. In the Small Game section of the report, they recognize all of their partners.

Ebony Alexander (BFLT) — She thanked the group for inviting her, and said that she learned a lot. She did not have anything to share at this time.

Sara Richardson (DCR) — Virginia Land Conservation Foundation Board will meet October 20th. She will send out notification. The deadline to apply is November 12th. The information on the grant program is on their website.

Patricia Stansbury (VABF and WRIR)—She asked about quail and hunting. Mark on phone said that hunting has not caused a decline. We are benefitting about half a dozen other species. Their agency is about hunting.

Jack Bricker gave some closing comments. We are approaching the end of fiscal year. Good presentation of issues and recommendation. Wade said that November 21 is the next cut-off period for EQIP and ACEP - (third Friday in November). We offer a continuous sign up. We will batch the applications received and then rank them and do cost estimates. New ones up until November 21 will be batched in with the back logged ones.

Mark Schonbeck - Are CSP sign-ups on the same schedule? We have not heard—perhaps in January. Wade mentioned that CSP is a good opportunity, not a lot of sign-ups here. Mark added that the level of interest in new contracts have dropped off.

November 25 is the next State Technical Committee meeting. (The November meeting has been cancelled).

Easement Highlights for FY 2014

- In FY 2014 NRCS closed 13 easements: 8 FRPP, 4 WRP, 1 GRP. See details in table below.
- Still in progress are 12 easements: 5 FRPP, 6 WRP, 1 GRP, including the new fy14 WRE.
- The fy14 ALE has been deferred to fy15 by the partnering entity.
- Wetland restoration was completed on four closed WRP easements.
- 100% of NRCS's easements were monitored in fy-14.
- FY-15 Geographic Area Rate Caps (GARCs) are being updated from FY-14 GARCs, as is permitted for the second year after a full Area-Wide Market Analysis (AWMA.) The AWMA is based on a contracted real estate appraiser's fair market values for WRP/WRE.

Easements Acquired: Closed and Recorded in FY 2014

Area	Prog.	County	Acres	Partner for FRPP
1	FRPP	Clarke	217.33	Clarke Co.
1	FRPP	Clarke	68.00	Clarke Co.
4	FRPP	Northampton	197.00	VOF, Northampton Co. PDR
1	FRPP	Rockingham	424.00	Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Found., VDHR
1	FRPP	Shenandoah	127.25	VOF/ Va. Outdoors Found., Shenandoah Co.
1	FRPP	Shenandoah	181.52	VOF, Shenandoah Co.
1	FRPP	Spotsylvania	56.62	Spotsylvania County
2	FRPP	Washington	161.24	VOF, Holston River SWCD, Wash. Co. PDR
			1,433	Total FRPP Acres, on 8 easements
1	GRP	Rockingham	71.00	na
			71	Total GRP Acres, on 1 easement
2	WRP	Grayson	33.50	na
4	WRP	Isle of Wight	6.79	na
1	WRP	Rappahannock	13.87	na
2	WRP	Washington	9.00	na
			63	Total WRP Acres, on 4 easements
			1,567	TOTAL ACRES, on 13 easements

Diane D. Dunaway, Easement Specialist, Program Manager for ACEP- ALE, -WRE (FRPP, GRP, WRP),
Diane.Dunaway@va.usda.gov, (804) 287-1634

ACEP – New Farm Bill 2014 Easement Program – Summary (repeat)

- New fy-14 funds are forthcoming, following states' requests.
 - ACEP has two components:
 - ALE - Agricultural Land Easement (FRPP, GRP functions)
 - WRE - Wetland Reserve Easement (WRP functions)
 - FRPP, GRP and WRP have been repealed, but their purposes and functions have been consolidated into ACEP - Agricultural Conservation Easement Program.
 - ACEP has few new statutory provisions when compared to GRP, FRPP and WRP, though ACEP will require a new regulation for its implementation. Does not impact authority to provide support for easements and agreements obligated under previous legislation.
 - WRE highlights:
 - Reduces ownership requirement from 7 years to 2 years.
 - Authorizes waiver process to allow enrollment of CRP land established to trees.
 - No option to enroll stand-alone restoration cost-share agreements.
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*Grayson County Wetlands Reserve Program easement,
pre-restoration, closed December 2013.*

