

New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee
10B Airline Drive, Albany, NY 12235 -- Telephone (518) 457-3738

State Committee Meeting

Crown Plaza
701 East Genesee Street Syracuse, NY 13210
Syracuse, NY
March 17, 2016

Meeting at a Glance:

- The 2016-2017 proposed Environmental Protection Fund budget has been increased to \$300 million, including:
 - \$9 million for Soil and Water Conservation District aid, an increase of \$3.725 million
 - \$19 million for Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Projects, an increase of \$4.8 million
 - \$2.5 million for the Climate Resilient Farming Program, an increase of \$2 million
- Round 22 AgNPS proposals are due 4/1/16 at 4:30pm, uploaded to SharePoint
- The Pilot/Round 1 Climate Resilient Farming ranked list was approved

Present:

D. Stein, Chair; J. Dickinson, C. Colby, Voting Members; B. Steinmuller, Assistant Director; G. Albrecht, B. Brower, V. DiGiacomo, G. Spitzer, S. Fickbohm, SWCC; G. Kist, NRCS; R. Ball, NYS DAM; PJ Emerick, CDEA; K. Stainbrook, NYS DEC; A. Paice, NYACD; D. Kirby, Orleans SWCD; S. Stein, Genesee SWCD; B. Luskin, Washington SWCD.

Call to Order

D. Stein called the meeting to order.

Review/Approval of Minutes

J. Dickinson moved to approve the January 2016 minutes; seconded by C. Colby. Motion passed; carried.

Agricultural Non-Point Source Program Update, B. Bzduch

Amendments for State Committee Consideration:

Region 2

Chenango County SWCD - The Chesapeake Bay Intensive Grazing Project/Access Control #2 – Round 18 – C701095

Start Date: 7/24/2012 Current End Date: 5/25/2016

Request: Time Extension to 5/25/2017

Reason: Of the three farms in the grant, two are complete and one farm has been waiting for their CRP contract to be completed. The contract was finally signed on 12/31/2015. There were several factors that caused the federal contract to be delayed, however, now that it is in place the project can move forward. The Landowner has signed a revised commitment letter.

Note: Scott Fickbohm, Region 2 AEA, supports this time extension.

Previous Amendments: 1 Time Extension

J. Dickinson moved to approve the amendment, seconded by C. Colby. Motion passed; carried.

Region 4

Jefferson County SWCD – Southern Watersheds Non-Point Source Abatement Program – Round 18 - C701092

Start Date: 7/24/2012 Current End Date: 5/25/2016

Request: Time Extension to 12/31/2016

Reason: One landowner is still committed to implementing the practices on his farm. The landowner has a complete design but was unable to retain a contractor to do the work in 2015. The landowner has initiated the procurement process to solicit bids and with approval of this extension, will provide that information to the SWCD in order to commence construction this spring.

Note: Bob Brower, Region 4 AEA, supports the time extension, refers to the State Committee for approval

J. Dickinson moved to approve the amendment, seconded by C. Colby. Motion passed; carried.

Round 22 Update and Q&A Review

Applications for Round 22 of the AgNPS program are due 4:30pm on Friday, April 1 through SharePoint.

The question and answer document was briefly reviewed, and the following question was discussed in depth:

Q. A farm has a silage bunk located on a Trout stream and the only solution is to relocate the bunk and provide treatment at the new site. Can the new bunk pad, exterior wall, and, the treatment system be cost shared? The farm will also require an access road which will be used to maintain the VTA, pump out the tank, etc. Can the access road be included as part of the Silage Leachate System?

A. The AGNPS program will only allow the treatment (apron to facilitate collection of the leachate, the low/high flow separation, transfer, and the VTA or other treatment as deemed appropriate by the planner and engineer) to be cost-shared. The cost of the new bunk floor as well as the exterior wall is not eligible for cost share. However, the cost associated with the construction can be used as Landowner match. Interior walls are **NOT** be eligible for cost share or Landowner match. The access road is an allowable practice and can be cost shared as it will be used to maintain the VTA, pump out the tank, etc.

This issue has come up before, but has not been addressed in a comprehensive way. The State Committee discussed the possible options regarding cost share and landowner match, and ultimately decided to keep the answer as above. However, the issue will be addressed through a formal policy, starting with soliciting feedback from the Technical Advisory Committee.

J. Dickinson motioned to approve the Round 22 Questions and Answers, including the bunk silage question, seconded by C. Colby. Motion passed; carried.

Climate Resilient Farming Program Update, G. Spitzer

Approval of the Ranked Lists

District employees with projects on the list recused themselves for the discussion.

