



## AGRICULTURE COST SHARE PROGRAM

### Technical Review Committee

October 28, 2026 - 1:30 PM

[Microsoft Teams Meeting Link](#)



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### AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Review and Approval of August and September Meeting Minutes (Action Item)
3. ACSP Updates
4. Thermal Dehydrators for Mortality Management– Presented by Randy Blackwood (NRCS)
5. Member Items

### FY2027 TRC Meeting Schedule

Wednesdays, 1:30 – 3:30 PM

December 16, 2026

February 24, 2027

April 28, 2027

June 23, 2027

\*May meeting scheduled as needed

# Technical Review Committee Meeting

October 28, 2026



# Agenda

1. Welcome
  - ❖ New member – Jase Owens, Division of Marine Fisheries
2. Review and Approval of August and September Meeting Minutes (Action Item)
3. ACSP Updates
4. Thermal Dehydrators for Mortality Management– Presented by Randy Blackwood (NRCS)
5. Member Items and Meeting Schedule



# TRC Membership

|                    |                                                                      |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| John Beck, Chair   | Division of Soil and Water Conservation                              |
| Erin Rivers        | Cooperative Extension Service/ NC State University                   |
| Abubakarr Mansaray | School of Agriculture, NC A & T State University                     |
| Alex Jones         | N. C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services                |
| Starla Harwood     | Farm Service Agency                                                  |
| Anne Coan          | N. C. Farm Bureau Federation                                         |
| Dewitt Hardee      | N. C. State Grange                                                   |
| Brandon King       | State Resource Conservationist, NRCS                                 |
| Jim Kjelgaard      | State Conservation Engineer, NRCS                                    |
| Rachel Smith       | Division of Soil and Water Conservation                              |
| Rick McSwain       | Division of Soil and Water Conservation                              |
| Jase Owens         | Division of Marine Fisheries                                         |
| Benjy Strobe       | Wildlife Resources Commission                                        |
| Pete Anderson      | Pamlico Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor              |
| Elliot Swain       | Brunswick Soil and Water Conservation District Employee (DEA East)   |
| Elton Wilson       | Johnston Soil and Water Conservation District Employee (DEA Central) |
| Jamie Bridges      | Cleveland Soil and Water Conservation District Employee (DEA West)   |



# Meeting Minute Approval

- Review and approve the August 26, 2026 TRC meeting minutes

*and*

- Review and approve the September 3, 2026 TRC meeting minutes



# ACSP Updates

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## Commission Meeting Update



# Historical Program Data

- Contract data prior to 2012 has been converted to Excel
  - Enable searching and analyzing program contract data
  - Includes contract number, cooperator and BMP data only.
  - Additional contract data will be exported and added



# Cover Crop Workgroup

- ❖ Initiating a workgroup to review and update the Cover Crop BMP
  - District Staff and Supervisors were invited to volunteer
    - Currently finalizing the membership
- Shelby Kaplan, Cost Share Specialist, will lead the group
- Josh Vetter, Environmental Services Section Chief, will assist



# Cover Crop Workgroup Objectives

- Clarify the Original Intent and Purpose of the Cover Crop BMP
- Review Planting Specifications and Establishment Flexibility
- Explore a Forage Grazing Option
- Improve Consistency in Documentation and Verification
- Review Check-Out Requirements and Termination Timing
- Evaluate Cost-Share Rates and Payment Tiers
- Review Alignment with Current NRCS Standards



# Commission Meeting Update

- The Commission approved the new BIOCHAR – SOIL CARBON AMENDMENT BMP and associated cost list items for ACSP
  - ✓ Added to the Detailed Implementation Plan
  - ✓ BMP website created
  - ✓ ACSP cost list updated



# Thermal Dehydrators for Mortality Management

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Randy Blackwood  
NRCS



# Thermal Dehydrators

- The Waste Management Workgroup investigated thermal dehydrators as an emerging technology in January 2025.
- Determined to hold off due to lack of guidance from the state veterinarian on land application (now existing) and unknowns with adoption and cost.
- There has been increased interest and NRCS is working on some projects.
- Randy Blackwood presented to district staff at CET and will share his presentation here for TRC discussion.



# Thermal Dehydrators

# Talking Points

Cost

Applicability

Infrastructure Requirements

Other Considerations

Questions

# The Elephant in the Room - Cost

2026 prices from one manufacture:

1000# - 45K

2000# - 50K

3000# - 55K

Does not include cost of structure if needed

# Application

Serves as the primary, stand alone mortality management system for a poultry operation.

