

Chesapeake Bay Program’s
Agriculture Workgroup (AgWG)
Log of Actions and Decisions: 2022 – 2025

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2025

[January 16, 2025 \(meeting materials\)](#)

Decision: The AgWG approved the [minutes](#) from the December AgWG meeting.

Action: AgWG members who have not yet designated an “alternate” representative should email Caroline (kleis.caroline@epa.gov) with the name and contact information of their alternate.

Decision: The AgWG voted to approve the list of nominees for at-large members for the 2025-2026 term. At-Large Members will be confirmed at the February meeting.

Action: Caroline and Eric followed up offline to get the approval of the 2025-2026 AgWG nominees from signatory and mid-term at-large members not present on the call.

Action: A live poll was opened during the call to determine interest in a Bay 101/AgWG informational session. Given member interest, Caroline and Eric will work to create an introductory presentation designed for AgWG members.

Action: Email Ashley Hullinger (ahullinger@pa.gov) and Tom Howard (toward@resolvehydro.com) with any additional feedback on the model acceptance criteria and recent work on the PA DEP Remote Sensing BMP Verification Pilot Project.

Action: Please fill out this [Google Poll](#) indicating your availability for virtual or in person attendance at the AgWG’s February in-person meeting.

2024

[December 19, 2024 \(meeting materials\)](#)

Decision: The AgWG approved the [minutes](#) from the November AgWG meeting.

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Action: Please continue filling out the *Beyond 2025: Actions of Interest for the AgWG* [Mentimeter survey](#). Email Eric Hughes (hughes.eric@epa.gov) and Caroline Kleis (kleis.caroline@epa.gov) with additional feedback on AgWG priorities and potential office hours.

Action: Caroline Kleis and Eric Hughes will follow-up with information about the February in-person meeting as soon as it is available. Please contact Eric (hughes.eric@epa.gov) with specific scheduling concerns.

November 21, 2024 (meeting materials)

Decision: The AgWG approved the minutes from the October AgWG meeting.

Decision: The AgWG approved the updated governance document language.

Action: Email Ashley Hullinger (ahullinger@pa.gov), Scott Heidel (scheidel@pa.gov), and Tom Howard (thoward@resolvehydro.com) with any additional feedback on the selected sampling approach and recent progress on the PA DEP Remote Sensing BMP Verification Pilot Project.

Action: Please complete the following Google Form answering the question: What topics covered in the CESR presentation and discussion would you like to see become part of future AgWG meeting agendas? Any additional feedback on the proposed plan for future AgWG meetings, email Eric Hughes (hughes.eric@epa.gov) and Caroline Kleis (kleis.caroline@epa.gov)

October 17, 2024 (meeting materials)

Decision: The AgWG approved the [minutes](#) from the September AgWG meeting.

Action: Continue to fill out the Menti survey questions, including those we did not get to during the meeting. Please send any additional feedback on the proposed plan for future AgWG meetings to Eric Hughes (hughes.eric@epa.gov) and Caroline Kleis (kleis.caroline@epa.gov).

Action: Please read through the call for nominations distributed via email and submit all nominations to Caroline Kleis (kleis.caroline@epa.gov) and Eric Hughes (hughes.eric@epa.gov).

September 19, 2024 (meeting materials)

Decision: The AgWG approved the [minutes](#) from the July AgWG meeting.

Action: Please reach out to Jimmy (jwebber@usgs.gov), Alex (asoroka@usgs.gov), and John (iclune@usgs.gov), with any additional feedback on their efforts on monitoring small ag watersheds.

Action: Email Ashley Hullinger (ahullinger@pa.gov), Scott Heidel (scheidel@pa.gov), and Tom Howard (thoward@resolvehydro.com) with any additional feedback, resources, lessons, or suggestions relevant to the PA DEP Remote Sensing BMP Verification Pilot Project.

Action: Please send any additional questions, concerns, or insights on the October meeting and/or future in-person meetings to AgWG leadership.

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August 2024: CANCELED

This meeting was canceled.

July 18, 2024 (meeting materials)

Decision: The AgWG approved the [minutes](#) from the June AgWG meeting.

