

Eastern Shore Agriculture Collaborative

Fourth Meeting
4H & Extension Office, Denton, Maryland
September 24, 2008

Welcome and Purpose

Joanne Throwe, from the University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center, welcomed participants and began general introductions. The majority of the day would be spent discussing the structure of the Eastern Shore Collaborative and trying to further define the focus and direction for the coming year. The meeting will follow up on the presentations made at the July 22nd meeting.

News and Events Highlights

Maryland Department of Agriculture: Royden Powell, Assistant Secretary, discussed the local implementation grants under the Chesapeake Bay Trust Funds. There is an expected \$3.87 million in awards to be made at the end of October. The entire focus of these awards will be for non-point sources. He described the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) permitting process for the new MAFO/CAFO regulations. The public meetings on these new regulations will begin soon. The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) will make funds available to support CAFO permitting for cost share assistance. MDA is trying to apply existing nutrient management plans (NMP) for medium sized operations largely affecting poultry.

EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office: Kelly Shenk reminded everyone that there is another grant program currently open under the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's (NFWF) Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund for Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction projects. Pre-proposals are due October 31, 2008, and notification is expected by early January regarding a final proposal. The complete RFP can be found at www.nfwf.org/chesapeake. NFWF is partnering with EPA and the Chesapeake Bay Program and will be awarding grants on a competitive basis of between \$200,000 and \$1 million each to support the demonstration of innovative approaches to expand the collective knowledge about the most cost effective and sustainable approaches that will reduce or eliminate nutrient and sediment pollution to the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. An Environmental Finance Center (EFC) employee wrote notes for ESAC that summarized the NFWF webinar for this grant. These notes were distributed during the meeting. For more information, contact EFC at 301/405-5036 to request a copy.

Chesapeake Bay Funders Network (CBFN): Connie Musgrove briefly described the CBFN Agriculture Initiative regarding the manure management projects in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. Connie said that farmers from the Eastern Shore interested in being involved in this program should contact her for more details.

LEAD Maryland Program: Kenny Bounds from the Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit said that applications for the sixth class are now open through October 1, 2008.

Structure of the Eastern Shore Agriculture Collaborative

Joanne reviewed the hopes and goals that were cited in the first meeting from February 2008. She noted that these were very broad and that it was time to discuss specific structure that would help the group move forward. Joanne discussed the need for local leadership that would help build the strength of the collaborative. She raised a few scenarios that could be considered such as the style used by the Virginia Waste Solutions Forum where there is co-leadership for a one year appointment with several active committees, or an executive style of leadership that would appoint a President, Vice President, etc. There were no nominations put forth at this time. The group felt more comfortable discussing committee topics for the group to focus on in the near future. A long discussion ensued between members regarding topics. Joanne wanted the group to focus on a few achievable goals that could be accomplished in the next year and asked for suggestions as to what they would be. The group was reminded of the main purpose of forming the Eastern Shore group was to *collaboratively seek water quality improvements while keeping farms viable*.

Goals of the Collaborative

The group tentatively agreed upon the need to focus on improving water quality while promoting economically viable agriculture. The topics of land use and the utilization of manure were the primary considerations. Concern was expressed about focusing on mostly environmental concerns and that we must remember to consider economics. A concern was expressed about the need for public education versus just farmer education. Another member thought that the driver for all action is TMDLs. The regulations are coming so there needs to be a plan ready to go very soon. Joanne reminded everyone that if we are going to make a difference, we need to narrow our focus to a couple of tangible things that the group could achieve within a year or two. Since the group did not appear ready to select local leaders, perhaps it could begin by starting with committees and people willing to serve on a particular committee. An open discussion took place on what we wanted to work towards.

Attainable Goals under Consideration:

1) *Managing, storing, and applying manure*: The group was reminded by one member that the overarching goal was to improve water quality while promoting economically viable agriculture. It was asked if the group could sponsor or promote a project that gets at this goal. Individual farmers won't have TMDLs but Maryland will have one for each watershed (10) for agriculture in general. One member responded by asking if we would want to focus on the Choptank, since that is the only big 10 watershed actually on the Eastern Shore. The model for the Virginia Waste Solutions Forum purposefully did not get involved in the regulatory end of things, so maybe the Eastern Shore group should focus on something more collaborative. A participant responded that manure seems to be a central theme of what we have talked about at every meeting. A question was posed to the entire group asking if the economic viability analysis for agriculture was going to change and mentioned that poultry litter is a big part of that equation. Farmers want to use it properly since it is a valuable resource. Manure helps hit the economic viability and water quality question at the same time. Another member mentioned that litter is now worth about \$100 per acre when it is spread on the field. Grain farmers don't want to see it burned. After much discussion, it was suggested that the Collaborative develop a plan to manage

manure so it is stored, applied, and used as a resource appropriately. This means for farmers, golf courses, etc.