May require a cost-shared structure (313 for instance).



# Infrastructure

Unlike an incinerator the unit must be housed in a building out of the weather

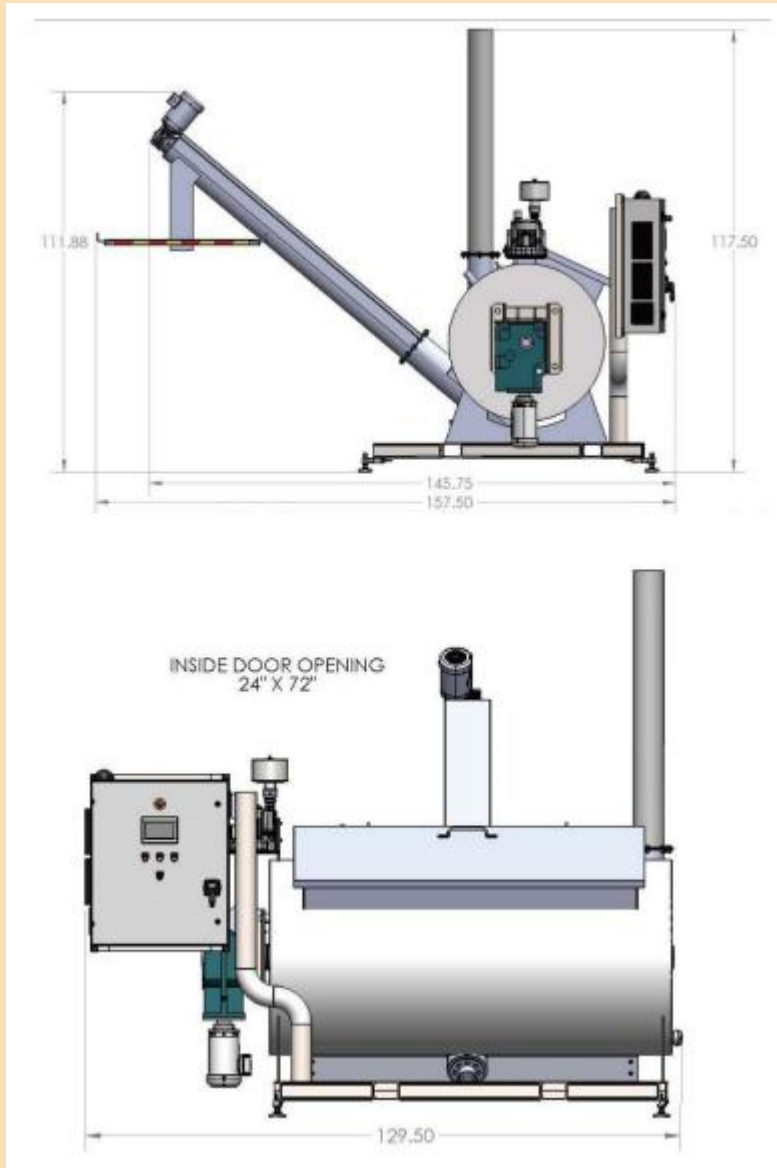
Could be incorporated into an existing/planned drystack.

Requires a 100-200-amp service so location to power should be considered

# General Building Guidelines

The location of the TDU shall be in accordance with the NRCS 316 standards and specifications within the state of location and/or, the integrator's location requirements, whichever is greater. **Protect the TDU from precipitation and direct sun if possible.**

Building design, construction, power source, and installation shall be in accordance with manufacturer's minimum recommendations of 16'X16' size concrete pad and minimum building size shall be 20'x16' x12' high for TDU 2A23B and the TDU 1A23B, Exhaust stack 10'ht. With open sided building the exhaust does not need to be vented through roof.