Action: Contact Alisha (alisha.mulkey@maryland.gov), Caroline (kleis.caroline@epa.gov), or Eric (hughes.eric@epa.gov) with questions/comments about the Agricultural Advisory Committee bylaws.

Decision: The AgWG approved the list of potential agroforestry EPEG members by consensus.

Action: Email Ashley Hullinger (ahullinger@pa.gov), Caroline (kleis.caroline@epa.gov), or Eric (hughes.eric@epa.gov), with any additional comments or feedback on the Phase 1 Methodology Development Plan for the PA DEP Remote Sensing BMP Verification Pilot Project.

June 20, 2024 (meeting materials)

Decision: The AgWG approved the minutes from the May AgWG call.

Action: The Draft Methodology Development Plan for the PA DEP Remote Sensing BMP Verification Pilot Project will be released on July 8th; email Caroline (kleis.caroline@epa.gov) and Eric (hughes.eric@epa.gov) with comments and feedback on the Plan by July 22nd.

Decision: The AgWG approved the proposed charge of the Agroforestry Expert Panel Establishment Group (EPEG).

Action: Email Ruth (rcassilly@chesapeakebay.net) and Eric (hughes.eric@epa.gov) with names and contact information for nominees to serve on the Agroforestry Expert Panel Establishment Group (EPEG) by July 1st.

May 16, 2024 (meeting materials)

Decision: The AgWG approved of the minutes from the April AgWG call.

Action: Please review the draft agroforestry EPEG charge. The AgWG will be asked to approve the draft charge and formation of the EPEG at the June meeting. Please email Ruth Cassilly (rcassilly@chesapeakebay.net) and Katie Brownson (katherine.brownson@usda.gov) with the following: a) feedback on the draft EPEG charge; b) if you want to volunteer to serve on the EPEG; or c) if you have any information on state implementation of alley cropping and/or silvopasture.

Action: Eric Hughes will coordinate with AMT leadership to get the ag industry data topic on future AMT agendas. Members suggested the AMT put together a best practices document or guidelines for the future to clarify what we should be looking for if we want to work with industry partners beyond poultry.

Action: Send AgWG leadership ideas for agenda topics for the in-person meeting.

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April 18, 2024 ([meeting materials](#))

Decision: The AgWG approved the minutes from the March 2024 call.

Action: If your organization would like to contact NASS about the decision to not produce annual, county level estimates of cropland and livestock, contact Bryan Combs (bryan.combs@usda.gov) and USDA-NASS Chief of Staff, LaKeya Jones Smith (lakeya.jones@usda.gov).

Action: Eric Hughes will send a call for information on agroforestry and the names of agroforestry experts to AgWG members.

Action: Eric Hughes and Tom Butler will present on the potential of an Expert Panel Establishment Group (EPEG) at the May 16th AgWG Meeting. This will likely be brought up as a decision item after it has been discussed at the AgWG.

March 21, 2024 ([meeting materials](#))

Decision: The AgWG approved the [minutes](#) from the February 2024 call.

Action: For those interested in joining the Chesapeake Agroforestry Network, contact Ruth Cassilly and Katie Brownson (rcassilly@chesapeakebay.net; Katherine.brownson@usda.gov).

February 22, 2024 ([meeting materials](#))

Decision: The AgWG approved the [minutes](#) from the January 2024 AgWG call.

Decision (via poll): The AgWG confirmed a new vice chair (Caitlin Grady, GWU) and six at-large members (Jeff Hill, YCCD; Zach Evans, Mountaire Farms; Ken Staver, UMD; Jenna Schueler, CBF; Dave Graybill, Farm Bureau; Leon Tillman, NRCS).

Action: Please fill out the 2024 in-person meeting poll: <https://forms.gle/Eevq1zQfNXXSS7866>.

January 18, 2024 ([meeting materials](#))

Decision: The AgWG approved the [minutes](#) from the November 2023 AgWG call.

Action: Please complete the in-person meeting poll by **COB Friday, February 9th**: <https://forms.gle/Eevq1zQfNXXSS7866>.

