

INMC Meeting Minutes

May 12, 2016

Attendees: Jot Smyth, Josh Spencer, David Crouse, Michael Shepherd, Deanna Osmond, David Hardy, Joe Hudyncia, Kristin Hicks, Sam Brake, Christine Lawson, Colleen Hudak-Wise, Natalie Woolard

Approve Minutes

Minutes for January 14, 2016 were approved.

Biofuels Project Report

Sam Brake, NCDA&CS Research Stations Division, reported on the background of the NC Bioenergy Research Initiative and the overall progress of this initiative.

J. Smyth presented research summary on the Long-term Production of Biofuel Grasses in Swine Effluent Sprayfields of the NC Coastal Plain and Long-term Biofuel Grass Yield Response to Fertilizer at the Williamsdale Experiment Station (attached).

In addition, he reported that a graduate student is conducting research on miscanthus rhizomes and nutrient storage and transport over time. The premise is that the nitrogen stored in the winter is used by the plant in the summer. The results of this research should demonstrate if this movement is occurring.

As research is finalized, J. Smyth and S. Brake are encouraged to bring the data to the INMC. This could result in re-evaluation and possible changes to the nitrogen rates for bioenergy crops.

Additional research funding for energy crops, as well as the traditional crops grown in NC, is imperative to provide adequate nutrient and yield data. This in turn will ensure nutrient recommendations are scientifically supported with the best available information.

NRCS Standard 333 – Amending Soil Properties with Gypsum Products

J. Spencer presented the proposed national standard which was released in June 2015. NC NRCS has a year to release the standard at the state level or make a determination that it's not applicable. The stated purpose of this standard is not as a soil amendment for crop production, but is water quality-related to bind soil phosphorous, as well as to improve soil health. There are a lot of very specific criteria in the standard related to those purposes that are not currently proven to work in NC. Thus far, NC has never given credit for alum to reduce soluble P because it is believed it would all simply recycle and allow even more P. The same scenario would occur for gypsum. Also, it is understood that the research which is used to support this standard only has one data point on a coastal plain soil. The majority of the data is from Ohio. At this time, neither Virginia or South Carolina have adopted this standard.

It is recommended for NC NRCS leadership to not release the standard in the NC Field Office Technical Guide until the demand and/or the science evolves for it. If or when there becomes a demand to use it in NC, then we can have a more involved discussion about the state of the science and whether it is possible to amend or modify this standard in a manner that would be effective for NC producers.

Plant Availability Coefficient of Composted Manures

Dr. Kristin Hicks, NCDA&CS Agronomic Division, questioned if nutrient availability coefficients for composted manures were considered when the INMC revised the waste tables for other sources in 2013.

These manure types were not evaluated at the time. The coefficients for composed manure used by the Agronomic Division are different from the uncomposted manures and were established in early the 1990's. It was recommended that Dr. Hicks provide nutrient analyses for these types of manure samples including a basic statistical analysis of the data. At this point, the INMC can determine if adjustments in the coefficients are justified.

SWCC Rules Review Update

N. Woolard reported on the status of Soil and Water Conservation Commission rules 02 NCAC 59E and 02 NCAC 59G as they move through the mandatory rules review process. Specific recommendations and modification were discussed as it related to the training and continuing education requirements for designated technical specialist. The Commission will be meeting later in May to review the recommended changes. It is planned for draft rule language to be approved for public comment during their July meeting.

Nutrient Management Software Update

N. Woolard reported that the planned release date is July 1. It was recommended that the initial roll out training be conducted through a pre-recorded webinar which can be viewed independently by software users. D. Crouse offered assistance of NCSU technology to record the training. A face-to-face training for soil and water conservation districts is scheduled for August 25, 2016 during the annual Conservation Employee Training. Similar trainings can be added throughout the year for individuals/small groups upon request or identified need.

Set agenda items for next meeting scheduled for July 14, 2016.