



# 2015 Committee Reports

Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission

AUGUST 2015

## **CONSERVATION PROGRAMS**

This committee looks at the types of programs that conservation districts across Kentucky carry out, based on their local conditions and needs. Committee members seek to assist all the members of the conservation partnership as they work together to carry out these programs.

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The committee recommends conservation districts carry out the following actions:

- Conservation Districts should address locally identified needs and represent local stakeholders' interests. In so doing, they should:
  - Expand partnerships to ensure all stakeholders (individuals & organizations) can have input.
  - Maintain a current assessment of conditions and needs.
  - Identify conservation programs to address local needs - not identifying needs to fit existing programs.
  - Look at combinations of programs (e.g. EQIP & State Cost Share) to better meet goals and objectives.
  - Develop sound conservation plans that again emphasize local needs, local concerns, and local input.
  - Publicize programs and successes with all stakeholders to keep them informed and to attract new partners, funding sources, and public input into an open-ended process.
  - Maintain a strong commitment in implementation of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Farm Bill).
- Conservation districts should employ and train quality technical assistance providers to help meet the need for technical assistance.
- Conservation districts should continue to support the technical assistance efforts of other groups and agencies such as the Kentucky Division of Forestry and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, as well as seek other, non-traditional sources of assistance such as Ducks Unlimited, Quail Unlimited and other groups that can provide valuable resources.
- Districts are also encouraged to stay abreast of development in technical service provider policy as it evolves.
- Districts and all other members of the partnership are encouraged to work with both state and federal delegation to seek funding for technical positions and ensure that there is adequate assistance in all District offices.



- All supervisors having ten acres or more of agricultural land are urged to complete and update their own agriculture water quality plan as required by law and file it in the district office immediately so they may lead by example.
- Districts should be tracking their efforts and accomplishments in implementing the Ag Water Quality Act. Any activity associated with the implementation of the AWQA, such as individual plan certifications filed, producer workbooks and other information distributed, meetings and workshops conducted, etc. should be documented and reported to the Division of Conservation on a quarterly basis.
- Districts should also update and promote the implementation of the BMPs in the plans.
- Districts, along with other members of the partnership, should make every effort to work closely with our legislators and others to secure additional and adequate funding to implement the program.
- Districts are encouraged to take advantage of funding sources through Environmental Grants available through the state cost share program and to apply for matching funds available from the Agricultural Development Program. Districts are also encouraged to promote to landowners the on-farm fallen animal composting practice available under the state cost share program.
- In relation to EQIP, Districts and other NRCS work group members should:
  - Identify program priorities and available resources
  - Develop proposals for pooling areas
  - Make policy recommendations for eligible practices based on local natural resource concerns, and
  - Encourage nationwide funding at maximum authorized level and gear funding and practices to area's concerns, not have a blanket set of practices for the state.
- Districts should promote Agricultural Districts and other farmland preservation programs in their communities by hosting local meetings and publishing articles about their programs.
- Conservation districts should encourage local support and the funding of RC&D Councils throughout Kentucky regardless of the age of the RC&D Council.
- Conservation districts should work with the other members of the partnership to secure and utilize Emergency Watershed Protection funding anytime it is applicable. Additionally, conservation districts should work with the other members of the partnership to continue the education and promotion of floodplain protection.