2) *Land Use:* Zoning, sprawl, and land preservation are important topics that emerged among Collaborative members as serious threats to the Eastern Shore and the agriculture industry. Members said that if we don't get a handle on it then we might not make that big a difference. It was even mentioned by one Extension Agent that with the ways things are heading, there may not be an agriculture industry in Maryland some day. There are models which show agriculture lands that are vulnerable to development. If we could identify highly vulnerable, good quality agricultural land, what kind of project could we potentially enact that could help? One possible solution is something that would preserve the value of land. The fear is that the land will lose value when there are restrictions placed on it. The TDR program for Caroline was mentioned as a successful model to build from.

One participant asked whether we as a group should develop a land use plan by the end of the first year. It was suggested that it would be nice if this group could organize a forum for counties for zoning of economic development focusing on the agriculture and land use connection. We could work very hard to identify where resources are for townships to tap into and how other municipalities have addressed these issues. We can help to identify common resources.

A member brought our attention to the Governor's Intergovernmental Commission on Agriculture, whose mission is to improve communication between levels of government and agencies so they are working together. One of the facets of this commission is to address land use planning. It was initially informal and then later formalized by an Executive Order of the Governor of Maryland. Perhaps there is a way to work together or get information from this commission. One participant expressed concern that land use issues are enough to consume us for decades to come. There is a division in the agriculture community on what to do about land use. If we are looking for attainable goals, they may not be in the area of land use. Joanne then asked if we could establish both long-term and short-term goals. She wondered whether there was some sort of manure related goal that was achievable in the first year.

3) *Public Education:* The importance of public education on land use issues as well as manure was brought up several times throughout the morning discussion. The Collaborative could consider its primary purpose to educate not just the public but help to get the environmentalists, scientific, and agriculture communities on board for manure and land use issues. A comment was made that environmentalists don't like manure but farmers should be getting credit for using it as opposed to petroleum-based fertilizers that need to be shipped in. Public outreach is needed and very doable. It was suggested that one subgroup could be formed to look at alternative uses, one for land application, and one for other purposes. An honest discussion about land use between older and younger farmers and environmentalists could take place and be a short term goal for the Collaborative. A suggestion was made to invite the people who have opposing views into the same room to let these groups talk together.

Summary of Attainable Goals

Joanne asked if there was any piece of the three topic areas mentioned that we could conceivably tackle as a goal for the coming year. She then called for a consensus on each topic. There were many hands in favor of the manure proposal but there were still people in the room who were unsupportive of the idea. It was said that since this is a Collaborative, we should focus on doing things that are not being done or not being done well, such as public outreach and education, which is valid and worthy. We should not talk about issues that are beyond the scope of the group. This group should focus on issues that we can't otherwise accomplish alone in our work but may make a difference as a group working together.

One member suggested again that if the only purpose of this group was to have the environmental groups and the agriculture community standing together as one then this (education and outreach) could be an attainable goal. It is not being done elsewhere and that would be seen as a very positive thing for both groups. The Waterkeepers Alliance was asked what it would take to stand up together with the agriculture community. The response was that if the ultimate goal is to improve water quality, then there is no reason the groups couldn't work together. The Waterkeepers Alliance prefers responsible agriculture over industry or sprawl. An invitation was extended to the Waterkeepers Alliance to make a presentation at the next Collaborative meeting to begin working towards better understanding between all groups. This was agreed to by the entire group as a good idea.

In terms of getting the biggest bang for the buck on one of the three proposed topic areas and have this group make a difference, a participant suggested focusing on one thing; specifically litter, with a focus on storage. The group could explore the latest research in covering manure using tarps or update the 2003 waste utilization study; the study should be updated but it is difficult to know where to begin or what information to use.

Another member supported the idea of getting as specific as possible, saying that it would be good if we could certify people who are doing good things to help water quality. There could be a checklist endorsed by the agriculture community, regulators, academics, and environmentalists. It was said to be difficult for agriculture since the issue(s) tend to get generalized.

Joanne asked the group whether we want to create our own projects do we just want to endorse other projects. One member stated that educational outreach is broad enough for everyone to be involved on each of the issues and it will keep the group together. Joanne asked everyone whether this group should be about promoting education and outreach but a member replied that you can't have a narrow first project knowing that you are moving toward a broader area. We should not let go of land use that quickly. Joanne again called for consensus but it was not reached. It was suggested that what is lacking in terms of education is the idea of educating the non-agriculture community. This might be where the Collaborative can do its public outreach. In other words, do outreach and education on agriculture issues into non-agriculture communities. An example was raised about the Talbot County visioning exercise. People responded in a way that showed there was a huge need for overall education on agriculture in general. Another member didn't agree with public education being the focus for this group. Public relations to the general public on agriculture issues are important but the connection between that and how it relates to water quality wasn't apparent. There is a big need for technical assistance. Another member stated that it ultimately has to be a piece of everyone's

ideas because we are a Collaborative. With a reference made back to manure, it was asked how do we get the correct message to the correct people. There is a group of people who will sue for public disclosure of nutrient management plans and we need a way to show people that the plans are working. Could we get money to pay for putting up stream fences, additional transportation, tarps, and other Best Management Practices (BMPs)? There is a draft report available from Dr. Greg Binford on “*Evaluating BMPs for Temporary stockpiling of Poultry Litter.*” Tim Pilkowski from USDA/NRCS will get us copies of the report and send it to Joanne for distribution. Tim suggested that we can invite Dr. Binford and Dr. Josh McGrath to our meeting and they would probably be willing to present their latest research on poultry litter issues, mainly stockpiling and land application. Tim suggested that if we could get the right people in the room for a discussion, then we may be able to make some sound, research based recommendations to Maryland Department of Environment on stockpiling issues.

