

**SARE Expert Advisory Panel (EAP) Meeting  
 Hosted by Agriculture Water Quality Alliance (AWQA)  
 August 13, 2014 (9:00 am to 1:00 PM)  
 UCCE Auditorium, 1432 Abbott Street, Salinas**

Phone: Anne, Brook, Sonja

In person: Pam, Karen Ben, GW, Michael, Forest

- 1) **Overview of Grant & Progress (Pam 15 minutes)**
- 2) **Review Agenda**
- 3) **Website (Link)**
- 4) **Overview of Grant and Timeline (Excel Spreadsheet)**

Event	Date	Lead
EAP Meeting 1		22-Jan Pam & Julie
Compile Tools	By July 18	Julie
Develop structure & content OnlineClearing	By Aug 12	Pam
EAP Meeting 2		14-Aug Pam & Julie
Post Online Clearing House on AWQA websi	by Aug. 30	Pam
Gap Analysis	by Aug. 30	Julie
In-field Cross-Training 1	between Sep 2014 - Feb 2015	3 RCD Experts (Ben Burgoa, Kevin Peterson, GW Bates)
Annual Progress Report		Jan-15 Pam
In-field Cross-Training 2	between Mar 2014 - May 2015	3 RCD Experts (Ben Burgoa, Kevin Peterson, GW Bates)
Project End Date		8/31/2015 Pam
Final Project Report Due		10/31/2015 Pam

**5) Cross Training – RCDs Central Coast and Experts**

- Michael – will practitioners or others attend?
- Karen – get the right people – important to understand the audience, frame as a focused question in an e-mail, follow-up with conference call if necessary
- Pam – we can discuss before Oct. via e-mail and calls to refine

**6) ToolKit (Excel Spreadsheet)**

**7) Clearinghouse: Central Coast**

**8) Gap Analysis**

**9) SOP**

Pam and Ben (UCCE vs ITRC) Philosophy of using one vs. the other.

Ben – using both, for example, “short version” depending on what the growers need.

GW – uses ITRC mostly, and modifies accordingly depending on grower needs and available funding. Various crop uses – more for trees, etc.

Karen – asked – what are the growers asking for and why?

GW – SIP or EQIP or sometimes unknown

Anne – Sometimes growers are asking because a partner suggested they call us, or they are required by a partner to have a DU test performed, etc. Sometimes we call them because we have a grant deliverable and need to complete a set number of audits by a certain time.

GW – Looking for overall better system, DU is necessarily the best information for the grower; Maintenance and Scheduling repeated issues.

Michael - ITRC – report that tells you good, ok, or bad, etc. If growers intention it get better, then more information has be collected. Not necessarily to get just a DU. Go

ahead and collect more information while we are out there so we can take it to the next step.

Karen – **GAP** not enough of technical capacity of personnel and clear definition of the audience/growers and what their needs are. We could use more than one model. Do not winnow down services, but create a series of options that one can choose from depending on each situation. We can't control with what people use the information for.

Ben – both systems have pros/cons. Issue with using one DU for analysis i.e., similarities and differences of blocks. Is that information transferrable to other blocks? Pressure map is important. Faster – can even give the grower information before leaving the field. If you need engineer, or there are different goals, then collect the information for later use.

GW – does not use ITRC expert info.?

Michael – week long student trainings, outcomes result in not very useful reports.

GW – grower thinks they know what the problems are, but after pressure and flow are measured often it is something else. Experience varies dramatically between audiences/growers. We need to define which program/tool is best for which audience. Michael – need more follow-up, and is a very long process to get long-lasting changes.

### **Website – Irrigation Assessment**

Pam will re-write, include ITRC and send out for review.

Anne - Can we ask questions (commitment) of grower ahead of time? A pre-meeting “consultation” of set of questions we can ask growers ahead of time? UCCE description of landowner (absentee owners) not following through with suggestions. Ventura RCD asks for \$ cost share as demonstration of commitment.

Karen - can we have two separate trainings/meetings? One - for managers/grant writers and one for technical staff?

Anne – yes, also need for these two perspectives to dovetail and include “outreach” component as well. There is a **GAP** if we don't dovetail.

GW – importance of that first one-on-one contact needs to be recognized, don't want to eliminate the importance of that for developing relationships/success.

Michael – **GAP** need for consistent graphics, tools, etc. as a starting point, not set in stone, but need for better illustrated examples, (where to put the catch cans, etc.).

### **Next Steps – Due August 29<sup>th</sup>?**

- 1. Michael send Pam SOPs and Spreadsheets (Irrigation Scheduling and Nutrient Management)**
- 2. Develop or Coordinate Graphics to go along with Reports**

Break (10 minutes)

