

Minutes: Agricultural Workgroup Conference Call

11/15/11

Time Start: 10:00 am

Time Stop: 10:35 am

<u>Council Members, Alternates, and Interested Parties</u>	<u>TWDB Staff</u>
Richard Egg	Vanessa Escobar
Tom Englke	Mark Michon
Darren Turley	Cameron Turner
Steve Walthour	
Justin Weinhiemer	
Stacy Pandey	
Wayne Halbert	
Steve Bednarz	

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am and roll call was taken.

The meeting began with discussion on the workgroup's Best Management Practices (BMP) revision process. Richard Egg provided a brief background on the development of the BMP Guide. The BMPs were originally established by the Water Conservation Implementation Task Force in 2004. One of the Council's current charges is to review the BMP Guide and consider updating existing BMPs or adding new ones. Many of the existing agricultural BMPs were based on the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation practices. The NRCS practices have recently been updated therefore it would be best for the Council and this agricultural workgroup to take a look at those updated NRCS practices and consider incorporating those updates into the BMPs.

The workgroup discussed the following order of priorities that will guide this workgroup's BMP efforts.

1. Review all BMPs and eliminate any that may no longer be needed or effective.
2. Correct and update existing BMPs based on NRCS conservation practice standards that have been updated.
3. Correct and update existing BMPs as new revisions to NRCS conservation practice standards revisions are completed.
4. Evaluate and add new BMPs as they are submitted.
5. Update cost data of remaining BMPs
6. Revise formatting of remaining BMPs to current format.

In early December an email will be sent out to the workgroup asking for workgroup members to do a cursory review to identify BMPs made need to be removed. Once that step has taken place, we will provide the workgroup with the latest NRCS updated practices. In early January the workgroup will plan to have another meeting.

There was some discussion on future efforts to evaluate what some of the major agricultural water districts are doing in terms of promoting best management practices in the major irrigated areas of the state. It might be beneficial to see what those aggregate programs are doing and incorporate that into a resource of case studies. One good place to start is by getting some information from the large irrigation districts and finding out what they are doing. To present this type of information as case studies would be a useful resource for producers and helps them to justify the switchover to more efficient practices. For the initial effort of taking a closer look at irrigation district activities we could start with information from the Texas Water Development Board's Agriculture Demonstration Initiatives. We could highlight some of the success in those projects and use them as some of the initial case studies. Through the learning process in developing these initial case studies we can better prepare a template for how future case studies can be developed.

An update was provided on the status of the Blue Legacy Award in Agriculture. The Blue Legacy Awards will be presented on December 9th in McAllen, TX at the 2011 Irrigation Expo. There was some discussion on how to best recognize all nominees. The workgroup agreed that all nominees should be showcased on the website as a case study. A formal press release from the Council will be made in mid December. For next year's 2012 Blue Legacy Awards we will look into hosting the award presentation at the Amarillo Farm and Ranch Show.

The conference call adjourned at 10:35 am.