Integrated Nutrient Management Program Work Group
Minutes May 22, 2002

Attending: Lee Telega, Danny Fox, Tom Tylutki, Quirine Ketterings, Caroline Rasmussen, Greg Albrecht, Mary Jane Porter, Megan Molique, Keith Porter, Luis Tedeschi, Ed Staehr, Karl Czymmek, Shawn Bossard, and Ellen Harrison.

Lee Telega – Pro-Dairy
Washington, Government Policy and Nutrient Management – Experiences being an intern for Senator Hillary Clinton

“Blinding flash of the obvious”
Politics = Power, gold, deciding “who gets what”.

Farm Bill
2002 Farm Bill – $ 180 billion over 10 years, 80% cost increase over previous farm bill.

Who has interest in determining how agricultural resources are divided up? (2nd largest source of Federal $)
- Farmers
- Environmentalists, conservationists, preservationists
- Food commodity processors
- Ag support services – bankers etc.
- Rural community leaders
- Hunger advocates
- Animal rights groups

Politicians have two jobs: 1) Public office elected to 2) PAC – being reelected. Most representatives and staff members have no knowledge of agriculture. Their interest is in manure not nutrients. Resources are directed to engineering solutions to manure not nutrient problems.

Farm Security and Rural Investment Act 2002: History
- In 1996 “Freedom to Farm Bill” attempted to move away from farm subsidy payments for commodities. In ’96 US was exporting grains, prices were high. In 1998 global economic downturn especially in Asia caused drop in grain prices. US spends $ 30 billion in 3 years on emergency ag. supplemental appropriations.

What shaped farm bill?
- Desire to limit emergency funding.
- Use wind-fall from budget surplus
- Regional equity
  - Midwest states are big winners (as usual)
  - Eggplant caucus – coalition of Northeast and Mid Atlantic States with 15-18 votes. Demands:
1) Dairy compact
2) Conservation programs
3) Specialty crop programs – veggies, apples, cost of production insurance programs.
4) Direct marketing programs

- Environmental Work Group web site (www.ewg.org) publishes info on all farmers getting government $. Publicizes money going to “corporate farms”. In general, the following per "person" payment limitations become effective beginning with the 2002 crop year: (1) $40,000 for direct payments; (2) $65,000 for counter-cyclical payments; and (3) $75,000 for marketing loan gains and loan deficiency payments. Dairy Subsidy 2.4 million lb cap/partner. Will undoubtedly lead to innovative farm partnerships.

- Marketplace competition issues – vertical integration. 81% beef processed by top 4 packers, 90+ % chicken processed by top 4 companies. Agriculture has been explicitly excluded from Taft-Hartley antitrust laws. In contract poultry industry, birds and feed not owned by farmer but manure is! Amendment to Farm Bill to disallow packers from owning animals 14 days prior to slaughter was not passed.

- Western water rights: Majority Whip, Reid of Nevada proposes conservation reserve program to conserve water as well as soil. Western states are opposed. Montana constitution specifies that water is owned by the land owner.

- Economic concerns will continue to drive ag. policy but there is an increasing influence of “social” concerns.

- Local zoning: social concerns will be manifested in policy. Interest in small farms, “view-sheds”, wild life.

Ag Policy and NMP
- EQIP
  - 60% for livestock farms
  - no priority acres
  - no farm site limitations
  - no restrictions on manure handling facilities
  - high cap, 5 year contract
    - 2003 $ 450,000
    - 2004 $ 750,000
    - 2005 $ 1 billion
    - 2006 $ 1.2 billion
  - NRCS is going to have a tough time spending that $ due to shortage of people and infrastructure.

- Conservation Security Program
  - Green payments for doing a good job. Payments for maintaining and increasing farm stewardship on working land.
  - 3 tiers of payments based on land conservation up to $ 450,000/individual over life of 2002 farm bill.
  - Will allow for planning costs.
Future Ag Policy

- TMDL = WA + LA + MOS (Total Maximum Daily Loads) + Point Source Contribution + Non point source contribution + Margin of Safety
- Need to quantify reductions in agriculture. Ag non-point vs. urban non-point source funding.
- Clean Air regulation
  - Odors – SO4 monitoring
  - Greenhouse gases
  - Particulate N regulation
- Nutrient Balance Tax – like Dutch mass balance program.
- WTO limit on loan rates

Take home message:
- At all levels of government, individuals can have impact. Have a person relationship with representative’s staff members.
- Recognize that person is busy and not knowledgeable about agriculture.

Meeting objects met:
- Group learned about current and future government policies that concern nutrient management and environmental regulation of agriculture.
- Suggestion (Karl) that PWT craft a PWT response to Vermont TMDL rules. See website:

Future Meetings:

June 5 Beth Boyer, Syracuse University. Quantifying N losses.