



Otsego County Water Quality Coordinating Committee, 967 County Highway 33,
Cooperstown, NY 13326 (607) 547-8778

WQCC Opens Informational Meeting To Public: Metzger To Speak on Ag Carbon Trading

On Wednesday, February 24, Phil Metzger of USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, who assists the Central New York Resource Conservation and Development Project, Inc., will give a special presentation on ag carbon trading to the Otsego County Water Quality Coordinating Committee. The meeting, which begins at 1 p.m., will be hosted by Cornell Cooperative Extension at 123 Lake Street, Cooperstown.

At the June, 2009 regular meeting of the WQCC, Metzger explained that the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative has imposed restrictions on the electric industry to limit greenhouse gas emissions. There are five eligible offset project categories: Landfill methane capture and destruction; reduction in emissions of sulfur hexafluoride (SF6); sequestration of carbon due to afforestation; reduction or avoidance of CO2 emissions from natural gas, oil or propane end-use combustion due to end-use energy efficiency; and agricultural manure management methane capture and destruction. The use of methane digesters, for instance, reduces the carbon footprint. Cap-and-trade is a regulatory program that caps harmful emissions by limiting them through a permitting system and distributing the emissions permitted to different stakeholders. These are called allowances, permits or credits. Stakeholders can buy and sell the rights to the permitted emissions or “credits” after their initial distribution. The industry has a cap, Metzger said, and must lower its greenhouse gas emissions. There may be opportunities for the agriculture and forestry sectors to sequester carbon and sell the credits.

Metzger has been invited back by the WQCC to explain the basic principles behind a cap-and-trade system, describe how agricultural practices fit into such a system, and to outline how rural farmers and landowners might participate in and benefit from such a program.

Central New York Resource Conservation and Development Project, Inc. (RC&D), is a 501-C-3 not-for-profit organization located in Norwich. RC&D is a USDA-supported program, administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, that supplies federal support to the local CNY RC&D Council. Its mission is to “work cooperatively in educating and learning from landowners, organizations and other partners to improve our 12-county region’s economic, environmental and social vitality through the wiser use of human and natural resources.” RC&D services are free. Metzger is the RC&D coordinator for USDA/NRCS.

This event is free and open to the public, particularly members of the ag community, municipal officials, and large landowners; pre-registration is required by Friday, February 19. Those interested in attending should e-mail hmt5@cornell.edu or call (607) 547-2536, extension 226.

This event is made possible thanks to the Otsego County WQCC which, in order to better satisfy the educational component of its mission, has restructured its monthly meetings to include public information sessions. The OCWQCC was established in 1992 as a sub-committee of the Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District. It is comprised of a diverse group of people representing state and local government agencies, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and lake associations. These members have technical expertise and knowledge and are committed to working to improve and maintain the quality of water in Otsego County through the reduction of nonpoint source pollution within its boundaries.