FY14 EQIP Budget Allocation - 9/22/14

Fund Code	Account Name	Allocated	Contracts	Contract Approval	Preapprovals	Preapproved Amounts	Funds Remaining
76F 51	Virginia	\$19,679,493.00	790	\$18,769,708.29	24	\$562,163.00	\$347,621.71
76F 51 AQ	Aquaculture	\$118,635.00	18	\$118,635.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 BF	Beginning Farmer	\$867,587.61	15	\$867,587.61	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 CA	CAPS-Conservation Activity Plans	\$164,490.00	69	\$157,390.00	3	\$7,100.00	\$0.00
76F 51 CC	Cropland - Christiansburg	\$33,015.00	4	\$33,015.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 CF	Cropland - Farmville	\$223,148.60	13	\$223,148.60	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 CH	Cropland - Harrisonburg	\$1,227,546.00	37	\$1,203,036.00	1	\$24,510.00	\$0.00
76F 51 CS	Cropland - Smithfield	\$1,755,533.85	92	\$1,755,533.85	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 FS	Forestry - Statewide	\$1,180,061.80	112	\$1,109,162.80	8	\$70,899.00	\$0.00
76F 51 2	FY14 Certified Organic	\$85,148.00	3	\$85,148.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 4	FY14 On-Farm Energy	\$1,067,436.60	46	\$1,067,436.60	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 EC	FY-14 On-Farm Energy CAP	\$99,800.00	44	\$99,800.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 3	FY14 Organic Transition	\$39,260.00	2	\$39,260.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 GW	Golden Winged-Warbler	\$45,944.00	8	\$45,944.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 IW	Irrigation Water Management	\$44,922.00	4	\$44,922.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 AC	Livestock - Christiansburg	\$2,777,263.32	40	\$2,640,669.32	1	\$136,594.00	\$0.00
76F 51 LF	Livestock - Farmville	\$3,836,565.70	84	\$3,577,601.70	7	\$258,964.00	\$0.00
76F 51 LH	Livestock - Harrisonburg	\$2,980,674.16	45	\$2,980,674.16	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 LS	Livestock - Smithfield	\$244,890.00	6	\$244,890.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 LP	Long Leaf Pine Initiative	\$80,072.00	8	\$80,072.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 FM	NWQI - Fifteen Mile Creek	\$174,525.40	4	\$174,525.40	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 MR	NWQI - Smith Creek - Mountain Run	\$48,310.00	5	\$48,310.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 WB	NWQI - Smith Creek - War Branch	\$96,619.00	4	\$96,619.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 SH	Seasonal High Tunnel	\$526,160.80	61	\$518,318.80	1	\$7,842.00	\$0.00
76F 51 SD	Socially Disadvantaged	\$431,227.85	18	\$431,227.85	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 SF	StrikeForce	\$750,185.64	9	\$702,431.64	1	\$47,754.00	\$0.00
76F 51 HM	Wildlife - Habitat Maintenance	\$116,175.00	10	\$116,175.00	0	\$0.00	\$0.00
76F 51 HC	Wildlife - Wildlife Habitat Creation	\$245,865.70	29	\$237,365.70	2	\$8,500.00	\$0.00
76F 51 14897	FY14 EQIP Reserve	\$193,506.97	0	\$70,808.26	0	\$0.00	\$122,698.71
76F 51 15023	FY14 CIG State Component	\$224,923.00	0	\$0.00	0	\$0.00	\$224,923.00
	Totals	\$19,679,493.00	790	\$18,769,708.29	24	\$562,163.00	\$347,621.71

\$3,239,243.45
16%

\$9,839,393.18
50%

Conservation Stewardship Program Update

- Total allocation = \$284,073
- 47 new contracts obligated for \$284,073
 - 15 were forestry contracts
 - 32 were agricultural contracts
- 220 CSP renewal applications have been received out of a 256 contracts that are expiring from 2010.

State Technical Committee Meeting

Tuesday, September 23, 2014

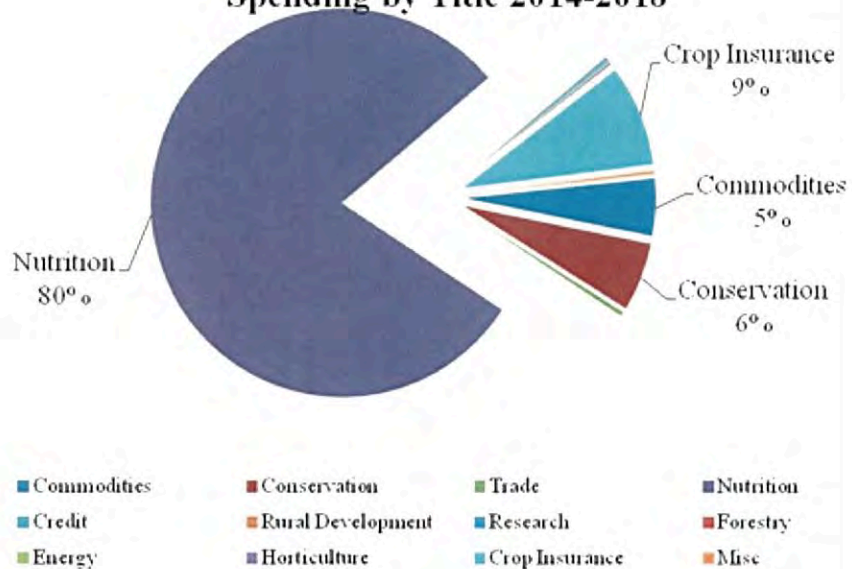
by

Wade Biddix

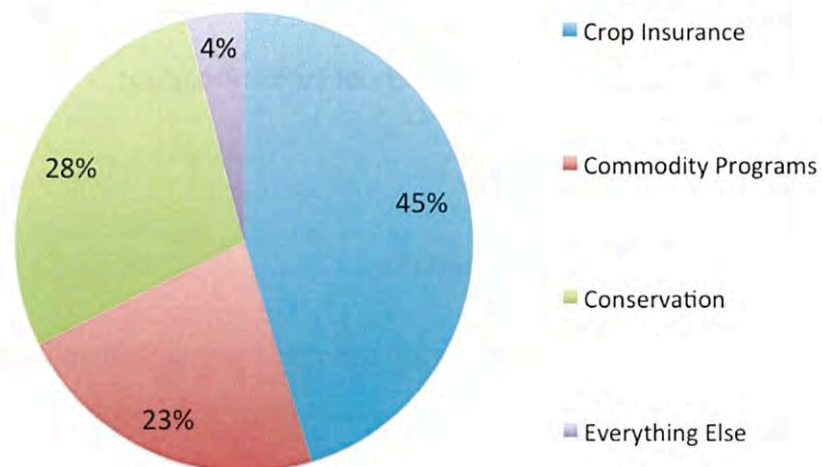
Highlights of New Farm Bill Agricultural Act of 2014

