

Farm Bureau – Position Description
COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR

PURPOSE:

The primary function of the County Environmental Coordinator is to help farmers understand and respond to complaints filed against them with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

The Environmental Resource Coordinator Program is a cooperative effort between PFB and DEP that establishes a process to reduce the likelihood of formal DEP investigations of farmers who are not violating environmental laws and of formal enforcement actions against farmers who may be in violation.

Other functions of the County Environmental Coordinator:

- Build clear channels of communication and establish relationships between farmers and DEP staff at the local level.
- Educate DEP staff (and, where appropriate, local government officials) regarding the modern-day practices of Pennsylvania agriculture.
- Serve as a resource for others (both farmers and non-farmers) in the county regarding environmental compliance on the farm.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Training and Continuing Education

- County Coordinators should attend spring regional meetings. The purpose of spring meetings is:
 - To discuss, among PFB members and staff, the prior year's complaints and the overall workings of the program.
 - To receive information from PFB and DEP staff on environmental regulations and/or policy that recently may have been developed.
 - To meet with DEP staff and discuss program functionality, and to coordinate a tentative date and location for upcoming summer farm tours.
- Note: When called upon, Regional Chairpersons should attend additional annual spring chairperson's meeting.

Handling Environmental Complaints Made Against Farmers

- County Coordinators should visit farms with reported environmental complaints in a timely fashion when called upon by the program's Regional Chairman.
- Parties who are the subject of DEP ag complaints are under no obligation to work with PFB County Coordinators.
- When acting on a complaint, County Coordinators should state that their involvement in this program is to help resolve the complaint and not to act as an enforcement agent or witness for DEP. Brochures explaining the program are available, and we encourage you to distribute them when acting on a complaint.
- When investigating a complaint, County Coordinators should assess whether an environmental compliance problem exists:
 - Where such a problem is suspected, secure a commitment from the farmer to achieve compliance with all applicable laws and regulations by working with his County Conservation District staff or other technical experts (NRCS, private consultants, etc.);
 - Remember, County Coordinators are not authorized to determine whether a particular practice complies with environmental laws!
 - Report results of the contact to the program's Regional Chairman in a timely manner, so that the Regional Chairman can follow up with DEP.

Farm Bureau – Position Description
COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR (cont'd)

RESPONSIBILITIES (cont'd):

Handling Environmental Complaints Made Against Farmers (cont'd)

- While maintaining the confidentiality of all parties involved in a complaint, report to the county Farm Bureau Board and to members at the spring meeting regarding the general nature of complaints received in the county throughout the year and the outcomes of those complaints.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding the identity of individuals involved in complaints and any details relating to specific situations that would be likely to compromise such confidentiality.
- If the workload becomes too great, contact the County Farm Bureau President and request that an additional County Environmental Coordinator be appointed.

Summer Farm Tours

- County Coordinators should attend regional summer environmental farm tours.
- County Coordinators should work with the program's Regional Chairperson, PFB's Regional Organization Directors (RODs) and PFB's Natural Resources Director to plan tours when they are to be held in a Coordinator's home county:
 - Summer farm tours typically rotate between each county within a region, so each county hosts a summer farm tour only once every few years.
 - PFB staff will work with County Coordinators and Regional Chairperson to coordinate: Transportation; lunch; invitations to PFB members, DEP and County Conservation District staff.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- Regular Farm Bureau member
- Interest in acquiring knowledge of environmental issues and regulations relating to agriculture
- Willingness to interact with farmers, DEP and conservation district staff
- Ability to handle delicate situations with diplomacy and confidentiality

RESOURCES

- County Conservation Districts (technical assistance)
- Regional County Environmental Resources Chairman
- County Governmental Relations Director
- PFB Natural Resources Director
- Regional Organization Directors

*The County Environmental Resources Coordinator is responsible to the County Governmental Relations Director.
The term of appointment is two years.*