There were 17 applications submitted for the Climate Resilient Farming Pilot Round/Round 1: 8 in track 1 (Manure Storage Cover and Flare), 5 in track 2 (On Farm Riparian, Floodplain, and Upland Water Management), 4 in track 3 (Soil Health). They have been ranked by track, generating three lists (attached).

The funding is allocated by track to each project until funding runs out or the threshold is reached. If there is leftover funding that does not constitute enough to fully fund the next project, it will be offered, as partial funding, to each project in the track. If the partial funding is rejected by all projects above the threshold, it will be offered to unfunded projects in the remaining two tracks, in order of their scores.

Resolution 16-01:

That subject to the availability of funds, the Committee shall award funding, pursuant to Pilot/ Round 1 of the Climate Resilient Farming Grant Program, for projects ranked on each of the three lists, one list per track, until funds available for this purpose are exhausted or the scoring threshold is reached, consistent with the Soil and Water Conservation District Law, the RFP, and any other law applicable to funding of such projects. Consistent with the RFP, the Committee authorizes the Department of Agriculture and Markets to negotiate the terms of the contract with the project sponsors and to make minor adjustments to the project description and budget as necessary to achieve project goals, conform to applicable laws and regulations, and to serve the best interests of the State.

J. Dickinson motioned to approve Resolution 16-01, seconded by C. Colby. Motion passed; carried.

The awards will be made at the discretion of the NYS Department of Ag and Markets. More details on the contracts and on plans for Round 2 will be discussed at a later date, but any Districts interested in providing feedback or suggestions should contact Gabriella Spitzer at gabriella.spitzer@agriculture.ny.gov.

Budget Update, B. Steinmuller

Proposals for the NYS 2016-2017 Budget have been released by the Governor's office and the Senate and Assembly. The Environmental Protection Fund has been raised to historic levels of \$300 million, including increases in the AgNPS program from \$14.2 million to \$19 million and in the District Aid program from \$4.75 million to \$9 million. The Climate Resilient Farming program was increased to \$2.5 million in the Governor's budget and in the Senate budget, but was eliminated in the Assembly budget. More information on how these changes will follow once the budget has been approved and enacted.

New York Certified, Commissioner Ball

Food labeling is full of ambiguous language that does not have any clear legal backing—while consumers desire food that is local, safe, and environmentally and socially responsible, very few of the labels that seem to indicate those things (“all natural” etc.) actually reflect anything other than a good marketing campaign.

The NY Certified program is an attempt to create one unambiguous label: “NY Certified – High Quality Foods.” Seeing it on a product would mean that the product is grown/produced in New York State, that the farm has an AEM Tier 2 assessment completed for all applicable production areas, and that the food has been handled in a safe manner—for fruits and vegetables, this means that the farms comply with Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) standards.

This initiative is a collaboration between the Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Department of Health. Empire State Development is also involved with the advertising campaign so that consumers are aware of the label and its meaning, and grocery stores and other partners are excited about the effort. New and revised regulations for truth in advertising and the meanings of labels will be released over the next several months, and the NY Certified labels themselves are scheduled to appear in supermarkets by the end of the year.

Districts will work with farmers on the AEM Tier 2 assessments, and any subsequent AEM work. While the first effort of the NY Certified program is aimed at fruit and vegetable growers, there are plans to expand to dairies and other sectors. Stay tuned for more information on the program and Districts' roles.

AEM Base Update, G. Albrecht

The AEM Base program is getting stronger. State Committee staff recently met to review AEM reporting requirements to streamline some of the forms and reports, and those changes will be forthcoming. One new (or, rather, renewed) element of the AEM program is that Regional AEAs and the AEM program manager will be scheduling AEM reviews with Districts throughout the year. This will not be connected to close outs or funding, but rather a meeting to discuss AEM strategy, annual action planning, and implementation.

In addition, the AEM Base options will be expanding for AEM Base Year 13. The AEM Base options will be the following (changes are highlighted):

- Option A: reimbursement of up to \$50,000 for the time of a qualified District professional who can write
 - Tier 3A plans, except for nutrient management
 - No CNMPs (Tier 3B)
- Option B: reimbursement of up to \$85,000 for the time of a certified AEM planner who can write
 - all Tier 3A plans
 - all CNMPs (Tier 3B), including for regulated/CAFO farms
- Option C: reimbursement of up to \$65,000 for the time of
 - an NRCS Certified Whole Farm planner who can write
 - All Tier 3A plans
 - CNMPs (Tier 3B), but not for regulated/CAFO farms
 - OR an NRCS Certified Nutrient Management Specialist who can write
 - All Tier 3A plans, including nutrient management on crop-only farms
 - OR an NRCS Pest Management Specialist who can write
 - Tier 3A plans, except for nutrient management
 - NRCS IPM plans

The new options reflect new NRCS certification options.

