

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FRRCC

In 2011, FRRCC identified a key need to generally foster understanding and trust between the agricultural community and EPA representatives through effective two-way communication, leveraging resources, and partnerships.

Partnerships and improved communication enables all stakeholders to:

- Better understand the science behind challenges & opportunities, identify research needs, support data collection and exchange,
- Develop options for the resolution of an identified problem
- Evaluate best practices, share successes, present compelling arguments for adoption of solutions, and implement those solutions

Table of FRRCC Recommendations

Derived from 2009 and 2011 Recommendations Documents

Recommendations	Year	Partnerships	communication	Comments	EPA Follow-up Actions
Expand EPA's relationship with NASDA to work on education, implementation, evaluation, and research needs for environmental regulations related to ag	2009	√	√	NASDA provided value to pesticides program for implementation & compliance. Possible benefits can exist for clean water & air requirements in ag NASDA has good relationships with farmers, conservation districts, NRCS, farm & livestock assocs, & state environmental agencies	
establish an regional/national ag env stewardship awards program to recognize ag producers who have superior env mgmt systems or have helped develop or advance high-impact innovation in ag conservation In partnership with Ag Depts, ag trade assocs, land grant institutions to develop selection criteria	2009	√	√	Focus first on permitted CAFOs; Emphasize air, water, & soil Give awards for each species (cattle, swine, broilers, dairy, turkeys, layers, etc.) and present at their natl convention; TaskForce of Ag Depts, env orgs, ag	

Establish prizes to incentivize development of improvements to existing conservation practices and development of innovative practices and technologies	2011			trade associations, land grant institutions to review existing env stewardship award programs & develop selection criteria	
EPA should ensure that voluntary mgmt. practices that translate into laudable env stewardship receive primary consideration and due recognition	2009		√		
Create an electronic news update specifically for farmers & farm orgs named "AgNews Notes" distributed quarterly or more frequently (monthly) as appropriate; Ag Counselor's Office be main coordinator – partner with other ag & env orgs. List key EPA points of contact on a variety of ag-related issues;	2009	√	√	Offer ideas for compliance assistance Offer successful strategies & practices – success stories; Include topics such as: updates / clarifications of regs pertaining to ag; status of proposed regs; status of pending ag-related lawsuits in which EPA is involved; announcement of stewardship award recipients & land conservation progs at state, regl, natl levels; info on new research/data that would be helpful for producers; water quality, air quality, wildlife habitat, climate change impacts, & benefits of ag; nutrient & manure mgmt	
EPA should continue to work closely with other fed agencies that regulate ag such as USDA, DOE, FWS	2009	√		To help avoid instability of commodity markets.	
EPA should direct farmers to POCs at USDA and work with USDA & conservation programs to ensure that env compliance is being met	2009	√	√		
EPA should make a concerted effort to explore alternatives to regs, such as voluntary, incentive-	2009	√	√	Project XL like effort?	

driven programs that are outcome oriented in achieving environmental goals, and encourage innovation & voluntary compliance.					
EPA should work with USDA & private sector to ensure that sound science-based nutrient mgmt. is practiced & that water & air quality are adequately protected [in biofuels production] (could apply broadly)	2009	√	√		
EPA should increase coordination with USDA, DOE, and NIST in development & execution of a national BF Strategy; consult with Am Society of Agronomy, Soil Science Society of America, & Crop Science Society of America	2009	√			
FRRCC proposed that it could expand & facilitate interaction & coordination between EPA & USDA and other agencies on nanotechnology issues based on information exchanged in the Nanoscale Science, Engineering, & Tech Subcommittee (NSET) and its Nanotechnology Environmental Health Implications (NEHI) workgrp, as well as facilitate greater outreach on these issues with the public.	2009	√	√	They expressed interest in meeting with pertinent EPA staff to identify an initial list of topics & issues re: nanotech, and to bolster outreach & education with the public will strengthen trust	
EPA should develop a coordinated public engagement plan to exchange information on agricultural and environmental issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and reach out to key leaders • Develop and provide funding for active outreach strategies to disseminate information (BMPs, science behind practices, impacts, success stories, and lessons learned) • Demonstrate BMPs at the farm level to facilitate understanding of the connection between action and impact 	2011	√	√	A theme raised repeatedly – need for more public engagement	
Make a planned effort to connect more effectively	2011			Establishing timely dialogue	