- Funding level = **\$956.4 Billion**
 - **80% to SNAP, WIC, and School Lunch Programs**
 - **9% to Crop Insurance**
 - **6% to Conservation**
 - **5% to Commodities**
 - **<1% to All Other Programs**
- All conservation programs are **reduced by only \$200 million over 5 years**
- Section 1619 (**Protection of PII**) still applies

Agricultural Act of 2014: CBO Estimates of Direct Spending by Title 2014-2018



Farm Bill Funding: Excluding Nutrition



Conservation Programs

- New FB consolidated **23 conservation programs into 13.**
- **EQIP funding stayed the same but must support WHIP** at minimum of 5% annually for wildlife habitat projects.
- CSP acres **reduced** from 12.7 M acres to 10 M acres.
- Three programs (GRP, WRP and FRPP) combined into **Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP).**
- **Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) continued**

Conservation Funds Are “No-Year”

- Funds are **available until expended.**
- Funds from cancelled/terminated/completed contracts are **returned to the State** as current year dollars.
- States can **rollover funds from one year to the next** without loss.
- TA Ratio for each program **will be set by Sec. of Ag.** – not OMB.

Payment Limitation

- The new payment **limitation is \$450,000** per individual.
- **No waiver available** for projects with **environmentally sensitive areas**.

Adjusted Gross Income

- New **AGI limit set at \$900,000** for both commodity and conservation programs.
 - Applies **to both farm and non-farm income**.
- AGI requirements do not apply for FY-14 but **will become effective for FY-15**.
- **Successors of interest for contract transfers** are responsible to meet AGI requirements **for the year the original contract was obligated**.

Veterans

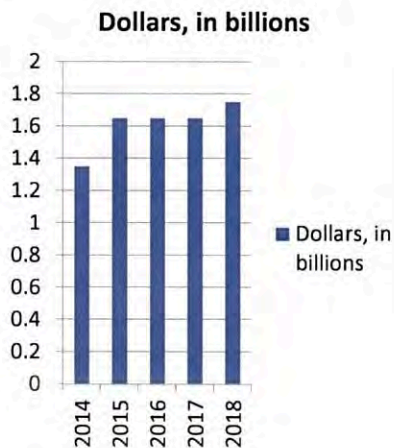
- **Veterans were added** as a new group for the **higher payment rate**.
- **Veterans will not have a separate fund pool** like New/Beginning Farmers and Socially Disadvantaged Farmers but they can get up to 90% payment rate.
- **Veterans Definition** – Anyone serving that did not have a dishonorable discharge. Includes Reserve and National Guard.

EQIP Funds

- **At least 60%** of EQIP funding **must go to livestock**.
- **10%** goes to **New/Beginning Farmers, Limited Resource Farmers, Veteran Farmers or Socially Disadvantaged Farmers**.
- **Minimum of 5%** goes to **wildlife habitat** projects.

Authorized EQIP Funding Level

- 2014 = **\$1.35** Billion
- 2015 = **\$1.65** Billion
- 2016 = **\$1.65** Billion
- 2017 = **\$1.65** Billion
- 2018 = **\$1.75** Billion



Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

- **Two major components** are:
 - WRE - **Wetland Reserve Easement** (old WRP)
 - ALE - **Agricultural Land Easement** (old GRP and FRPP)
- **Will use existing rules and regulations** for FY-14 programs.
- WRE – **reduces ownership requirement from 7 years to 24 months.**
- GRP Rental Agreements are now **part of CRP** and **administered by FSA.**

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- **Combined**
 - CBWI
 - Great Lakes
 - AWEP
 - CCPI
- Funded with \$100 M in mandatory funds plus 7% of program funds
 - **Totals about \$250 - \$300 M annually**
- **Encourages Partners to cooperate with producers**
- NRCS will provide assistance through:
 - **Partnership agreements**
 - **Program contracts and/or easement agreements**

RCPP Fund Allocation

- **25% for State Projects**
- **40% for National Projects**
- **35% for Critical Conservation Areas**

HEL and WC Compliance

- **“Recoupling” federal crop insurance premium support benefits** to HEL and WC Compliance requirements
 - **HEL Compliance for Crop Insurance**
 - Will have 5 years to develop and comply with conservation plan
 - 2 years for existing operations with violations
 - **Wetland Conservation Compliance for Crop Insurance**
 - New conversion trigger date is 2/7/14
 - “Payment in lieu” option for mitigation of conversions <5 ac
 - New mitigation timelines
- **NRCS will work with FSA and Risk Mgt. Agency** to coordinate certification process and recordkeeping
- **HEL and WC compliance still required** for Conservation Programs

Pollinators

- Pollinator protection provisions **extended to 2018**
- **“Honey Bees” added to conservation provisions** for native and managed pollinators
- USDA, in consultation with DOI and EPA, to publish guidance on **enhancing long term pollinator habitat** and **long term viability of pollinators**
- Forest Service lands **will now allow planting and maintaining forages for natives and managed honey bees**