# Value Added Product

- Can be used for livestock feed, or soil amendments

| Analysis                                                                                                  | Level Found |            | Reporting |       |                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|-----------|-------|-------------------|
|                                                                                                           | As Received | Dry Weight | Units     | Limit | Method            |
| Sample ID: 7-21-24 Chris Alabama 783 lbs EW 37.8%      Lab Number: 14359569      Date Sampled: 2024-07-22 |             |            |           |       |                   |
| Moisture                                                                                                  | 11.45       | //////     | %         | 0.10  | AOAC 930.15       |
| Dry matter                                                                                                | 88.55       | //////     | %         | 0.010 | Calculation       |
| Protein (crude)                                                                                           | 62.7        | 70.8       | %         | 0.20  | AOAC 990.03       |
| Fat (crude)                                                                                               | 23.8        | 26.9       | %         | 0.10  | AOAC 2003.05      |
| Fiber (crude)                                                                                             | 1.6         | 1.8        | %         | 0.2   | AOCS Ba 6a-05     |
| Ash                                                                                                       | 2.88        | 3.25       | %         | 0.10  | AOAC 942.05       |
| Total digestible nutrients                                                                                | 93.0        | 105        | %         | 0.1   | Calculation       |
| Net energy (lactation)                                                                                    | 0.98        | 1.11       | Mcal/lbs  | 0.01  | Calculation       |
| Net energy (maint.)                                                                                       | 1.05        | 1.19       | Mcal/lbs  | 0.01  | Calculation       |
| Net energy (gain)                                                                                         | 0.68        | 0.77       | Mcal/lbs  | 0.01  | Calculation       |
| Digestible energy                                                                                         | 1.86        | 2.10       | Mcal/lbs  | 0.01  | Calculation       |
| Metabolizable energy                                                                                      | 1.51        | 1.71       | Mcal/lbs  | 0.01  | Calculation       |
| Sulfur (total)                                                                                            | 0.69        | 0.78       | %         | 0.01  | AOAC 985.01 (mod) |
| Phosphorus (total)                                                                                        | 0.54        | 0.61       | %         | 0.01  | AOAC 985.01 (mod) |
| Potassium (total)                                                                                         | 0.75        | 0.85       | %         | 0.01  | AOAC 985.01 (mod) |
| Magnesium (total)                                                                                         | 0.06        | 0.07       | %         | 0.01  | AOAC 985.01 (mod) |
| Calcium (total)                                                                                           | 0.23        | 0.26       | %         | 0.01  | AOAC 985.01 (mod) |
| Sodium (total)                                                                                            | 0.27        | 0.30       | %         | 0.01  | AOAC 985.01 (mod) |
| Iron (total)                                                                                              | 194         | 219        | ppm       | 5.0   | AOAC 985.01 (mod) |



# Other Considerations

Nutritive value of dehydrated material

Fuel source cost i.e. comparing electricity, to diesel to static bin composting

Biohazard reduction – heats the material to approximately 200 degrees for complete pathogen control

Questions?

# Thank You

Randy Blackwood  
randy.blackwood@usda.gov  
336-308-1648

Member Items

Open discussion



# TRC Meeting Schedule

Next Meeting:

- **December 16, 2026**

Future Meetings:

- February 24, 2027
- April 28, 2027
- June 23, 2027

\*May meeting scheduled as needed

- 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month
- 1:30 – 3:30 PM





## AGRICULTURE COST SHARE PROGRAM Technical Review Committee



### September 3, 2026 – Meeting Minutes

#### Attendees

**TRC Members:** John Beck (Chair), Erin Rivers, Abubakarr Mansaray, Alex Jones, Anne Coan, Dewitt Hardee, Brandon King, Rick McSwain, Benjy Strobe, Elliot Swain, Elton Wilson, Jamie Bridges, Pete Anderson, Levi Preston (alternate)

**Guests:** Tim Baumgartner, Josh Vetter, Dalton Buchanan, Julie Henshaw, Keith Larick, Lisa Fine, Shelby Kaplan, Sam Allbee, Lorien Deaton, Barbara Bleiweiss, Nicole Warren, Allie Dinwiddie, Aaron Franks, Amy Cook, Porche Spence, Gail Hughes, Frankie Singleton, Darren Layton, Michael Shepherd, Jessica Wilson, John Morrow, Joe Trimnal, Paige Henderson, Caleb Lippard, Brandi Talton, Annette Adams, Shannon Biddy, Daniel McClellan, Christopher Bordeaux, Mikey Woodie, Cole Smith, Steven Ward, Thomas Muphrey, Zachary Hatcher, Lindsay Edwards, Angie Quinn, Jim Burns, Charles Bass III, Bill Thomas, Starr Silvis, Demico Guy, Jane Humphrey, Leanna Staton, James Warner, Payton Roberts, and staff from Wilkes, Lincoln, Davie and Alleghany districts

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#### Agenda Summary

- Welcome & Introductions
  - Biochar BMP Update (Action Item)
  - Biochar Cost List Items (Action Item)
  - Member Items & Closing Discussion
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#### Meeting Overview

- Biochar BMP Policy Revisions Approved  
TRC adopted final revisions clarifying water-quality purpose, nutrient-management triggers, prohibited feedstocks, testing requirements, and field-specific 590 guidance; unanimous approval.