Action: SIGNATORY + MID-TERM AT-LARGE ONLY: Please complete the following poll indicating approval or rejection of 2024-2025 at-large members and Vice Chair by **COB Friday, January 26th**: <https://forms.gle/WT25XGhhcvUdEb9C7>.

2023

December 2023: CANCELED

This meeting was canceled.

November 16, 2023 ([meeting materials](#))

Decision: The AgWG approved the [minutes](#) from the October 2023 AgWG call.

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Action: Call for nominations for at-large members and a vice chair position. Please send nominations via email (pickford.jacqueline@epa.gov; hughes.eric@epa.gov) by January 18th.

October 19, 2023 (meeting materials)

Decision: The AgWG approved the [minutes](#) from the September 2023 AgWG call.

Decision: The AgWG approved the changes to nutrient application eligibility in Phase 6 CAST. This change allows all crop nutrient applications to be both manure and fertilizer eligible if the crop/land use allows it. See [votes and rationale](#) for more information.

September 21, 2023 (meeting materials)

Decision: The AgWG approved the [August meeting minutes](#).

Action: VOTING MEMBERS (at-large + signatory) - please contact Chris Brosch (chris.brosch@delaware.gov), Tom Butler (butler.thomas01@epa.gov), and Eric Hughes (hughes.eric@epa.gov) prior to the October meeting with feedback on his presentation and where you stand in terms of approving the changes to the manure application eligibility file for Phase 6 CAST. We will be seeking a decision on this in October.

August 17, 2023 (meeting materials)

Decision: The AgWG approved the [July](#) meeting minutes.

Action: Please provide comments on Phase 7 agricultural land use categories to Katie Walker, Peter Claggett, and Mike Evans (pclagget@chesapeakebay.net; kwalker@chesapeakeconservancy.org; mevans@chesapeakeconservancy.org). They will return to the AgWG in September for additional feedback from the group.

Decision: The AgWG approved the methodology for PA's non-intrusive verification pilot project. This will be accepted for 2023 Progress and onward.

Decision: The AgWG approved the methodology for the Virginia Tillage Survey Verification project. This will be accepted for 2023 Progress and onward.

Action: Contact Chris Brosch (Chris.Brosch@delaware.gov) with any questions, comments, or concerns on DE's manure application timing and eligibility presentation. The AgWG will be asked to vote on this in September.

July 20, 2023 (meeting materials)

Decision: The AgWG approved the [minutes](#) from the June meeting.

Decision: The AgWG approved the recommendation from the BMP Verification Ad-Hoc Action Team and Forestry Workgroup to extend the credit duration of RI-9: Forest Nutrient Exclusion Area and RI-10: Forest Buffer on Watercourse from 10 years to 15 years. See post-meeting note from EPA and [summary of votes](#).

Decision: The AgWG approved the Fertilizer Expert Group (FEG) recommendations to address fertilizer concerns in response to PSC Decision #2. Concerns with the recommendations are noted in the [summary of votes](#).

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Action: Please reach out to Scott Heidel (scheidel@pa.gov) and Joshua Glace (jglace@larsondesigngroup.com) if you have any questions or concerns about the [Pennsylvania Verification Pilot Project](#) methodology. We will be asking for approval from the AgWG at the August meeting.

Action: Please reach out to Stuart Blankenship (stuart.blankenship@dcr.virginia.gov) and James Martin (james.e.martin@dcr.virginia.gov) if you have any questions or concerns about the [Virginia Verification Tillage Survey](#) methodology and [approach](#). We will be asking for approval from the AgWG at the August meeting.

June 15, 2023 ([meeting materials](#))

Decision: Approval of [minutes](#) from the April AgWG call.

Action: Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia reps will send Jeff Sweeney (sweeney.jeff@epa.gov) the visual indicators reporting information for RI9 and 10 practices. A formal vote on the extension of the credit durations for these practices will occur at the July AgWG meeting.

May 2023: CANCELED

This meeting was canceled.

April 20, 2023 ([meeting materials](#))

Decision: Approval of [minutes](#) from the March AgWG call.

