

Workgroup Status

Workgroup: Ag Workgroup

Status Report Date: March 15, 2006

Team Leader(s): Cedric Karper

Team Members in Attendance:

Walt Peechatka, Penn Ag Industries
Scott Vandemark, PECWest
Don McNutt, Lancaster CD
Jeff Wendle, PMAA
Matt Ehrhart, Ches. Bay Foundation
Susan Fox-Marquart, PACD
Andrea Sharretts, PFB
Peter Hughes, Red Barn
Corey Adams, PSATS

Bill Angstadt, Consultant
George Hazard, Red Barn
Kelly Ireland, USDA – NRCS
Jana Malot, USDA - NRCS
Fred Suffian, EPA
Brenda Shambaugh, PACD
John Bell, PFB
Karl Brown, SCC

DEP:

Cedric Karper
Doug Brennan
Mark Dubin

Steve Taglang
John Hines
Duke Adams

Issue (s) Addressed:

- Baseline & Threshold

Status Report and Recommendations:

- The Work Group met for the second time on March 14.
- Discussions on March 14 included discussions on baseline and threshold, as requested by the Secretary at the March 3 Steering Committee meeting. The group did not reach consensus as to what the threshold should be, as individual farming operations are so unique and the needs will vary. There was “buy-in” by the group however to an understanding that some measures above baseline should be taken to allow trading. The concept that the group is choosing to move forward with gives options to the farming operation. The group is proposing a “suite” or list of BMPs that could qualify an operation for threshold OR an equivalent trading ratio to be applied in lieu of BMPs. The option of the BMP or

the applied higher ratio would be up to the individual farm operator. Just doing baseline compliance is possible to qualify for trading but it carries a high conversion ratio - say 3# reduced for each tradable credit (3:1). By adding a BMP beyond baseline - say cover crop - the trading ratio could be reduced to maybe 2.5:1. Each BMP in the suite would have a reduction factor to the trading ratio that reflects its efficiency. Adding a vegetated buffer to baseline compliance could reduce the trading ratio to 2:1. This does allow us to equate baseline with the trading threshold but just meeting the threshold has a cost. All seemed to agree that it does not matter what the conversion is as long as the farmer is reasonably compensated for his efforts. DEP staff will put together a proposal that builds on the legal baseline document. We will design it with the options discussed. For example a person could do legal baseline and option to do a ratio (3:1, 4:1, etc) or to do baseline and then a series of additional BMPs. Either way we are filling in the threshold prior to trading.

- The group has chosen to work towards a development of this list and the corresponding ratios at the next meeting on April 5th.