FY14 – Challenges and Opportunities

- Year started with **Federal government shutdown**
- **New Farm Bill signed on February 7, 2014**
- Allocations from both 2008 and 2014 Farm Bills
- Sign-up and Batching Periods Overlapped new FB
- Program changes in **middle of year**
- **New Programs to rollout** – ACEP and RCPP
- **Programs Eliminated** – CBWI, WHIP, GRP, FRPP, WRP
- Significant **increases in funding for Dam** Rehabilitation
- **Changes / Upgrades** to Toolkit and ProTracts
- **Delays** in contracting, modifications and payments
- **3 National Program Reviews** in Virginia

FY-14 Farm Bill Progress

Facts and Figures

Facts and Figures

Total Number of Active Contracts in VA

	Area I	Area II	Area III	Area IV	Grand Total	Sum of Obligation
EQIP	288	355	443	338	1,424	\$45,861,157
CSP and CStP	94	93	115	285	587	\$25,396,225
CBWI	359	7	79	96	541	\$19,957,277
WHIP	17	11	8	7	43	\$370,575
Grand Total	758	466	645	726	2,595	\$92,116,005

Payments made to existing contracts = **\$40, 614, 544.00.**

FY14 Farm Bill Progress Summary

Fund	Allocation	Obligated	# of Contracts	% Obligated
EQIP	\$19,680,815	\$18,021,104	749	91.60%
CSP	\$284,073	\$284,073	47	100.00%
FY14	\$19,964,888	\$18,305,177	795	92.00%
FY13	\$25,807,444	\$25,429,620	1,240	98.54%
FY12	\$24,579,604	\$24,509,413	1,034	99.71%
FY11	\$29,504,629	\$29,504,193	1,058	99.99%
FY10	\$25,682,915	\$25,294,065	981	98.49%

Program Payments

- Fiscal Year 2014
 - From October 1, 2013, through September 22, 2014, **NRCS made payments to program participants** totaling **\$25,929,539.**

FY14 EQIP Allocation = \$19,680,815

- Obligated **\$18,021,104** in **749 contracts**
- Obligated **\$13,633,555 (69.43%)** to **livestock** which **exceeds the 60%** requirement.
- Obligated **245 contracts for \$6,048,611** in **Socially Disadvantaged, New/Beginning Farmers, Limited Resource Farmer** (30.73%) which **exceeds the 10%** target goal.
- Obligated **\$775,684 (117%)** in **StrikeForce.**
- **Approved 3 State CIG projects** for \$224,923.

CSP Obligations

- **Promoted and obligated \$6,232,000** in FY-14 funds to prior year contracts.
- Held **one new sign-up** and got **64 applications**.
- **Obligated \$284,073 in 47 new contracts**
 - 15 Forestry
 - 32 Agricultural
- **Contacted 256 participants** with expiring 2010 contracts and **220 of them applied to renew**.

Facts and Figures

Top Ten Planned Practices in VA in 2014

Code	Practice	Amount Contracted
561	Heavy Use Area Protection	\$1,900,120
367	Roofs and Covers	\$1,674,074
382	Fence	\$1,381,324
590	Nutrient Management	\$1,374,611
512	Forage and Biomass Planting	\$1,148,395
313	Water Storage Facility	\$1,124,679
374	Farmstead Energy Improvement	\$1,028,016
328	Conservation Crop Rotation	\$1,008,717
516	Livestock Pipeline	\$681,992
340	Cover Crop	\$614,075
	TOTAL	\$11,936,002

Facts and Figures

Top Ten Practices by Count in VA in 2014

Code	Practice	Count
382	Fence	388
472	Access Control	309
590	Nutrient Management	270
614	Watering Facility	253
512	Forage and Biomass Planting	237
374	Farmstead Energy Improvement	237
328	Conservation Crop Rotation	223
561	Heavy Use Area Protection	215
516	Livestock Pipeline	214
528	Prescribed Grazing	200

Facts and Figures

13 Closed Easements in FY14

8 FRPP	1,433 acres
4 WRP	63 acres
+ 1 GRP	+ 71 acres
13 total	1,567 acres

12 more easements in acquisition process.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

Easement Photos







Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

- Received 2 new applications for **ALE** and 1 got **funded for \$555,700 on 171 acres in Rockingham County.**
- Received 4 new applications for **WRE** and 1 got **funded for \$842,250 on 337 acres in Greensville County.**

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- Secretary announced 8 Critical Conservation Areas and **VA is part of two:**
 - Chesapeake Bay Watershed
 - Longleaf Pine
- Total of 11 preproposals from VA **advanced to full proposal phase:**
 - 5 from Chesapeake Bay CCA
 - 2 from Longleaf Pine CCA
 - 2 from National Fund Pool
 - 2 projects from State Fund Pool (\$4.8 M requested)

Proposed Changes

to FY-15 Program Offerings

Input For FY-15 Program Changes

- **Local Working Groups**
- **State Technical Committee** Members
- **Interagency Subcommittees** of STC
- **NRCS Committee** at State, Area and Field Level
- Program and Technical Staff **developed proposed changes after consideration of input.**

SAM.gov Registration

- All applicants that are entities will be required to register with SAM.gov prior to contract obligation and maintain registration annually.
 - NRCS will be checking before contract approval and before processing any payments.

Application Cut-off/Batching Deadlines

- Third Friday of Each Month - November thru February:
 - November 21st with ranking deadline 12/19/14
 - December 19th with ranking deadline 1/16/15
 - January 16th with ranking deadline 2/20/15
 - February 20th with ranking deadline of 3/20/15

Veteran Farmers

- Veteran Farmers that **are also a New/Beginning Farmer** will be given a **"High Priority"** and be funded first.