C. Colby moved to approve the new planning components under Option C of the AEM Base Program; seconded by J. Dickinson. Motion passed; carried.

Leadership Institute, B. Brower

CDEA is putting together a Leadership Institute/Conference July 12-15 at the SUNY ESF Ranger School in Wanakena NY. Costs depend on potential grants that make become available.

Next meeting tentatively scheduled for April 19, 2016 in Albany, with video conferencing available.

Climate Resilient Farming Pilot Round 1 Ranked Lists

Code	District	Project Name	Requested Funds	Track Total	Points
Track 1- Manure Storage Cover and Flare (\$1.1 million available)					
-00007	Erie	Palmer Dairy Green House Gas Mitigation Project	\$ 141,500.00	\$ 141,500.00	138
-00014	Cortland	New Hope View Farm CRF Project	\$ 268,350.00	\$ 409,850.00	132
-00023	Wyoming	Table Rock Farm Methane Reduction Project	\$ 429,929.00	\$ 839,779.00	127
-00010	Genesee	East View Farms, Inc. Manure Storage Cover & Flare	\$ 176,839.00	\$ 1,016,618.00	126
-00006	Cayuga	Lincoln Dairy GHG Emission Reduction and Storm Resiliency	\$ 240,466.00	\$ 1,257,084.00	125
-00012	Lewis	Marks Farms Climate Resiliency Project	\$ 494,460.00	\$ 1,751,544.00	120
-00005	Chautauqu	Findley Lake Dairy Agricultural Waste Storage Cover & Flare System	\$ 233,055.00	\$ 1,984,599.00	115
-00009	Wayne	Wayne County Climate Resiliency Pollution Control: Greenhouse Gas Mitigation for Seneca River Watershed	\$ 158,110.00	\$ 2,142,709.00	111
Track 2- On-farm Riparian, Floodplain, and Upland Water Management (\$150,000 available)					
-00026	Onondaga	Smith Hollow Pond Dam Repair	\$ 46,324.00	\$ 46,324.00	114
-00004	Orange	Wallkill River Flood Resilience and Riparian Restoration	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 121,324.00	113
-00008	Albany	Patroon Land Farm Erosion Control and Upland Water Storage	\$ 26,705.00	\$ 148,029.00	111
-00015	Cortland	Dylan Barber Farm CRF Project	\$ 35,910.00	\$ 183,939.00	98
-00017	Cayuga	Great Gully Streambank Stabilization	\$ 19,305.00	\$ 203,244.00	93
Track 2- Soil Health (\$150,000 available)					
-00003	Onondaga	Climate Adaptation and Mitigation at Palladino Farms	\$ 55,803.34	\$ 55,803.34	131
-00011	Genesee	Oatka Creek Cover Crop Implementation	\$ 22,316.00	\$ 78,119.34	114
-00021	Wayne	Soil Health Demonstration Project for Climate Resiliency for Central Plains Field Crops of Wayne County	\$ 73,778.00	\$ 151,897.34	108
-00025	Madison	Chenango River No Till Project	\$ 8,720.00	\$ 160,617.34	98



Agricultural Environmental Management

AEM Base Funding - Year 12 Update

Greg Albrecht

AEM Coordinator / CNMP Specialist

Division of Land and Water Resources

NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee

greg.albrecht@agriculture.ny.gov or 607.229.4654



AEM Base Funding – Year 12

- More efficient close out procedures
 - Districts submit close out checklist, final report spreadsheet, and claim for payment
 - Maintain other documents at District
- AEM Annual Reviews
 - AEA/Coordinator support for AEM Strategy, the resulting Annual Action Plan, and quality technical service
 - Not tied to AEM Base close out, scheduled throughout year
- New planner certification options



Current Planner Certification Options

AEM Base Funding Option A (up to \$50k).....

- Qualified District Professional for the AEM Tiers performed
 - All Tier 3A plan types, except nutrient mgt.
 - No Tier 3Bs (CNMPs)

AEM Base Funding Option B (up to \$85k).....

- AEM Planner Certification (existing)
 - All Tier 3A plan types
 - CNMPs (Tier 3B), including CAFO farms

AEM Base Funding Option C (up to \$65k).....

- NRCS Certified Whole Farm Planner (existing)
 - All Tier 3A plan types
 - CNMPs (Tier 3B), not on CAFO farms



Proposed additional options from NRCS Policy Update

For Option C (up to \$65k)

- NRCS Certified Nutrient Management Specialist (new)
 - Non-livestock, non-manure nutrient mgt.
 - So all Tier 3As, including nutrient mgt on crop-only farms.
- NRCS Pest Management Specialist (new)
 - For NRCS IPM plans and any other AEM Tier 3A plans except for nutrient mgt