

## Workgroup Status

**Workgroup:** Ag Workgroup

**Status Report Date:** May 1, 2006

**Team Leader(s):** Cedric Karper

### Team Members in Attendance:

Walt Peechatka, Penn Ag Industries	Bill Angstadt, Consultant
Scott Vandemark, PECWest	Jana Malot, USDA – NRCS
Emily Wade, Wenger Feeds	Kelly Ireland, USDA – NRCS
Bob Korancai, EPA	Karl Brown, State Conservation Commission
Andrew Seligman, EPA	Patricia Gleason, EPA
Brenda Shambaugh, PACD	Andrea Sharretts, PFB
John Bell, PFB	Jenny Guling, World Resources Institute
Marel Raub, Chesapeake Bay Commission	Mindy Selman, World Resources Institute
Michael Hubler, Dauphin CD	Eric Rosenbaum, Consultant

### DEP:

Cedric Karper  
Mark Dubin  
Duke Adams

Steve Taglang  
Deputy Secretary Cathy Myers

John Hines

### Issue (s) Addressed:

- Criteria that should apply to any trading options that are established
- Threshold Options

### Status Report and Recommendations:

- The Work Group met for the fourth time on May 1, 2006.
- Through the discussion of the options for achieving threshold and the explanation of the recently funded Growing Greener grants and ACRE initiative, the group began the development of a list of criteria that should apply to any acceptable trading options. The list is a work in progress and needs further discussion, additions and possible revisions.
  - Criteria that should apply to any trading option:
    - Must improve water quality
    - Practices must go beyond baseline compliance

- Trading shall not encourage retirement of farms
- Trades should not create water quality hotspots
- Trades should not contribute to local TMDL impairments
- Trades cannot exceed Maximum Allowable Credits based on Tributary Strategy BMPs

The list will be continued and discussed further at the next meeting of the Ag Workgroup.

- The group further reviewed and discussed the options that should be available to a farm operation to reach threshold. The group was presented with three examples of Dauphin County Farms that could be eligible to trade. After review, the group agreed that the 20% reduction in nutrients, from baseline nutrient management compliance, seemed feasible and acceptable. Additionally, the farmer should also have the option of using the original concept of a 35' buffer as the requirement for threshold when applied above baseline compliance (e.g. not applicable to CAOs, CAFOs, or any operation where a buffer is required for baseline compliance). Therefore, the threshold requirement beyond baseline compliance for a non-CAO, non-CAFO farm could be achieved by either a 20% reduction in nutrients OR the establishment of a 35' buffer. Consideration of the change in harvested crop nutrient content will also be added to the example process.
- There was also general acceptance of farmers being able to trade at a 2:1 discount ratio once threshold has been reached. The need to include watershed delivery or edge of stream loading ratios was also discussed. The group has asked that the examples reviewed at this meeting be enhanced to include these ratio factors and return to the discussion at the next meeting.
- The examples will also be enhanced to incorporate other BMP efficiencies to examine how the nutrient percentage reductions beyond threshold could be applied for a farmer to improve their trading ratio. The goal of the group would be to get farmers trading at a 1:1 ratio. However, what percentage of additional reduction that should be beyond threshold is to be determined. The group asked for examples demonstrating the impacts of these percentages.
- The group will be meeting again on May 19.