Pasture Grazing

Subcommittee Recommendations

Subcommittee Recommendations

Silvo-Pasture

Issue: Some Local Work Groups recommended that we **eliminate Silvo-Pasture** as an eligible EQIP practice.

Recommendation: It was decided that **silvo-pasture practice should be continued to be offered.**

Subcommittee Recommendations

Silvo-Pasture

Issue: **Only allow Silvo-Pasture** when the person has IMPLEMENTED all practices in an approved grazing system plan AND they show a need for additional grazing land for the existing herd.

Recommendation: There was no need to add this change to guidance and policy since **this is already included in the nine step planning process and the field staff should already be doing this.**

Subcommittee Recommendations

Silvo-Pasture

Issue: **Develop Silvo-pasture and boundary fence program guidance**, expansion of grazing system only allowed if resource concerns exist and applicant/participant cannot exceed 2 acres/animal unit.

Recommendation: The group recommended to **add this guidance to our Farm Bill Handbook for practice 382 - Fence**, and changing the acres required **per animal unit to 2.5 acres.**

Subcommittee Recommendations

Livestock Shelter Structure

Issue: Add **576 - Livestock Shelter Structure** practice to offerings — **allow portable shade structures only.**

Recommendation: : The group recommended **not adding this practice to our offerings until we learn more about it.** However, NRCS will release the practice standard and offer technical assistance on it.

Subcommittee Recommendations

Livestock Shelter Structure

Issue: Develop Livestock Shelter Structure guidance such that **to be eligible, you must be following a prescribed grazing plan.**

Recommendation: If this practice is offered in the future, the group suggested that **a prescribed grazing plan should be required.**

Subcommittee Recommendations

Prescribed Grazing

Issue: Establish a statewide policy to require 528 Prescribed Grazing and pasture management with any **winter feeding** operations that receive EQIP funding.

Recommendation: There was support from most of the group for this policy; however there were also concerns that **this could possibly limit resource concerns that could be addressed by field staff on dairy farms.** The recommendation is to require 528 for grazing operations but not for headquarters projects.

Subcommittee Recommendations

Ranking Tool Points

Issue: Give points in ranking tools for EQIP plans/contracts that will be certified as Resource Management Plans.

Recommendation: **NRCS cannot give points** in the ranking tool for participation or practices installed through **other Federal or State programs.**

Subcommittee Recommendations

Ranking Tool Points

Issue: Should ranking points be awarded to applicants who attend a grazing school?

Recommendation: It was agreed that ranking **points should be awarded** in the local questions **for applicants who attend grazing school.**

EQIP Subcommittee

Forestry and Wildlife Subcommittee

Forestry and Wildlife

Issue: Issue a blanket waiver for forestry practices and aquaculture practices, if needed, based on environmental conditions, weather, and/or delays in program funding.

Note - waivers expire at the end of the fiscal year.

Recommendation: Per the EQIP rules, **blanket waivers are allowed only when there is a need, such as late program funding or other issues.** There is no indication of any problems at this time, so issuing a blanket waiver isn't warranted. If a need arises in the future, we will submit a request to the State Conservationist for a blanket waiver. Individual waivers can be requested at any time by participants, in writing, based on their specific conditions.

Forestry and Wildlife

Issue: Increase allocation to Forestry fund pool to 7% from 5%.

Recommendation: The subcommittee **agrees with increasing the funding for forestry from 5 to 7 percent of EQIP eligible funding.**

Forestry and Wildlife

Issue: Forestry Fund Pools

Recommendations:

- 1) **Look at options for Area fund pools vs. Statewide.** The committee believes that the current, Statewide Forestry, funding pool still works the best. Therefore, the best projects with the highest ranking points are approved first.
- 2) **Establish a new Statewide fund pool for Shortleaf Pine and Longleaf Pine planting and take them out of the larger statewide forestry pool.** The subcommittee agrees that there should be a separate funding pool created for shortleaf and longleaf pine establishment. Under this pool, longleaf pine can be established outside its historic range if the site conditions are suitable based on the DOF Forester's determination.
- 3) **Continue a Longleaf Pine fund pool for the targeted / historical range in VA.** The committee agreed with leaving this pool specifically for longleaf pine in the historic range.

Forestry and Wildlife

Issue: Set \$10,000 payment cap for practice 654 Road, Trail and Landing Closure per participant/year.

Recommendation: The committee agreed that there should be a cap of \$10,000 for this practice.

Forestry and Wildlife

Issue: Clarify that forest mulcher is available for invasive species control under 666 – Forest Stand Improvement. This is for spot treatment only – not clearing, site prep, or regular timber stand improvement.

Recommendation: The committee agrees, and the clarification will be made in the NRCS Program guidance.

Forestry and Wildlife

Issue: Clarify that DOF forestry assistance is required on all forestry plans and contracts. Cannot accept just a CAP 106 and contract it without DOF assistance for review and approval of items needed.

Recommendation: The committee agrees and the clarification will be made in the NRCS Program guidance.

Forestry and Wildlife

Issue: Clarify conditions where hardwood tree planting is allowed on cut-over sites.

Recommendation: The committee agrees and the clarification will be made in the NRCS Program guidance.

Forestry and Wildlife

Issue: Consider **allowing riparian forest buffers to be established to wildflowers or pollinator habitat.**

Recommendation: The committee favors following the CREP/CRP guidance to **allow companion plantings along with the tree seedlings.** Wildflower plantings and pollinator habitat can be planted within the forest buffer, but **at the landowner's expense**, i.e. not covered by cost-share.

