team as it works to meet customer demands, management goals, and the needs of team members themselves.

2. Change the mentality of inspection to prevention. This takes a concerted effort, but a manager can support this endeavor by creating and sustaining an atmosphere of listening to the ideas brought up by others. When a district conservationist, for instance, mentions a problem one of his or her farmers is having with understanding the purpose of a conservation plan, it may be time to review how conservation is presented to the customer in order to prevent future misconceptions and misunderstandings. Fixing his or her presentation will take care of the immediate need, but a preventive attitude will require that the problem be looked at from the widest possible angles to prevent future problems and to ensure that there is benefit to both the farmer and to conservation practices.

Conservation professionals are known for their commitment to the future needs of land and water resources. TQM hopefully will add to conservationists' store of effective, quality practices. We face many serious problems, not the least of which are the issues of food safety and environment quality. How agriculture manages these two problems will set the tone for the quality of our society in the years to come. □

Coordination of state soil and water conservation and farmland preservation regulatory programs

By James E. Holloway and Donald C. Guy

FEDERAL and state governments encourage farmers to implement soil and water conservation programs voluntarily through the use of moral suasion and economic incentives. In recent years farmland protection policy has been established by the federal government and farmland protection policy and preservation programs have been established by state governments to slow the loss of agricultural land through conversion to nonagricultural uses. While these programs all have valid natural resource conservation objectives, many of the programs are often implemented inconsistently by different agencies at and within different levels of government, with little regard for their effect on other programs. Recent gains under the Conservation Title of the Food Security Act of 1985 (FSA) in reducing soil erosion do not eliminate the need in many communities to preserve farming on erodible land and to reduce agricultural runoff. More coordination between these programs is required if each is to achieve the specified objectives.

Environment, policy, and legislation

More coordination between soil and water conservation and farmland preservation programs should address natural resource concerns, public policy issues, and legislative actions. These concerns, issues, and actions must be dealt with in reviewing existing conservation and preservation programs because these programs represent simultaneous regulation of farmland, its uses, and the off-site consequences of these uses. Natural resource concerns require that environmental policy recognize the natural interdependency of farming, farmland, and soils; the combined losses of farmland, soil, and water resources; and the inseparability of water quality, land uses, and land limitations. Public policy concerns require that public awareness focus on the purposes of, participation in, and efficacy of preservation and conservation programs. Public policy issues also address the state and local impacts of national policies, private property interests, and federal objectives and priorities. Finally, policymaking actions center on formulating and implementing regulatory schemes and mechanisms and the intended effects of these regulatory schemes. Policymaking actions require consideration of ways in which regulatory mechanisms advance existing policies; conflict with legal limitations; and influence existing social, economic, and political conditions.

These concerns, issues, and actions promote broad societal representation and participation in eliminating inconsistencies between conservation and preservation programs. Such representation and participation is needed if coordinated regulatory schemes or programs are to impose forceful land use obligations through multipurpose mechanisms rather than single-purpose controls. Multipurpose mechanisms, however, must be tied to the availability of government incentives and benefits.

Natural resource and land use concerns

Existing and emerging policies and programs. Resource conservation and farmland preservation policies have led state and local governments to establish different objectives and regulatory schemes for these programs. State and local governments preserve farmland to protect farmland and farming, to preserve open space, and to maintain the rural way of life. Efforts to conserve soil and water are aimed at maintaining farm productivity, reducing agricultural runoff, and controlling soil erosion. In both cases, purely voluntary programs have failed to induce participation, to provide adequate economic benefits and incentives, and to restrict owners' use or management of land. Farmland conversion and soil erosion still occur despite the presence of these regulatory policies and programs.

Many state and local governments loosely connect or separate farmland conversion and soil erosion programs on much erodible agricultural land. The federal government, under FSA, only recently has mandated consistency between farm production and soil and water conservation programs. Moreover, the federal Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) requires federal agencies to consider state and local farmland preservation programs in providing assistance to local landowners. Farmland evaluation criteria under FPPA recognize that soil erosion is a limitation to farmland uses. Federal programs are neither financially broad nor forceful enough to induce conservation treatment or uses that protect soils, farmland, and water quality. The federal government should urge broader state and local coordination by coordinating its soil and water conservation, farmland preservation, and farm production policies.