- **Biochar Cost List Adopted**  
Committee approved the volumetric (cubic-yard-based) cost structure, including the \$160/CY rate and proportional blend and small-area rates; unanimous approval.
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## **Meeting Proceedings**

### **1) Welcome and Introductions**

Chair John Beck called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM and confirmed a quorum. He acknowledged the large attendance and emphasized the importance of finalizing the Biochar BMP revisions and cost list recommendations.

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### **2) Review and Approval of August Meeting Minutes**

John Beck held the August meeting minutes for review in October.

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### **3) Biochar BMP Policy Update**

Josh Vetter summarized revisions made since the previous meeting, including:

- Removing direct reference to NRCS CPS 336 for the Soil Carbon Amendment Plan; replacing with a Division-specific plan.
- Adding requirements that all biochar samples be tested by NCDA&CS Waste and Compost Analysis Lab prior to application.
- Clarifying when a nutrient management plan meeting NRCS CPS 590 is required. The new criteria require a 590 plan only for fields receiving biochar, and only when:
  1. The amendment is derived wholly or partly from animal manure feedstock;
  2. Plant-available nutrients in the amendment exceed one-year crop uptake;
  3. Pre-application soil test shows a phosphorus index  $\geq 400$ .
- Removal of language that previously could imply whole-farm nutrient management planning.
- Clarification that all biochar—certified or not—must meet Table 3 testing requirements, and that prohibited feedstocks cannot be used, even if found in sealed or certified materials.

## Discussion Points

- Field-specific 590 requirement: Multiple members (Coan, Hardee) stressed ensuring policy language clearly limits 590 plans to the specific field where biochar is applied. Revisions were accepted to clarify this.
- Water quality justification: Members requested strengthening language in the definition section so that soil health benefits are explicitly tied to water quality improvements, consistent with statute.
- Purpose & scope: Questions were raised regarding planning for soil health under ACSP; Vetter and Beck clarified that improvements to soil health directly relate to water quality via infiltration, erosion reduction, nutrient retention, and other mechanisms. Conservation planners may plan activities for soil health, but any contracting of this BMP must demonstrate a water quality benefit.
- Prohibited feedstocks & certification: The discontinuation of the IBI seal (April 2024) means Table 3 testing is now effectively the only active pathway for eligibility. Any material containing prohibited feedstocks is ineligible, regardless of certification.
- Repeat applications: Permitted only when supported by updated testing and documentation showing a need for additional resource-concern-focused application.
- Water-quality data and NC soils: USDA-ARS has conducted relevant research on NC coastal plain and Helene-impacted soils. Additional statewide soil response data is expected through the AMP grant.

## Motion

Motion to approve the revised Biochar BMP as presented (with clarified language on water quality, field-specific 590 requirements, and reordered utilization bullets):

- Motion: Dewitt Hardee
- Second: Benjy Strobe
- Vote: Unanimous, motion passed.

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## 4) Biochar Cost List Recommendations

Cost List Presentation – Dalton Buchanan

Buchanan presented detailed supplier data (9 respondents), ARS-supported density conversions, and rationale for moving from per-acre to cubic yard pricing. Key findings:

- Biochar moisture variability makes ton-based pricing unreliable.
- Market is bimodal:

- Lower band: ~\$66–\$83 per CY
  - Upper band (including NC producers): ~\$200–\$250 per CY
- Weighted average (mean) supports a recommended unit rate of \$160 per CY, with 75% cost share = \$120 per CY.
- Small-area (<10,000 sq ft) rates reflect bagged product pricing, which is significantly higher.
- The market is still developing; future cost list revisions are expected as invoices accumulate.

#### Discussion

- Timeline for reconsidering rates: TRC members recommended revisiting pricing after one year of invoices to avoid unintended price-floor effects.
- Grant vs. ACSP timeline alignment: Clarification provided that AMP grants require faster implementation than ACSP contracts; this must be communicated to districts.
- Freight assumptions: Costs presented reflect delivered-to-site pricing statewide.
- Modeling & nutrient planning tools: RUSLE2 already supports biochar as an operation. NLEW/PLAT updates are forthcoming.

#### Motion

Motion to adopt the proposed FY27 Biochar Soil Carbon Amendment cost list additions at the rates presented:

- Motion: Anne Coan
- Second: Rick McSwain
- Vote: Unanimous, motion passed.

These cost items will be incorporated into the FY27 ACSP Cost List for Commission approval.

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#### 5) Member Items

No additional items were raised.

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#### Meeting Adjourned

- The meeting concluded at 2:20 PM.