Forestry and Wildlife

Issue: Consider **increasing hardwood stocking rates in the riparian buffers while eliminating the requirement to use stakes, tubes and mats.**

Recommendation: The committee believes that the **current method of establishing hardwood trees in riparian buffers, i.e. stakes and shelters, is the best** way to have successful plantings. More trees per acre without protection is not the answer to getting better survival.

Forestry and Wildlife

Issue: Add ranking points if they are implementing pollinator habitat practices.

Recommendation: The committee **agrees to add a question and points to the forestry ranking** sheet. However, **there is already a question** with associated points **in the wildlife ranking sheet**.

Forestry and Wildlife

Issue: Clarify that “cutback field borders” are allowed and **available** for early successional habitat under 647 Early Successional Habitat Development / Management.

Recommendation: The committee decided that **there is already sufficient clarification** in the NRCS Program guidance, so **no new guidance is needed**.

Forestry and Wildlife

Issue: Explore what resource concerns exist with other fish farming such as freshwater shrimp, catfish, trout, tilapia, etc. See if there are concerns that can be addressed by NRCS using EQIP funding.

Recommendation: It was not clear what the key resource concerns were that needed to be addressed. **Jeff will continue exploring this for possible FY 2016** program offerings.

Forestry and Wildlife

Issue: Only labor is allowed for 400 Bivalve Aquaculture Gear and Bio-fouling practice.

Recommendation: The committee learned that **this is a NRCS National Headquarters' decision**, so there is **nothing that Virginia can do about it.**

Forestry and Wildlife

Issue: Update programs offerings for 643 Restoration and Management of Declining Habitats for our Oyster Habitat Restoration efforts.

Recommendation: The committee **agrees that Virginia should update 643 to include "spat on the shell"** as a program offering.

EQIP Subcommittee

Livestock, Cropland and Other Issues

General EQIP

Issue: Change 314 Brush Management to reflect new payment scenarios for mechanical treatment as follows:

- 10-20% of field infested with invasive plants (light)
- 25-50% of field infested (medium)
- > 50% infestation (heavy) and pay for the actual acreage with undesirable plants.

Recommendation: The group agreed to use the new payment scenarios for mechanical treatment under 314 Brush Management for the FY15 payment schedule.

General EQIP

Issue: Continue the 20% maximum for spot treatment for 315 Herbaceous Weed Control practice.

Recommendation: The group agreed to continue with the 20% maximum for spot treatment. A suggestion was made for FY16 to possibly offer the light, medium and heavy scenarios options like 314 Brush Management but there was not a similar scenario in the FY-15 Payment Schedule. This will be pursued for FY-16.

General EQIP

Issue: Allow frost free hydrants with the 516 Livestock Pipeline practice.

Recommendation: The group **agreed to allow the frost free hydrants** to be offered. The additional pipeline for the hydrant will be included in the scenario.

General EQIP

Issue: Consider changes to the eligibility assessment on poultry pads. Use same rules for composter, poultry house or litter shed.

- Leachable soils
- High water table
- Distance to streams
- If site is in violation with DEQ, VDACS or EPA based on litter management issues, should the site be eligible for poultry pads.

Recommendation: The group decided that **the poultry pad assessment should be revised to be more in line with the risk assessment for Heavy Use Areas / Animal Concentration Areas**. For any unique site that may not meet the specific assessment criteria, a waiver may be submitted for consideration by NRCS.

338 - Prescribed Grazing

- **Add 338 -- Prescribed Grazing to the list of management practices that are eligible to receive payments for 1, 2 or 3 years.**

Agronomic

Issue: Develop Nutrient Management guidance on implementing 590 and **make a change in allowing only one technique to qualify for level C.**

Recommendation: The committee **agreed with making the change and requiring only one technique to qualify for payment.**

Agronomic

Issue: Clarify 590 Nutrient Management - Can NRCS make payment when soil sampling says no nutrients are needed?

Recommendation: We were unable to come to a resolution on this recommendation. Further discussions will need to be held with NRCS Technical Staff before a decision will be made. However, the committee felt that making the change to allow only one technique to qualify for level C would help with this issue.

Agronomic

Issue: Give points for conservation crop rotations (live cover – one year, two years, or three years – just like perennials under state or local questions.).

Recommendation: The payment schedule only allows for a 3 year system to receive points. The ranking tool will be revised to give 30 points for continuous live roots.

Agronomic

Issue: Maintain payment caps for agronomic management practices at \$10,000 per participant per year and \$30,000 per contract.

Recommendation: The committee **agreed to keep the cap limits the same.**

Irrigation

Issue: Irrigation Water Management Changes

- Add 442 – Sprinkler Irrigation System Practice (practice cap of \$50,000 per participant per year).
- Add 436 – Irrigation Reservoir Practice (practice cap of \$50,000 per participant per year).
- Emphasize that new equipment is required.
- Keep \$10,000 payment cap for 441 – Irrigation System, Micro-irrigation.

Recommendation: The committee **decided not to make any changes to our Irrigation Water Management Program** at this time. We will continue to offer 441 Irrigation System, Micro-irrigation and 449 – Irrigation Water Management Plan. The payment cap will remain at \$10,000 per practice per year.

