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Commissioner

**North Carolina Department of Agriculture
and Consumer Services**
Division of Soil and Water Conservation

David Williams
Director

THE NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL WATER RESOURCES ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
AgWRAP Review Committee: Monday, February 9, 2026: 1:00 pm

Meeting began at 1:01pm.

Attendees: Sarah Avery, Rusty Collins, Jacob Peele, Dustin Brewer, Bill Moss, Jim Kjeelgaard, Bryan Evans, Darren Layton, Barry Greer, Kayla McCoy, Chris Love, Robert Moore, Rachel Smith, Shelby Kaplan, John Beck, Julie Henshaw, Sam Allbee, and Lorien Deaton

Meeting adjourned at 2:28pm

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome & Introductions

II. New ARC Members and Alternates

Since October's meeting, new required alternate committee members have been appointed to the committee, one representing soil and water districts in each region of the state have been added to the committee membership. Spencer Stock is the alternate representative for the western region. He's the Soil and water Technician with Burke soil and water district. Dustin Brewer is the Natural Resources Coordinator for Durham soil and water district and will be the alternate committee member in districts in the central region. And Henry Faison Henry Faison is the new alternate member for the eastern region. Henry is the Soil Conservationist for Sampson soil and water conservation district. Additional alternates include Ryan Knox for the Produce Safety Team, and Bryan Evans will represent the soil and water supervisors until one has been appointed to the committee.

III. AgWRAP FY26 Regional Application Projects Overview

There were a total of 12 qualifying applications for regional projects this year. 2 applicants in the east, 5 in the central region, and 5 in the west. 1 new pond in Lenoir, an Ag Water Storage system and a Pond Repair/retrofit in Chatham County, an irrigation conversion in Rockingham, a new pond in Cumberland, and 2 New ponds in Lincoln. These 7 projects will total \$288,392.

Sarah Avery with the Produce Safety Task Force asked questions regarding 3 of the applications and the cooperator's knowledge of the use of surface water on produce. Questions regarding the produce safety rule were answered in the regional applications, but that data was not readily available for today's presentation. The main goal is to make sure applicants understand how the Produce Safety Rule may impact them prior to BMP construction, and to make sure that after construction, they are prepared to complete an ag water assessment to address surface water concerns and what options are available for them as producers.

To ensure applicants are aware of the Produce Safety Rule, Lorien will reach out to the impacted districts to make sure the discussion regarding the PSR has been had with the cooperator.

All voting committee members in attendance voted Yes to send all 7 of the regional applications forward to the SWCC for final approval at the march Commission meeting.

IV. AgWRAP AGI Form Discussion

The cost share team receives questions regarding eligibility and when it applies to the cooperator, landowner, operation, or the land. AgWRAP's AGI Statute and form raise questions often and I presented these to the committee to get opinions on how others interpret this form.

Main question is who is required to meet the income cap for AgWRAP eligibility? Just the applicant? Or in situations where the land is being leased and infrastructure like an ag well is being installed, should both the applicant AND landowner be required to meet the income cap?

Feedback was mixed. Julie noted that contract language says parties agree to be held jointly and severally liable for any repayments owed to the state of NC under this contract. If the BMP impacts the land, both the applicant and the landowner should fill this form out and are required to meet the income caps.

Jim Kjeelgaard mentioned that in California with NRCS, huge tracts of land are leased out to farmers and the landowners have nothing to do with the farming operation. The income cap should only apply to the applicant.

Bryan Evans agreed, stating that whoever receives payment should fill out this form and meet this requirement.

This was not an action item, just a discussion to see how the statute is interpreted and should the subsequent form be edited to include parties other than the applicant.

V. Ag Water Storage BMP Payment Increase Request for FY27

Presented by Lorien Deaton on behalf of Wilkes District Staff. Wilkes offered data on their standard Ag Water Storage/Collection System design, stating that the current \$15,000 cap often doesn't cover the cost of the tank and shipping, much less the additional pump, concrete, and plumbing needed to complete the system. They have two requests:

1. They would like the ARC to approve raising the BMP cap to \$30,000 (75%) and \$36,000 (90%), and
2. They would like the BMP cap to ONLY apply to the cost of the tank and the shipping fees. Additional components to complete the system already have their own caps and could be paid based on those.

Discussion included questions regarding the range of water storage systems that could be installed under this BMP, not just the 10,000 gallon tank scenario provided. Jim Kjeelgaard said that since this is an entire system, components aren't optional and shouldn't be broken out into separate payment items.

There was agreement that the payment rate for this BMP (and the livestock water storage BMP) needs to be increased, but there was no discussion on how high the cap should be. Lorien will send prior contract data to the engineering team to use towards engineering estimates to help guide future discussion. This item will be on the May meeting agenda for more discussion.

VI. Next Meeting Date:

Given time constraints and the AGI and Wilkes payment request items needing more discussion, it was decided that a shorter ARC meeting would be scheduled for 1pm on May 18th to address these items further. The regular meeting will be held on July 13th at 1pm for final approval for fiscal year items.

VII. Open Discussion & Conclusion

[FY2025 Cost Share Program Annual Report](#) is posted.

Discussion item: Lorien showed a chart of suggested Date Changes for AgWRAP's Regional Application Process for FY27. This will remain on the agenda for May's meeting and allow district representatives to see if there are any issues with the new timeline given their spring schedules.

Lorien mentioned that the conservation community lost Marvin Cavanaugh last month. Anyone interested in donating to selected nonprofits can find out more information [here](#).

No additional discussion was had. Meeting adjourned at 2:28pm.