Watershed Agricultural Council Guideline

3.1.01

BMP PRIORITIZATION AND WORKLOAD DEVELOPMENT

Each year, before the October Ag Committee meeting, a prioritized list of BMPs to be designed and implemented the following year will be submitted to the Agricultural Committee or East of Hudson Committee for review and approval.
The WAP Program Manager will appoint a Project Planning Group; consisting of WAC staff, Senior WAP partnering agencies staff, and DEP representative, to carry out this task according to the following guidelines.

1. Risk Based Farm Ranking Procedure

   A. A procedure, based on the approximate risk of off-farm movement of nutrients and pathogens, will be used annually to rank all farms. The farm ranking procedure is documented in the farm ranking procedure (see SOP 3.1.01.1 attachment 1 for detailed steps).

2. BMPs will be ranked annually according to the following process (see SOP 3.1.01.1 for detailed steps)

   A. BMPs will be grouped together as projects to allow ranking of grouped BMPs that; are part of a conservation/management system *(two or more BMPs that work together to perform a specific water quality protection function)*, or are grouped for significant implementation efficiencies. Implementation recommendations will take into account farmer readiness.

   B. Considering the significant water quality benefits of establishing riparian buffers as well as the cost sharing provided by USDA through CREP, BMPs associated with the riparian buffers will be given the highest priority, ordered by the farm ranking score.

   C. All BMPs are placed in a Pollutant Category based on the Environmental Review/Problem Diagnosis (ER/PD) or AEM evaluation tools. BMPs in lower numbered Pollutant Categories will be ranked higher, BMPs will be ordered by Pollutant Category then by the farm ranking score.

3. The Project Planning Group will define Implementation Areas and assign ranked BMPs to the applicable area. (e.g. Riparian Buffer BMPs, BMP Repair & Replacement, etc.)

   A. The Project Planning Group will recommend funding levels for the Implementation Areas for the year, taking into account balancing workload for current staff, contractor availability, and available funding.

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4. The Project Planning Group will select BMPs to be designed and implemented (the annual workload) from each Implementation Area based on priority and recommended funding.

   A. BMP Repair and Replacement projects will be assigned for implementation with the following considerations.

      1. Failing BMPs that are causing, or may imminently cause significant environmental issues should be implemented first regardless of priority rank.

      2. BMPs where the current design and implementation has caused, or imminently will cause significant management issues for the farmer may be given special prioritization and be implemented before BMPs with higher priority rank.

5. The Project Planning Group will assign the selected BMPs to staff for implementation.

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