Specialty Crop Subcommittee

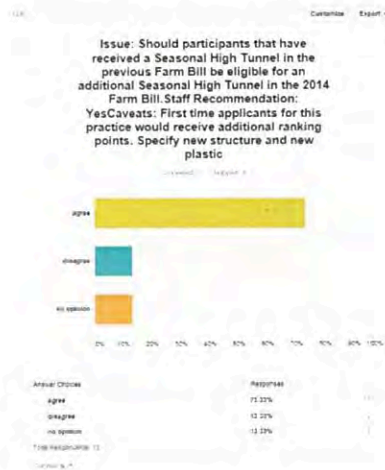
Specialty Crop

Background: NHQ has given decision authority to the states for the Seasonal High Tunnel practice.

Issue 1: Should participants that have received financial assistance for a SHT via the 2008 Farm Bill **be eligible for an additional SHT** in the 2014 Farm Bill?

Recommendation: Participants that have received a SHT via the 2008 Farm Bill, **will be eligible for an additional one** via the 2014 Farm Bill. However, applicants that have **not previously received financial assistance for a SHT will receive additional ranking points and a "High Priority" and be funded first.** Must be a new structure and have new plastic.

Specialty Crop



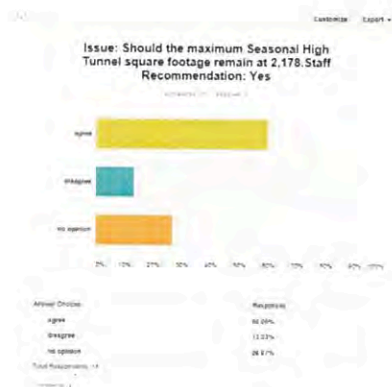
Specialty Crop

Background: NHQ has given decision authority to the states for the Seasonal High Tunnel.

Issue 2: Should the maximum Seasonal High Tunnel square footage for cost-share remain at 2,178 per participant?

Recommendation: The maximum Seasonal High Tunnel square footage will remain at 2,178 per participant for the life of the 2014 Farm Bill.

Specialty Crop



Specialty Crop

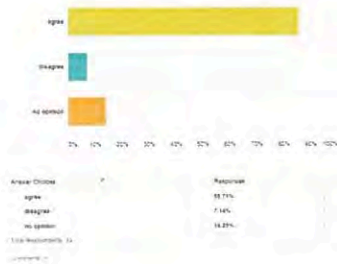
Background: Suggestions that non-organic specialty crop clients don't compete well against traditional commodity crops, nor are they eligible for the Organic Initiative as they are not and do not wish to become USDA Certified Organic.

Issue 3: Should Virginia combine organic/specialty crops into "Specialty Crop Fund Pool"?

Recommendation: **Virginia should proceed with creation of a Specialty Crop fund pool** for FY15 (as defined by USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSv1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELPRDC5082113>).

Specialty Crop

Issue: Combine organics/specialty into "Specialty Crop Fund Pool." Allow any organically grown or naturally grown foods or Specialty Crops to participate in this fund pool. Background: Staff thinks that we will be required to offer a separate Organic Initiative fund pool. Many specialty crop growers are not, nor do they wish to be, USDA Certified Organic. Staff Recommendation: Create a Specialty Crop (as defined by USDA Agricultural Marketing Service) fund pool for FY15



On-Farm Energy Initiative

Recommendations:

- 1) Farmstead Energy Improvement Practice (374) will have a **\$100,000 Payment Cap per participant.**
- 2) Increase base allocation for energy implementation **to 7% from 5%.**
- 3) Consider giving the most points to applicants who are implementing **ALL practices identified in the Audit that have a 10-year or less payback.**

Key Payment Rate Changes

Key Payment Rate Changes

- **Access Road (560)** - **Surfacing and vegetation of disturbed areas *are included*** in the practice scenarios.
- **Animal Trails and Walkways (575)** – **Name is now “Trails and Walkways”**.
- **Bivalve Aquaculture Gear and Bio-fouling Control (400)** - **Surplus gear is no longer included** in the scenarios. Only labor is included.

Key Payment Rate Changes

- **Farmstead Energy Improvement (374)** - The **lighting and building envelope scenarios are now new practice standards and were put into separate payment schedules.** See practice 670 and 672.
- **Forage and Biomass Planting (512)** - There are **2 new multi-year scenarios that include annuals for transitioning** from poor stands of perennial forage to healthy stands of perennial forage. **One is for NWSG and one is for cool season grasses.** Neither can be paid for until the perennial is established.

Key Payment Rate Changes

- **Grassed Waterway (412)** - **Soil amendments, seeding, and mulching are included** in the scenarios.
- **Heavy Use Area Protection (561)** - Units of practice: **Square Feet** (unless we get a change during the Federal Register review); also, **vegetation of disturbed areas** is included in the practice scenarios.

Key Payment Rate Changes

- **Livestock Pipeline (516)** - There is a **new scenario for a frost-proof hydrant that would be used with a portable trough**. It includes 10' of pipeline. There is a new scenario for hookup to a **municipal water system**.
- **Livestock Shelter Structure (576)** – This is a **new practice**, partially based upon an old interim practice.

Key Payment Rate Changes

- **Restoration and Management of Rare or Declining Habitats (643)** - **Wildlife structure scenarios** were moved to new 649 scenarios. **Oyster reef scenarios** were revised. **The components are the same but the cost basis is different**.
- **Trails and Walkways [formerly known as Animal Trails and Walkways] (575)** - The **surface and vegetation of disturbed areas are included** in the practice scenarios.