Decision: Consensus was not reached on the extension of credit durations of *RI-9: Forest Buffer Exclusion Area on Watercourse* and *RI-10: Forest Buffer on Watercourse* practices from 10 to 15 years through the inclusion of these practices into the Forestry Workgroup's "Proposed Credit Duration for Forestry BMPs" proposal approved by the WQGIT based on the Feb 2023 FWG determination that these practices are functionally equivalent to Narrow Forest Buffers and Riparian Forest Buffers, respectively.

Action: More information about an AgWG in-person meeting is forthcoming.

March 16, 2023 ([meeting materials](#))

Decision: The AgWG approved the [minutes](#) from the February AgWG call.

Action: Reach out to Vanessa Van Note (vannote.vanessa@epa.gov) and Jackie Pickford (pickford.jacqueline@epa.gov) with any questions about the extension of credit durations for select Forestry RI Practices. The AgWG will be asked to vote on the extension of credit durations of RI-9 and RI-10 at the April meeting.

Action: Please fill out [this poll](#) to gauge group interest for an in-person meeting by COB Thursday, March 30th.

February 16, 2023 ([meeting materials](#))

Decision: Approval of [minutes](#) from the January AgWG call.

Decision: The AgWG confirmed the new at-large members for the 2023-2025 term.

Action: Please contact Tom Butler (butler.thomas01@epa.gov) by COB Friday, March 10th with suggestions for membership of an Expert Panel Exploratory Group (EPEG) to review crediting estimates for the Soil and Water Conservation Plan BMP and determine if updates need to be made through an Expert Panel.

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[January 19, 2023 \(meeting materials\)](#)

Decision: The AgWG approved the [minutes](#) from the November AgWG call.

Action: Jackie Pickford, Staffer, will distribute a poll for current voting members to rank at-large nominees for the 2023 - 2025 term to be completed **by COB Monday, Feb 6th**. Confirmation of the new at-large members will occur at the February AgWG meeting.

Action: If you want to be involved in the effort to gather Milk Urea Nitrogen (MUN) data to better quantify for the Dairy Precision Feeding implementation, please contact Mark Dubin (mdubin@chesapeakebay.net) and Frank Schneider (fschneider@pa.gov).

2022

December 2022: CANCELED

This meeting was canceled.

[November 17, 2022 \(meeting materials\)](#)

Decision: The AgWG approved the [minutes](#) from the October AgWG call.

Decision: The AgWG approved [the methods](#) used for the Pennsylvania Cover Crop Enhancement Pilot Project for annual verification.

Action: Tom Butler and Jeff Sweeney, EPA, will look into whether spring harvest of winter annual crops is being reported as a crop to NASS and influencing how double crop acres are calculated in the watershed model.

Action: Jackie Pickford, Staffer, will send out the call for nominations for AgWG at-large members. If [current at-large](#) members with expired terms would like to be renominated, please contact Jackie (pickford.jacqueline@epa.gov) and Tom (butler.thomas01@epa.gov).

Action: Frank Schneider, PA SCC, will follow up with AgWG members who are willing to assist PSU in acquiring a more robust data set of MUN numbers for the Dairy Precision Feeding BMP. Pennsylvania will return to the AgWG at a future meeting for additional discussion and a potential decision on an approved method for verifying the Dairy Precision Feeding BMP through MUN data.

[October 20, 2022 \(meeting materials\)](#)

Decision: The AgWG approved the [minutes](#) from the September AgWG call.

Decision: The AgWG approved the voting membership of the Phase 7 Ag Modeling Team (via email).

Action: Members are encouraged to reach out to Aaron Cook (amc521@psu.edu), Mark Dubin (mdubin@chesapeakebay.net) and Ted Tesler (thtesler@pa.gov) with questions and/or concerns about the PA Cover Crop Enhancement Pilot Project. Approval of the methods will be sought on the November AgWG call.

Action: Contact Kurt Stephenson (kurts@vt.edu) with any additional questions about his presentation and [recently published article](#).

Action: Members are encouraged to attend the [Water Quality GIT Oct 24 call](#) to hear Loretta Collin's presentation on the [2021 STAC Workshop report](#).

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September 15, 2022 (meeting materials)

Decision: The AgWG approved the meeting minutes from the August AgWG call.