### **Irrigation Scheduling & Design (GW 45 Minutes)**

**Website** Should we organize by crop type or by tools available by commercial/Industry vs. govt. vs. academic etc. (CalPoly, Fresno, UCCE)? Karen – NRCS - IWM what information are you using to define your management practices, CIMIS, soil moisture, etc. What kind of information are they providing? Then design based on what they are using, e.g., what kind of data loggers, etc. Details are important. GW – Discussion of different types of devices, and what kind of information do growers need to understand

about the devices they are using. Going back to commercial/Industry vs. govt. vs. academic etc. (CalPoly, Fresno, UCCE). **GAP** - Flowmeters are missing. Karen – **GAP** - ability to quantify how much water they are using. GW – **GAP** sophistication in ability to understand available information. Ben – **GAP** – what tools and numbers do they use. Karen – needs to be a transparency of online tools and formulas. Karen – need scaffolding. Ben – not always funding availability to use Crop Manage. Can we teach growers to use the tools? Karen – three things 1) grower has capability to do it, 2) for practitioners to help when funding allows; 3) learning platform. Pam – her goal to organize them on the Website. Karen – we need to develop scaffolding. Example of NRCS questionnaire so we understand the capacity of grower and know which tool to use. Forest – organize list of tools by category, e.g., sophistication of tools, etc. Ben – more complicated than that. Maybe pick top four tools and focus on those. Karen – says – should would be picking winners? Ben – some of the tools are good right now, we need to narrow down. It will be a living tool. Tools we find the most reliable, most cost effective, etc. Karen – reluctant to narrow down the list. What is they are interested in a tool we don't list. Forest – list all tools, but categorize the tools we find the most successful ones for now. Ben – thinking about “cross-training”, we need to know the tools really well we are training on. Karen – the cross-training, can define which ones we know the most about. Soil-Con vs. Engineers. GW – suggest combine the two suggestions. Question by question, and then provide tools to help organize scaffolding. Karen – List of question examples, she will send to Pam. Quick road map, good platform to start with. Pam – where would Crop Manage fit into this list? Karen described. GW – the database will link them to CM. Michael – CM explosion of tools, there is a tool for that. For example, calculators, links to Soil Web, etc. GW – likes questions guiding the tools. Ben can help. When and how much are the two big questions. How to narrow down lots and lots of information. GAP – Case Studies per top tools? Michael – Signature Irrigation follow-up with growers. GW – different audiences (small growers vs larger growers). Comes down to scheduling. Pam – cross-training invite list (include consultant/designers). Focus on what we can accomplish in Cross-training and create list.

### **Next Steps – Due August 29th**

- 3. GW and Ben will work on Scaffolding for Website and for preparation for Cross-Training.**
- 4. Keep list of Action Items for future funding.**
- 5. Send Flow-Meter information to Pam.**
- 6. Link to NRCS Practice Standards**

Add-On Topic - Forest - RFP – Capacity Building, Due in Sept. (\$150,000 to \$300,000) range.

### **Nutrient Management (Ben and Karen 45 minutes)**

Entry Point – who, why, identifying a good pathway in for discussion/discovery. Two-way street, learning from each other – partnership with growers. Understanding the moving prices. How well can you quantify (or will they allow a consultant to quantify N input), etc. Nutrient Management assessment (series of questions). Idea of where they are at, what their capacity is, and what their interest is. The next step, is to build a scaffolding for them. This is a place for where all the information can land. Careful not to give recommendations - liability/lack of skill set, etc. It is only as useful as someone is willing

to understand. We need to know the limits of what people are willing and able to do. Give the guidance document first - sometimes this works. Lastly, lots CDFA fertilizer guidelines, and lots of UC resources. Floodgate of agronomic guidance. What the farmers are seeking were finding it, or were not looking in the right places. We need to keep the long list so we all have a reference. Challenge is helping them finding the correct tool to use, even if tool is not perfectly set for their specific situation. Start with self-assessment. What do RCD clients need? Farmer, what does farmer need? Fertilizer Website (based on FREP results). Basic ball-park, not all crops on there yet. More than one portal. Sonja – great to hear what Karen’s is saying, trying to create searchable database that will better suit specific needs. Karen - Lots of ways to get the info. Sonia – still needs updating. Vegetable has not been updated in a while. Karen – job to support NRCS planners. Nutrient Planning and Guidance Plan. Staff has expressed an appreciation of a way to provide information management and training. Michael – example soil sampling (when). Karen – the person taking the sample is not always the person writing down the information. Information Management is key. Logistics is part of the reality we have to recognize. Need for a very engaged decision maker from the farm. Work with them in-depth. They will teach their staff if they buy into to. Detailed record keeping for more than 100-150 acres might trigger hiring a new staff person. And they may not want to. Could equal short-term cost savings.

### **Next Steps – Due August 29<sup>th</sup>**

- 1. Karen will work with Ben on scaffolding for Website and for preparation for Cross-Training.**
- 2. Karen send out questionnaire developed for working with growers.**

Bottom line – Gathering Information does not add up to a “right” answer. It provides a foundation for them to make their own decisions. It avoids us telling them what to do. It helps open the door for dialogue. It is not the regulatory approach. Is our hope and intent that we are providing tools for farmers or practitioners or both? What is best for lasting change? Depends on the audience.

**Website** – Karen - Do not use NRCS logo. Pam – source needs to be ID’s. Karen – needs to run it through NRCS process for approval. Sonja – Tagged information for search engine. Maybe could be combined with Karen’s questions. Karen – maybe use same questions for smooth transition for farmers. Pam - not searchable. Karen - grower expectation. NRCS and RCD as support, not necessarily developing new practices, but see us as implementing new practices. GAP – Pam this is a smaller list than irrigation section. Sonja – send to link to Martha’s Campbell Mathews website – send to Pam other information (dairy forage information, crop nutrient uptake).

### **Next Steps – Due**

- 1. Decide who to invite to Cross-Training**
- 2. Cross Training Tentative Date and Subject - Late January – Irrigation Evaluations and Scheduling**
- 3. Cross Training Tentative Date and Subject - Late March – Nutrient Management**