

MINUTES
State Technical Guide Committee Meeting
April 14, 2004
Delaware, Ohio

All committee members were in attendance: D. Braden, A. Brate, M. Core, P. DeArman, M. DeBrock, R. Gehring, J. Gerken, D. Harris, M. Monnin, M. Patterson, J. Reedstrom, D. Samples, M. Smith, N. Widman.

The meeting was chaired by Dot Harris. She opened the meeting with introductions and a review of the functions of the committee.

The committee moved into a discussion regarding practice standards. This included the timeframe for reviewing and updating standards. It was noted that there are 93 conservation practice standards used in Ohio. It was noted also that all practice standards were reviewed and updated in 2002 in order to put them into an electronic format for eFOTG. Sixty one practice standards were reviewed last year by technical specialists.

It was mentioned that any change made in a practice pertinent HEL and Swampbuster has to be published in Federal Register. This needs to be kept in mind as practice standards are reviewed for changes.

It was suggested that an archive section in the eFOTG be created to maintain "old" standards (prior to latest revision) for a period of 10 years. This issue will be discussed at future meetings.

Mike Patterson, Mary Ann Core, and Norm Widman will meet to review job sheets and Practice narratives during the first quarter of FY 2005.

QUESTION: If a practice standard is changed following a program participant's signature on a contract, does the revised standard take effect or does the standard in effect at the time the contract was signed by the participant remain in effect throughout the life of the contract?

RECOMMENDATION: Committee should review contracting procedures related to this issue of revised standards.

DECISION: Mike Monnin agreed to review procedures and report back to committee at next meeting.

The next item of discussion focused on the role of a sponsor in reviewing practice standards and making appropriate changes. A sponsor is a technical specialist who has assigned responsibilities to review practice standards appropriate to their discipline.

The review process is as follows:

- sponsor will prepare a DRAFT of the new or revised standard.
- sponsor will distribute to appropriate technical specialists for review

- sponsor will send DRAFT to Tech Guide Comm. for a 30 day review.
- sponsor will update Committee at each quarterly meeting regarding what is being revised.
- DRAFT will be placed on Ohio NRCS website for 30 days for review/comment
- final copy will be reviewed with State Technical Committee

RECOMMENDATION: Process for DRAFT changes to standards take no more than 2 (two) months.

RECOMMENDATION: Practice Standards posted on internet should have means of identifying them as a DRAFT. There was a suggestion that this can be done by using a watermark.

There was a brief discussion of status of several “new” practice standards. It was noted that some consideration needs to be given for the development of the following standards: Anaerobic System, Waste Treatment Cover, Atmospheric Resource Management (Air Quality).

Following this discussion, technical specialists (i.e. sponsors) discussed conservation practice standards that are currently undergoing change/revision:

Mike Monnin

- DRAFT of practice 702i-Ag. Chemical Storage Facility
- Standard 313 needs revision
- DRAFT of Drainage Water Management (554) is in final stages
- Need to develop NEW standard for Vegetative Treatment of Wastewater Area
This is a HIGH PRIORITY.

Art Brate

- DRAFT revision for grade stabilization in process.
- DRAFT of revision of diversion standard needs to be sent out for review
(Changes in this practice involve adding freeboard)
- Revision of Fence specification needs to be done. (Notching of brace posts)
- DRAFT revision for Watering Facility coming out. There is a question regarding the use of steel or concrete for spring tanks.

DECISION: Art will send DRAFT to Committee members for comment and the DRAFT will be posted on the Ohio NRCS website for 30 days for review according to Ohio policy. It will be posted under “What Is New” Section on the Home Page.

Rich Gehring

- Revisions for NASIS and SSURGO are being made in Section II of the Technical Guide

Norm Widman

Recommended that revisions in practice standards, or other changes to the eFOTG, be reviewed by the appropriate person(s) at the field level before going forward with the changes. He also suggested that there needs to be some kind of approval mechanism for putting something in the eFOTG. For example, Soils changes should undergo a review process with State Technical Guide Committee, but do not need to undergo the review of others.

DECISION: It was determined that any changes made in soils data be reviewed with the Committee. Approval will be noted in the minutes of the Committee meeting.

SUGGESTION: Need to send something to field offices to identify official soils list to be used and where it can be found.

DECISION: Jon Gerken and Rich Gehring will send clarification to the field on what to use as the official soils list.

Need to establish a time when RUSLE II is official. It has been distributed to field offices for installation. May 1, 2004 is the official date according to national requirements.

Conservation System Guidesheets have come out. That requires a change in Section III of the eFOTG. What is now in Section III can be dropped.

Notice will be going to the field that Guidesheets can be used. By setting up a hyperlink to CSGs in Section III, the "old guidesheets" can be eliminated.

Stripcropping standard needs to be reviewed. Revised residue management standards (National) will be out in July, 2004 and they will drive changes in Ohio standards.

Seeding rates (especially for warm season grasses) need to be looked at. Evaluations of these rates need to be done in the field.

There is a new national standard for Feed Management. Should this standard be used in Ohio?

RECOMMENDATION: Do not use Feed Management standard in Ohio.

Mark DeBrock

Reviewed status of biology practice standards. His goal is to revise higher priorities this fiscal year. He provided a handout to the committee that depicted a prioritization of biology standards.

Suggested that information needs to go to the field on environmental review process in Section II.

Following reports from technical sponsors, there was a general discussion regarding a tracking system for revisions. It was noted that all practice standards were reviewed in 2002 prior to placing them on eFOTG. There needs to be a more formal method of notifying field of changes. Currently, notification is via an email message.

DECISION: Sponsors will track the status of practices for which they are responsible. Refer to DeBrock's handout. Each sponsor will develop similar data.

DECISION: Committee will review reference list in Section I at next meeting to determine relevant needs, etc.

DECISION: Place an electronic Tech Guide Notice on the Ohio Directives List for all changes and revisions.

RECOMMENDATION: When a DRAFT is distributed for review, develop a color coded system to show what changes are being made. This is especially important when the DRAFT being reviewed is being reviewed for the third or fourth time. Without using some kind of system to denote changes, it is difficult to determine what changes have already been made.

There was a brief discussion of the role of the State Technical Committee in reviewing changes and revisions to the eFOTG.

Next Meeting Date and Location:

July 30, 2004 at Ohio Cattlemen's Association

October 22, 2004 at Ohio Cattlemen's Association

January 28, 2005 at Ohio Cattlemen's Association

Minutes submitted by Paul DeArman