Key Payment Rate Changes

- **Watering Facility (614) – Livestock watering ramps are now included** in this practice. Last year, they were in the Heavy Use Area Practice scenarios. The frost-free hydrant is under 516 Livestock Pipeline.

Proposed FY-15 EQIP Fund Pools

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ▪ Livestock (4 Area pools) | ▪ Shortleaf and Longleaf Pine |
| ▪ Cropland (4 Area pools) | ▪ Conservation Activity Plans |
| ▪ New / Beginning Farmers | ▪ On-Farm Energy CAPs |
| ▪ Socially Disadvantaged | ▪ On-Farm Energy |
| ▪ Forestry Statewide | ▪ Aquaculture |
| ▪ Wildlife Habitat | ▪ Irrigation Water Management |
| ▪ Specialty Crops | ▪ NWQI (3 projects) |
| ▪ Seasonal High Tunnel | ▪ State Cons. Innovation Grants |
| ▪ Longleaf Pine (Targeted Area) | ▪ StrikeForce |

EQIP Applications (Backlog)

(As of 9/22/14)

395 Total Applications to date for **\$653,038**

- 40 Forestry
- 167 Livestock
- 52 Cropland
- 18 Energy
- 29 New/Beginning Farmer
- 18 High Tunnel
- 16 Wildlife
- 4 Socially Disadvantaged Farmer
- 15 Conservation Activity Plans
- 4 Aquaculture, Organic or Irrigation Water Mgt.
- 32 No Fund Code Assigned

FY-15 Farm Bill Training Dates

- During November JED Training Sessions
 - **November 12th** – Harrisonburg
 - **November 13th** – Smithfield (at **NRCS State Office**)
 - **November 18th** – Farmville
 - **November 20th** - Christiansburg

Nondiscrimination Statement

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers. If you believe you experienced discrimination when obtaining services from USDA, participating in a USDA program, or participating in a program that receives financial assistance from USDA, you may file a complaint with USDA. Information about how to file a discrimination complaint is available from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex (including gender identity and expression), marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Any Questions?



The Chesapeake Forest Fund is offering hassle-free funds for interested Virginia landowners to help achieve their conservation goals. The Chesapeake Forest Fund will pay-in-full and manage the planting and maintenance of native trees on your property. The on-the-ground effort will be led by the Forests for the Bay and the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOT). There are no additional costs to landowners.

Eligibility

All Virginia landowners in Chesapeake counties (see counties below) are eligible for funds and assistance. The planting area must be a minimum of 1 acre. Preference will be given to landowners with a conservation easement or who are interested in long-term protection of their new woodlands. In addition, priority will be given to proposed areas with the greatest conservation potential, such as areas adjacent to pre-existing forests or in proximity to streams. However, we emphasize all interested landowner are welcomed to apply.



For more information, please contact:

Jenny McGarvey
Program Manager,
Chesapeake Forests Program
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
(443) 949-0575
jmcgarvey@allianceforthebay.org

Specifications

Landowners may seek tree planting and care services for either fall 2014 or spring 2015. Due to limited funds, priority will be given to landowners interested in fall planting over spring. The Chesapeake Forest Fund will enter into a minimum 15 year agreement with landowners, during which the Chesapeake Forest Fund will pay for and manage the site preparation, tree planting, tree planting materials, and up to the first five years of tree maintenance. Forests for the Bay will work with VDOF to identify the best combination of native tree species for your property. Maintenance may include, but is not limited to, spot spraying, invasive species control, and mowing.

Expectations for landowners

- No harvesting of reforested trees may occur during the 15 year agreement period.
- Proposed areas must have been without trees for the past ten years (e.g., abandoned pasture fields, lawns greater than 1 acres, etc.).
- No broadcast fertilization of reforested trees during the 15 year agreement period.

Benefits for landowners

Beyond the immediate and long-term value of tree planting for increasing wildlife habitat, improving air and water quality, and reducing greenhouse gases, there are additional direct benefits to landowners:

- Trees are the property of the landowner and will grow in size and value over time.
- Forests for the Bay will offer landowners a free service to determine what other funding opportunities are available for your property to help you reach your conservation goals.
- Additional incentives may be available for agreements greater than 15 years.

Forests for the Bay is a program of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay with the support of the USDA Forest Service and the Virginia Department of Forestry. Forests for the Bay supports private woodland owners who seek to actively conserve and restore woods on their property.

Forests for the Bay: Keeping woodlands healthy
<https://www.forestsforthebay.org/>

**Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
Sign-up Progress**

As of 8/31/2014

Chesapeake Bay -	1,689 contracts approved 14,928.8 acres <i>AVAILABLE ACRES: 10,071.2</i> <i>Current Allocation: 25,000</i>
Southern Rivers -	2,103 contracts approved 13,309 acres <i>AVAILABLE ACRES: 1,691</i> <i>Current Allocation: 15,000</i>
CP-33 - Habitat Buffer For Upland Birds	237 contracts approved 1,695.3 acres <i>AVAILABLE ACRES: 1,804.7</i> <i>Current Allocation: 3,500</i>
CP-36 Longleaf Pines	19 contracts approved 384.9 acres <i>AVAILABLE ACRES: 3,365.1</i> <i>Current Allocation: 3,750</i>
SAFE	
CP-38D Longleaf Pine	38 contracts approved 292.1 acres <i>AVAILABLE ACRES: 707.9</i> <i>Current Allocation: 1,000</i>

