



C-AGG Webinar on Core Data Needs

January 6, 2012

Participants included: Ryan Anderson, Andrew Arnold, Bill Salas, Adam Chambers, David Diaz, Jason Funk, Susan Gammon, Noel Guerwick, Dana Gunders, Rob Janzen, Teresa Lang, Sheila Nolan, Lydia Olander, Carolyn Olson, Ward Smith (on behalf of Raymond Desjardins), Doreen Stabinsky, Allan Stokes, Ashley Markgraf, Jennifer Pratt-Miles, and Debbie Reed.

Summary

The Coalition on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases (C-AGG) held a second webinar for the Core Data Needs Workgroup on January 6, 2012. This document provides a summary of the webinar and its outcomes and next steps. For questions about the webinar, or further information on C-AGG, please contact Debbie Reed, C-AGG Executive Director, at dreed@drdassociates.org.

The Core Data Needs Workgroup aims to scan the information and data points required by various models, tools and initiatives seeking to measure agricultural greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and reductions, in order to see if it can identify 'information hot spots' for GHG measures or some density of data points that are common across programs. With data point overlays devised for the various tools, including sensitivity analyses conducted by some of the programs to identify their most critical data inputs, it may be possible to begin to narrow or at least better identify common data needs, and the most critical data needs for various outcomes, whether carbon market projects or supply chain initiatives. Also, the workgroup is seeking to identify when measured or actual data is required, versus the use of look-up or default values. The results can lead to better harmonization across various efforts, initiatives, tools, and models, help reduce 'audit fatigue' among producers, potentially narrow data collection needs to essential elements, and increase accuracy of data collected.

The webinar began with an overview of two different worksheets that are currently being used to capture data from farmers. Susan Gammon of the Androscoggin Valley Soil and Water Conservation District presented a checklist she developed to support an assessment process for growers. The checklist, sent prior to an onsite visit, is used to help farmers participate in one or both tiers of a two-tiered certification program. Tier 1 is a Green Certification Program for agricultural GHG emission reductions; and Tier 2 is used to establish a baseline for participation in carbon offset programs. The checklist was not

designed around a specific model or offset program, but is meant as a generic checklist for offset programs.

Ryan Anderson of the Delta Institute demonstrated a web-based (using Google docs), paperless form developed for use with the DeNitrification-DeComposition (DNDC) model. Ryan and Eliav Bitan of the National Wildlife Federation are working to translate this into a batch feed system for DNDC modeling of data for their GHG CIG project. Producers must complete one form per crop year. Anderson noted that the American Carbon Registry requires five years of data, which would require five forms from a producer.

Andrew Arnold of SureHarvest pointed out two important issues for C-AGG to consider and to address as part of this framework process: (1) data granularity (what level of granularity will the summary framework consider); and (2) data availability, i.e., is the desired data even available from producers? Discussion about the latter, in particular concluded that this exercise can help narrow true data needs and potentially inform data collection needs before the fact, e.g. inform development of checklists to aid farmers in identifying before the fact which data they should keep track of for participation in specific programs. This should improve both the quality and quantity of data collected from producers.

A document from Marlen Eve of USDA was then shared. Based on the previous webinar, Eve made several changes to the chart, which now includes over 100 tools in 3 categories: 40 calculators, 47 Guidelines and Protocols, and 21 models. A fourth category for supply chain initiatives can be added, if desired by this group.

Participants also suggested adding:

- an additional column (to the far right) describing the internal methodology used to calculate the GHG reductions, and
- a column outlining the level of end use for which the specific tool or protocol is acceptable. (It was acknowledged that development of a decision support tool for end users is a separate objective than originally conceived by this workgroup, but a welcome addition to C-AGG's role. See more information, below).

Dana Gunders of the Natural Resources Defense Council indicated that Terra Global Capital, LLC is doing a sensitive analysis of all the data required of DNDC, to identify which inputs are more sensitive to model results than others. The result may help to identify data which is less sensitive, and for which default values can thus be used. Anderson asked whether this would include the Monte Carlo analysis used in DNDC (4,096 runs per field can take hours). Terra Global will not be looking at this issue explicitly. Bill Salas of Applied Geosolutions LLC indicated that reduced requirements for the Monte Carlo analysis will increase the uncertainty range of results, and he has not begun to address or consider these potential trade-offs. There was discussion of possibly investigating "the most sensitive factor approach", to identify which input fields are the most sensitive to reduced Monte Carlo

requirements, and would thus create the greatest range of uncertainty. (**Note:** it was agreed this is a potential topic to further discuss within the Uncertainty Workgroup).

Decision support objective (new objective for the Core Data Needs Workgroup): Participants agreed a decision support tool to help end-users identify potential applications for each tool (or alternatively, to narrow the range of tools for a particular need/use), would be very useful to the agricultural sector. Suggestions for achieving this goal included: having someone try each tool in the chart to evaluate the utility for different purposes; and/or engaging tool developers to populate the chart.

Next Steps

Several next steps were identified for this workgroup:

- Additional tools, calculators, and initiatives for the chart should be sent to Eve.
- Gunders will circulate her sensitivity analysis of input data.
- Reed will talk to Eve about what data USDA is populating in the chart as a part of its existing work, and will consider approaches to populating the document.
- Reed will document the goals and outcomes of a proposed workshop for workgroup review and discussion.
- Ashley Markgraf will schedule another call based on workgroup member's availability to discuss the populated chart.
- Reed will invite the Carbon Disclosure Project and GHG Conservation Innovation Grant recipients to participate in the workgroup.
- Reed will identify a collaborative tool for the workgroup to use in developing the framework.