Kelly Shenk stated that if we better define the target audience and the message, we may be on the right track. Another expressed concern that we would turn into a marketing group and there was some discomfort with that notion. The Virginia Waste Solutions Forum tended to go after gaps and that approach seemed to be effective. After much time on this discussion, it was finally stated that making any final decisions at this meeting may be too soon. Joanne agreed that more information was needed and that the presentations from the previous meeting should be delayed until such time that the group can reach a consensus on the overarching goals for the Collaborative. Kelly Shenk stated that we need more information before we can decide on our scope and our target audience. Everyone agreed that although we did not reach consensus, progress was made toward building this Collaborative.

Cellulosic Biofuels and the Chesapeake Bay

Mathew Mullin, Maryland Director for the Chesapeake Bay Commission, spoke with the group about the September 4th Cellulosic Biofuels Summit that was held in Harrisonburg, PA. He issued copies of the report entitled “*Next-Generation Biofuels- Taking the Policy Lead for the Nation.*” Matt explained how the Chesapeake Bay region plans to take the lead for the nation in the evolution of sustainable advanced biofuel production. He said that the hope is to encourage regional collaboration among various stakeholders and build upon the region’s unique assets including diversity in technology, ability to sustainably produce feedstocks and the proximity to markets. For a copy of the report, please visit <http://www.chesbay.state.va.us/summitdocs.html>.

Next Steps

Joanne asked the group whether there was a better name for this Collaborative or was the name Eastern Shore Agriculture Collaborative acceptable. No one opposed the existing name. Joanne closed the meeting by asking when the next meeting should be held and whether there were suggestions for the next agenda. There were a few volunteers to help coordinate the next meeting agenda. The group thought that we should meet again before the public hearings which MDE is holding in November. The next meeting will try to be scheduled for late October.

The agenda for the next meeting should focus on the following items if time allows:

1. Further discussion on the possible goals and potential committees for the group. If time allows and the group is able to move towards identifying attainable goals, we will discuss the proposals that were given at the previous meeting.
 - Proposed certification program
 - Litter studies
2. Invitation to MDE to speak
3. Invitation to Waterkeepers Alliance to speak
4. Invitation to Josh McGrath and Greg Binford about evaluation of BMPs for poultry litter

APPENDIX 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

21 People Participated

Category	Name	Position	Company/Affiliation
Academic	Wayne Bell	Senior Associate	Center for the Environment and Society, Washington College
Ag Org	Kenny Bounds	Vice President, Government Affairs Officer President	MidAtlantic Farm Credit LEAD Maryland Foundation
Ag Org	Kurt Fuchs	Asst. Director for Government Relations	Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.
Env	John Groutt		Wicomico Environmental Trust
Academic	John Hall	County Extension Director & Ag Educator	University of Maryland Cooperative Extension, Kent County
Env	Joelle Hervic	Senior Attorney, CAFOs	Waterkeeper Alliance
Ag Org	Lynne Hoot	Executive Director	Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts
Ag Org	Pat Langenfelder	First Vice President	Maryland Farm Bureau, Inc.
Academic	Jim Lewis	Senior Agent, Agriculture & Natural Resources & County Extension Director	Caroline County Extension
Academic	George (Bud) Malone	Extension Specialist III, Animal and Food Sciences Assoc Scientist, Agriculture Experiment Ctr	Animal and Food Sciences, University of Delaware
Ag Org	Steve McHenry	Executive Director Executive Director	Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industries Development Corp. Rural Maryland Council
Fed	Matt Mullin	Maryland Director	Chesapeake Bay Commission
Academic	Connie Musgrove	Senior Research Coordinator	UMD Center for Environmental Science
Academic	Doug Parker	Associate Professor	UMD Agricultural and Resource Economics
State	Tim Pilkowski	Conservation Agronomist	MD NRCS
State	Royden Powell	Acting Assistant Secretary	MD Department of Agriculture
Fed	Kelly Shenk	NSC Coordinator	EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office

Category	Name	Position	Company/Affiliation
Academic	Elizabeth Skane	Graduate Assistant	University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center
Agribusiness	Jack Tarburton	Representative	Perdue Farms Incorporated
Academic	Joanne Throwe	Assistant Director	University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center
Academic	Jennifer Timmons	Extension Specialist for Poultry	Maryland Cooperative Extension-Lower Eastern Shore