## AGRICULTURE COST SHARE PROGRAM

### Technical Review Committee



## August 26, 2026 – Meeting Minutes

### Attendees

**TRC Members:** John Beck (Chair), Erin Rivers, Abubakarr Mansaray, Alex Jones, Dewitt Hardee, Rachel Smith, Anne Coan, Elliot Swain, Jamie Bridges, Elton Wilson, Starla Harwood, Pete Anderson, Rick McSwain, James Rodriguez (alternate)

**Guests:** Dalton Buchanan, Tim Baumgartner, Thomas Ducey, Joshua Padilla, Bill Yarborough, Michael Shepherd, Steven Ward, Lorien Deaton, Allie Dinwiddie, Darren Layton, Sam Allbee, Keith Larick, Jacob Peele, Bryan Evans, Roger Toledo, Dustin Brewer, Lisa Fine, Shelby Kaplan, Josh Vetter, Barbara Bleiweis, Julie Henshaw, Lindsay Edwards, Porche Spence, Matthew Berens, Sam Edwards, Kristina Fischer, Jane Humphrey, Nicole Warren, Angie Quinn

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### Agenda Summary

- Welcome & Introductions
  - Review & Approval of June Meeting Minutes (Action Item)
  - ACSP Program Updates
  - Biochar BMP Presentation (Action Item)
  - Member Items & Closing Discussion
- 

### Meeting Overview

- **June Meeting Minutes Approved**  
Motion by Dewitt Hardee, seconded by Abubakarr Mansaray; unanimous approval.
- **ACSP Program Updates Received**  
No committee votes required; informational briefing only.
- **Biochar BMP Consideration Deferred**  
TRC determined additional revisions were required regarding nutrient management

plan thresholds, cost structure (volume-based instead of per-acre), and template updates.

An **interim meeting will be held in early September** to review modifications prior to final consideration.

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## **Meeting Proceedings**

### **1) Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 1:31 PM by Chair John Beck. He noted the large number of attendees, and facilitated full introductions for members, guests and presenters.

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### **2) Review and Approval of June Meeting Minutes**

John Beck reviewed the June minutes; one correction had been made regarding a member's name.

- Motion to approve: Dewitt Hardee
  - Second: Abubakarr Mansaray
  - Vote: All TRC voting members indicated "Yay"; motion passed.
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### **3) ACSP Updates**

John Beck summarized significant policy and funding updates from the latest Commission meeting.

#### **Grass Waterway BMP**

- Policy updates were approved to allow use of subsurface drains under specific conditions.
- Technical competency requirements are to be considered in September.

#### **Program Cost List & Maintenance Period Adjustments**

- Approved changes included tiered 5-year and 10-year options for:
  - Critical Area Planting, Cropland Conversion, Field Borders, Filter Strips

#### **Funding Summary**

- District requests: ~\$19M total; ~\$2.4M for impaired/impacted streams.

- Available funds: ~\$7.4M including non-recurring appropriation and rollover funds.
- \$300K deferred to September for possible Biochar Grant supplementation.
- \$500K earmarked for impaired/impacted initiative.
- Upper French Broad livestock exclusion funds fully allocated (remaining \$670,323).

## Implementation Communications

- Funding allocations were released on August 3.
  - Webinar was held on August 6 covering ACSP, AGRAP, CCAP.
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## 4) Biochar BMP

Dalton Buchanan presented the proposed **Biochar Soil Carbon Amendment BMP**, explaining its water equality benefits and alignment with NRCS CPS 336.

### Key Benefits

- Increased soil water availability (up to 45% in coarse soils)
- Reduced nutrient leaching
- Improved infiltration and aggregate stability
- Liming effect in acidic soils

### Risks & Safeguards

- Over-liming, phosphorus/salt loading, contaminant concerns addressed via soil tests and material testing.
- Feedstocks such as treated wood and municipal biosolids are prohibited.

### Policy Review – Josh Vetter

Reviewed draft BMP policy including:

- Required soil carbon amendment plan
- Biochar testing requirements
- Soil test requirements (pre & one-year post-application)

### Discussion Points

Member requested revisions:

- Clarify CPS 590 requirement.
- Switch cost structure to cubic yard or tonnage basis.
- Modify NC-specific soil carbon amendment plan template.

- Clarify compatibility with existing nutrient management plans.

#### Outcome

TRC postponed formal action pending revisions.

An interim meeting will be held in early September to review updates.

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#### **5) Member Items**

No additional items were raised.

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#### **Meeting Adjourned**

- The meeting concluded at 3:29 PM.