Action: Reach out to Jake Reilly (jake.reilly@nfwf.org) with any questions about the NFWF Ag Networking Forum and/or Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction (INSR) Grants for 2023.

Action: A survey will be sent out to the AgWG voting membership (signatories + at large) to rank nominations for the Phase 7 Ag Modeling Team. Results will be confirmed at the October AgWG meeting.

Action: Reach out to Loretta Collins (lcollins@chesapeakebay.net) with any questions or comments on forage/winter cover presentation.

Action: Please review the [presentation and options on a path forward](#) concerning the May 2020 proposal for NRCS Soil and Water Conservation Practices. The AgWG will vote on a path forward at a future meeting.

August 18, 2022 (meeting materials)

Decision: The AgWG approved of the meeting minutes from the July AgWG call.

Decision: The AgWG approved the charge of the Ag Modeling Team via email on August 4th.

Action: Please send all nominations for the Ag Modeling Team to Tom Butler (butler.thomas01@epa.gov) by COB Thursday, September 15th, including the following information: name of nominee, CV/resume, and conflict of interest form.

Action: Please reach out to Peter Claggett (pclagget@chesapeakebay.net) with any questions or feedback on the LUWG ag-related GIT funding project. Q&A is included in the meeting minutes.

July 21, 2022 (meeting materials)

Decision: The AgWG approved June meeting minutes.

Action: Loretta Collins, AgWG coordinator, work with partners and USDA-NASS to better understand if Ag Census is reasonably accounting for winter forage (which impact CBP land use assumptions). Expect an update on the August AgWG call.

Decision: The AgWG did not reach consensus to approve the calculation method presented by PA for use in estimating commodity cover crop BMP implementation and reporting annual BMP implementation progress, utilizing roadside transect survey data and CAST estimated land use acres for relevant cropland. The request is tabled for July.

Action: Loretta Collins will work with partners to compile feedback on the PA request and seek a way forward based on that feedback in order to improve accounting for winter cropping and its benefits to soil and water quality. Update on progress for August AgWG meeting.

Action: Reach out to Matt Royer (mzr154@psu.edu) and Aaron Cook (amc521@psu.edu) with further questions on the Cover Crop Enhancement Pilot Study. They are expected to return in August with more detailed information.

Decision: The AgWG ran out of time to come to consensus on approving the proposed Phase 7 Agricultural Modeling Team (AMT) charge and call for nominations with minor adjustment based on today's discussion.

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Action: Tom Butler, AMT coordinator, will be making minor updates to the AMT charge language based on today's discussion. For those who indicated specific concerns, please provide those concerns to Tom (Butler.Thomas01@epa.gov) in writing NO LATER than 5PM on Monday July 25. Modifications will be made to the charge and distributed next week for a 5 business -day review. The AgWG governance body (signatories + at-large) will be asked to approve the charge via e-mail. Approval by consensus means everyone can live with a decision. Please utilize the consensus continuum to guide your response.

June 16, 2022 ([meeting materials](#))

Decision: The AgWG approved the minutes from the May AgWG call.

Action: Contact Laura Cattell Noll (lnoll@allianceforthebay.org) if interested in participating in the creation of an agricultural module in A Local Government Guide to the Chesapeake Bay.

Action: Contact Ted Tesler (thtesler@pa.gov) with feedback on PA commodity cover crop tracking and reporting. The AgWG will vote on the method at the July meeting.

Action: Tom Butler, EPA, will further define the membership and nomination process for the Phase 7 Agricultural Modeling Team. He will follow up with the AgWG and return at a future AgWG meeting to get approval of the charge and call for nominations.

May 19, 2022 ([meeting materials](#))

Decision: The AgWG approved of the minutes from the April AgWG call.

Action: Contact Ted Tesler (thtesler@pa.gov) with your questions, comments, or suggestions on PA commodity cover crop tracking and reporting.

Decision: The AgWG endorsed the proposed changes to the Phase 6 NEIEN appendix for select NRCS practices identified as mapping to Soil and Water Conservation Plans in the Phase 5 NEIEN appendix. These BMPs would shift from "draft" to "release" status. Final approval of changes in the NEIEN appendix will occur in the Watershed Technical Workgroup.

