

**Missouri State Technical Committee
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Conducted via MS Teams - Virtual Meeting
9:00am – 11:30am, Monday March 1, 2021**

Scott Edwards, NRCS, State Conservationist

Welcomed everyone in attendance. Introduced himself as Missouri State Conservationist. He gave a summary of current NRCS priorities and activities. Edwards discussed the continue role of COVID-19 on agency operations, thanks members participating, and introduced Jeremy Mosely, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Acting State Executive Director.

Jeremy Mosely, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Acting State Executive Director

Introduced himself, his duties and appreciates the value of working together within USDA, NRCS and partners.

Brad McCord, NRCS, State Outreach Coordinator, Moderated the meeting

Marilyn Gann, NRCS, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs (ASTC) for Programs, Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

Gann provided an overview of CSP Overview & FY20 Review, CSP – Grassland Conservation Initiative (GCI), EQIP Overview & FY20 Review, EQIP Conservation Incentive Program (EQIP-CIC), and the EQIP-CIC Subcommittee Opportunity. Mrs. Gann introduced herself and began with CSP being a 5-year program and explained how it is performed. All contracts include all land in the applicant's agricultural operation. She explained the two types of applications: Cropland, Pasture, Hayland and Nonindustrial Private Forestland. Every applicant is evaluated to establish the level of existing conversation. Gann explained the combination of payments, consisting of maintaining the existing level of conservation and installing & adopting additional conversation. Gann moved on to FY-2020 CSP stats \$13 million contracts were obligated, and 139,802 acers contracted. Gann went into CSP's Top Five Practices for 2020.

- Reduce risk of Pesticides utilizing precision pesticide application techniques
- Reduce Risk of Pesticides utilizing IPM PAMS techniques
- Pest Management Conservation System
- Cover Corp
- Fence

Gann addressed the FY-2020 CSP Renewals, obligated \$5.1 million and 69,577 Acres contracted. Gann updated the committee on CSP-GCI, CSP-GCI is a 5-year contract program. Eligible acers are identified by Farm Service Agency (FSA). FY-2020 totals: 319 contracts, \$1.1 million obligated, 11,826 acres. Gann also updated the committee with CSP FY-2021 obligations and application updates. Gann concluded asking the committee if they had any questions.

Gann updated the committee with EQIP, and the purpose of EQIP. FY-2020 stats 935 contracts and obligated \$32.5 million. Gann provided a table with all the top practices planned for FY-2020. She informed the committee about the workshops held through out the state various times a year. Inviting the committee to attend at least one. Gann moved forward introducing a new program EQIP Conservation Incentive Program (EQIP-CIC). The program purpose it to incentivize additional conservation around locally established resource priorities. This program is a new program under the 2018 Farm Bill. Gann informed the committee when the first sign-up and the percentage dedicated to EQIP CIC.

A request was made of partners interested serving on the CIC subcommittee are asked to respond by March 3, 2021 if interested.

Adam Jones asked a question concerning possible updates to the pollinator program payment rates. Lauren Cartwright indicated the rates are established using a broad range of state average costs. Discussion included installation rates and forgone income from the producer during establishment.

Nate Goodrich, NRCS, State Resource Conservationist, Field Technical Services Update

Goodrich provided updates for the Central Region Monarch Butterfly Project, Conservation Reserve Program, and Feral Swine Control Program. Goodrich presented a map of the central region monarch project. The map demonstrated the fall and spring migrations. He expressed the goals for NRCS. Goodrich also mentioned the five primary phases of this project:

- Promotion
- Collect Materials
- Review material; decide how to use them to develop products
- Product Development
- Review project success

Goodrich moved forward with CRP information explaining FY-2021 3,724 expiring contracts 131,991 acres. He also informed the committee with the new administration has left sign up open with new closing date to be determined. Goodrich expressed the Feral Swine Control Program authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill. NRCS and APHIS Animal Plant Health Inspection Service have been working together with this program and Missouri was approved for funding in FY21.

A question was received regarding the CP25 and 643 practice standards to use source identified seed. Nate Goodrich indicated the standards have changed and the use of locally adapted seed is highly encouraged, but no longer required by program participants. A comment was made suggesting further use of third-party validation of seed sources.

Chris Hamilton, NRCS, Assistant State Conservationist for Programs (ASTC) for Water Resources, Water Resource & Easement Program Update

Hamilton provided updates for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), Wetland Reserve Easement (ACEP-WRE), and the Agricultural Land Easement (ACEP-ALE). Hamilton informed the committee on the ACEP funding increasing to \$450 million a year, enrolling over 5 million acres nationally. He provided one change to the ranking criteria; Native Vegetative Communities, ranking criteria can also be found on Missouri's NRCS website. (ALE) FY21 criteria changes cooperating Entity Cash. Hamilton provided a (ACEP-WRE) compensation map for rate cap determinations.

Mark Abney, NRCS, Assistant State Soil Scientist, Resource Inventory & Assessment Update Abney

Abney provided an overview of Missouri Methods for Making Wetland Determinations and solicited State Technical Committee input for use in making future determinations.

David Doctorian, NRCS, Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships & Initiatives Partnerships & Initiatives Update

Mr. Doctorian provided an overview of the Missouri participation and results for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP). Doctorian also introduced the concept of creating subcommittees of the NRCS State Technical Committee. There was discussion on what types of committees may need to be established and attendees were asked to submit suggestions for committees to David Doctorian by April 1, 2021.

Question was received regarding how the success of source water protection efforts through RCP and other programs would be evaluated.

Question was received concerning the opportunity to establish long term conservation protection on a property versus a short-term practice to complete management activities. Easement programs to complete long term conservation through NRCS programs are difficult due to the entity still being required to provide 25 percent of the cost to establish the easement.

A question was received suggesting the development of a conservation practice or incentive to enhance/restore carbon credits in NRCS programs.

Partners Update (MDC, DNR SWCP, MDA)

Chris Klenklen of the Missouri Department of Agriculture provided brief comments regarding ongoing services and activities of the Department of Agriculture. Bill White of the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) provided an update in conservation related programs, Feral Swine, and MDC efforts. In addition, Kurt Boeckman, Missouri Department of Natural

Resources, Soil and Water Conservation Program (SWCP) provided an update on soil and water conservation program activities and conservation district activities in support of the Parks and Soils Sales tax.

Scott Edwards Appreciated everyone's input and questions. Thanked everyone for attending.

Meeting Adjourned 11:35am