<p>with the ag community at the local level.</p> <p>More effective two-way communication with the agricultural community is needed</p> <p>EPA should ensure it has adequate staff and apply resources commensurate with the challenges; Resources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial • Staffing • Facilities • Informational materials • Subject matter expertise <p>Assign staff with excellent technical and customer skills to work effectively in the field with agriculture on environmental issues, help catalyze effective technology transfer to agricultural producers, and connect more effectively to the Land Grant Universities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important that these are trusted local individuals who are available for the “long-haul” in sufficient numbers to reach key stakeholders with the technical and social skills to effectively communicate, educate, perform, and persuade <p>Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create & maintain full-time Regional Agricultural Advisors that report directly to the RA, • Re-establish the IPM Strategic Agricultural Initiative-like specialists, focusing on nutrient mgmt • EPA-Land Grant University liaison positions in all 		<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>between the Agency, its partners, and the public will strengthen trust</p> <p>The Regional Ag Advisors are under-resourced and under-staffed to achieve the important impact they could have in developing and advancing partnerships to implement solutions and build trust and understanding between EPA and ag stakeholders.</p>	
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<p>EPA Regions and work with LGUs to provide salary and adequate travel budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open communication with NRCS District Conservationists, Conservation Districts, and LGU County Extension Agents, farm groups, technical service providers (TSP), consulting engineers (CE), certified crop advisors (CCA). Agricultural industries – including retailers • Develop & support integrated training for EPA & State reg agency employees to increase their effectiveness in working with farmers especially on ag production practices 		√	√		
<p>Improve support for & visibility of the role of EPA's Regional Ag Advisors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase & better coordinate communications with regl ag partners on relevant EPA activities & dedicate time for meeting & interacting with producers & stakeholders in the field on an on-going basis • Advance cross-talk & collaboration among Regl advisor and involved stakeholders in a transparent way 	2011	√	√		
<p>EPA should convene interested parties in a partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish FRRCC-like groups at the Regional level • Hold quarterly/regularly scheduled meetings with Regional Administrator and ag partners to provide info on ag related activities by EPA in the region and nationally to receive feedback • Dedicate time to meeting and interacting with ag producers around their region on an on-going basis 	2011	√	√		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with State regulators to better coordinate between state and fed regs and resolve conflicting ordinances, better appreciate practical and financial limitations within which farmers/producers operate; enhance regl & state customer service skills • Collaborate with regl partners to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ identify the top 3 ag resource conservation issues in the region ○ Encourage information exchange ○ facilitate partnership approaches to develop & implement solutions to those issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Note: there may be instances where other agencies & orgs have established relationships with ag producers and the most appropriate EPA role is to facilitate, but not be an active participant • Clearly define & communicate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ any statutory requirements, ○ regulations, ○ criteria to meet standards, ○ parameters, and ○ areas where EPA has flexibility or limitations on which there is no compromise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ make clear the implications of not being able to address environmental problems through an alternative pathway 		√	√		
<p>Create and support improved tools for communicating activities of Regl Ag Advisors,</p>	2011				

<p>including more effectively designed and user-friendly online information & web pages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • easily findable website for Ag Advisors, their meetings, and partnership efforts • newsletter/email communications to provide important updates about EPA & partner activities 			√		
<p>strengthen traditional partnerships and expand into non-traditional relationships to leverage EPA resources more strategically</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage opportunities with institutions, orgs, & univs to develop effective tech transfer progs • Engage stakeholders before planning reg actions to encourage voluntary action, discuss possible solutions <p>Resources are needed to develop and implement targeted programs at every scale (natl, regl, state, local, and farm)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategically allocate resources by investing in actions that yield the highest returns • convene key stakeholders to better align resources to address problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ particularly those who share common goals of reducing pollution from ag sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ work with USDA • Invest in developing curricula through partnerships with LGUs & community colleges that address reg issues facing ag, for both ag & natural resources students • Use Section 319 funds to help States develop reasonable levels of stewardship for certainty agreements • Work with State & federal conservation progs & 	2011	√	√		

<p>USDA NIFA to coordinate funding opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the use of State Revolving Funds for practices and sell applicable credits to reimburse the Fund • Reach out to private foundations to explore aligning private sector resources more effectively with Agency efforts • Leverage private sector efforts to establish performance metrics for agriculture • Continue to encourage ecosystem services markets by providing guidance to States on ways to support markets & improve outcomes 		√	√		
<p>EPA should support the development of certainty agreements by States to encourage and acknowledge stewardship by ag producers and work proactively with agriculture to address water quality issues early and often</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with States to establish a reasonable level of stewardship & develop uniform checklists to assess a farm's operation & mgmt against this list 	2011	√	√		
<p>EPA should continue to improve the effectiveness and reach of currently available resources by leveraging resources with others, including State and Federal conservation programs, Section 319 funds, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) opportunities, state revolving funds, private foundation funds, and private markets</p>	2011	√	√		
<p>Facilitate, participate, and lead in partnerships</p> <p>EPA should work with USDA (e.g., Office of Environmental Markets) to enable and provide resources for a multi-entity, multi-disciplinary partnership to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess and define issues through collaborative 	2011	√	√		

<p>research and data collection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop and use tools and protocols, and metrics for improved measurement, documentation, and verification of water quality benefits or impacts [or any other desired outcome] from agricultural practices and strategies • coordinate existing efforts to research, develop, and pilot technical tools, such as farm-level tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ facilitate the evaluation and adaptation of tools to improve their performance • Leverage private sector efforts to establish performance metrics for agriculture • improve the use of resources for the development and delivery of critical best management practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use portion of 319 resources ○ Develop partnerships with states to implement science-based, economically achievable, BMPs • to evaluate and advance more effective approaches to delivering real improvements to nutrient management and other critical conservation practice efforts, and to advance more effective use of federal and state resources invested in conservation programs 					
<p>Need adequate resources (people, money, time) for technical, educational, and financial assistance to effect & sustain positive change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPA can develop educational materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaborate on short courses offered by LGUs or as part of TSP, CE, or CCA training 	2011	√	√		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LGUs & EPA's Environmental Education Program, invest in developing a curriculum that addresses reg issues related to ag ○ Appeal to farmers/producers based on what's important to them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify potential negative impacts that ag activities may have on future yield and ability to adapt to more severe weather events ▪ Legal requirements and solutions or resources available to avoid negative impacts ▪ Cross-media benefits by implementing conservation practices ▪ Positive relationship between sustainability and profitability ● Identify & address barriers to overcome ● Make info & technology more visible & accessible 		√	√		