Action: Contact Tom Butler (butler.thomas01@epa.gov) with any additional questions or feedback on the Phase 7 ag modeling team. There will be continued discussion at the AgWG about the charge and membership of this group in the following months.

April 21, 2022 ([meeting materials](#))

Decision: The AgWG approved of the minutes from the March AgWG call.

Action: Please reach out to Travis Averill (travis.averill@usda.gov) with any additional questions or comments about his presentation on USDA Animal Data Collection.

Action: Please reach out to Jordan Baker (jbaker@hrg-inc.com) and Katie Walker (kwalker@chesapeakeconservancy.org) with any additional questions or comments on their presentation on remote sensing for BMP verification.

Action: Tom Butler will return at the May AgWG meeting for review and discussion of a proposed charge for addressing ag modeling in the Phase 7 watershed model.

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Action: Please fill out the following poll by COB Monday, May 2nd to indicate your availability for an in-person AgWG meeting on Thursday, June 16th: <https://forms.gle/8bvsovJ2wUyRwgV48>. *Note:* there will be a virtual option available.

March 17, 2022 ([meeting materials](#))

Decision: The AgWG approved the minutes from the February AgWG call.

Action: Reach out to Sucharith Ravi, UMCES, (sravi@chesapeakebay.net) and Ruth Cassilly, UMD, (rcassilly@chesapeakebay.net) with any questions regarding the fertilizer data sourcing and preparation.

Action: Jurisdictions are asked to reach out to their state chemists to better understand the nature of fertilizer sales data supplied to AAPFCO. This will be a topic of discussion at a future AgWG meeting.

Action: Reach out to Lance Honig, USDA-NASS, (lance.honig@usda.gov) with any questions regarding his presentation on methods and intended use of USDA crop data.

Action: Reach out to Loretta Collins (lcollins@chesapeakebay.net) with any questions for the NASS representatives presenting on animal data at the April 21 AgWG meeting.

Action: Reach out to Peter Claggett (pclaggett@chesapeakebay.net) with any feedback on the value of the high-resolution land use and land cover data to support the Land Use Workgroup's initiative to secure funding through 2030. See summary here: [Land Use/Land Cover Data Recommendation](#)

February 17, 2022 ([meeting materials](#))

Decision: The AgWG approved the minutes from the January AgWG call.

Decision: The AgWG approved the recommendation of a new vice-chair and endorsed six at-large members for the 2022-2023 term.

Action: Please submit any questions on the proposed changes to the NEIEN Appendix to Leon Tillman (leon.tillman@usda.gov). The AgWG will be asked to endorse this proposed change at a future meeting.

Action: Please submit all questions and comments about the CAST-21 discussion, ag data inputs, etc. to Loretta Collins (lcollins@chesapeakebay.net).

Action: Please contact Loretta Collins (lcollins@chesapeakebay.net) with any questions for NASS representatives about ag data sources to be answered at a future AgWG meeting.

January 20, 2022 ([meeting materials](#))

Decision: The AgWG approved of meeting minutes from the November AgWG call.

Action: Please contact Dennis Timlin, USDA (dennis.timlin@usda.gov), with additional questions or comments regarding the impacts of climate change on agricultural management in the Bay Watershed.

Action: Please contact Jeremy Hanson, CRC (hansonj@chesapeake.org), with additional questions or comments regarding the Chesapeake Bay BMP Climate Synthesis Report. The final report will be published soon.

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Action: Members are encouraged to review the survey results document and presentation with feedback provided by the AgWG on Hillandale and Partial Credit. Contact Loretta Collins (lcollins@chesapeakebay.net) with any additional feedback or questions.

Action: More information on determining a path forward regarding questions related to animal data (including Hillandale) will be distributed to the AgWG prior to the next monthly meeting (Feb 17th).

Action: The BMPVAHAT is expected to seek consensus on the partial credit proposal on Feb 11. Please contact Jackie Pickford (pickford.jacqueline@epa.gov) for meeting details.

Action: Interested parties please review [NRCS To NEIEN Status Update Proposal](#). Leon Tillman, NRCS, will discuss the proposal on the Feb 17 AgWG meeting.