FSA promotes and establishes consistency between federal soil and water conservation policies and farm production policies. However, federal policies include temporary land diversion and permanent cross-compliance programs. Funding to support land diversion and farm production programs is limited, however. Moreover, land diversion and cross-compliance pro-

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grams under FSA do not apply to or require enrollment of all erodible land. FPPA demonstrates a federal concern for farmland preservation and does not impose land use restrictions on farmland within the states. The temporary nature, limits on coverage, and narrow interest of federal programs means that water quality, conservation, and preservation policies are still not adequately supported by federal statutes and regulations.

Because farmland conversion and soil erosion affect primarily state and local interests, the federal government should urge states to develop more consistent agricultural land use, soil erosion, and water quality objectives and priorities. The federal government should urge states to coordinate efforts to control soil erosion, farmland conversion, and agricultural runoff. The federal government should continue to provide technical assistance and financial support to states with these consistent objectives and priorities. State objectives and priorities must be consistent with or directly support federal objectives and priorities for maintaining productivity, reducing soil losses, and improving water quality. The federal government should urge the states to impose forceful obligations under regulatory schemes consistent with FSA and FPPA because many farmers cannot participate in the land diversion program or are not subject to cross-compliance provisions. Federal programs and assistance should support state efforts to establish forceful obligations, multipurpose mechanisms, and more consistent state and local objectives to control soil erosion, agricultural runoff, and farmland conversion.

Interdependent natural resources and their uses. Erodible land in production that is subject to farmland conversion, susceptible to soil erosion, and contributing to water quality problems should be regulated by coordinating regulatory programs. Much farmland is protected under both preservation and conservation programs. This farmland is productive erodible land, the use of which for agricultural purposes should be protected. This land's soil properties, topography, or climate often lead to erosion, which, in turn, limits or restricts agricultural use. Severe limitations require major conservation treatment or a restriction on agricultural uses. Use of highly erodible land as cropland may require a complete ban. Preservation and conservation programs that protect erodible land and its uses but ignore this land's limitations lead to conversion, idleness, unsuitable uses, and inadequate treatments.

Many states allow agricultural land in capability classes II through VI to be preserved. These classes may include some farmland that is excessively eroding or moderately to severely erodible. FPPA classifies land eligible for federal protection as prime farmland; unique farmland; and farmland, other than prime or unique farmland, of local or statewide agricultural importance. FPPA recognizes that prime farmland must not be excessively erodible and that unique farmland and other farmland can require treatment and management. Many land classes are broad enough to include slight to severely erodible land. Preservation of farmland and uses within these classes is evidence of the need to coordinate preservation and conservation programs. These conservation and preservation programs could be failing to recognize the interdependence of farmland, soils, and farming, which has led to uncoordinated programs that simultaneously bring about losses of soil, water, and land resources.

Public policy issues

Federal objectives and priorities. The *National Program for Soil and Water Conservation: 1988-97 Update* sets forth national objectives and priorities for soil and water conservation. Reducing soil erosion and protecting water quality will be given top priority in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) conservation activities. Such objectives only further the ultimate federal

goal of emphasizing agricultural productivity because soil erosion and poor water quality are major threats to agricultural productivity. This does not necessarily mean that production policy will take priority over soil and water conservation policy. FSA provides for consistency between federal production programs and soil and water conservation programs. FSA attempts to make certain that federal programs for conservation and production are coordinated to avoid inconsistency when both programs are applied to the same farmland. Under the cross-compliance provisions of FSA, farmers are induced to apply soil and water conservation treatments as a condition for federal production subsidies on much erodible land. A few farmers may voluntarily but temporarily divert some cropland for a term of years to land uses suitable to local soil limitations or capabilities. Although federal policies establish production and conservation consistency and resource objectives and priorities, soil erosion and farmland conversion are still mainly state and local interests and concerns. Nevertheless, state and local governmental officials have been reluctant to promote forceful regulatory programs and schemes to protect farmland, soil, or water quality.

Existing mechanisms to coordinate programs. The national soil and water conservation program update and FSA include mechanisms that can be used to develop consistent objectives, formulate consistent priorities, and jointly apply various land use and resource techniques and controls under coordinated regulatory schemes. These mechanisms are cross-compliance, program consistency, conservation priorities and resource planning and plans. All provide for better coordination among programs and greater consistency among objectives for agricultural land and its management under coordinated regulatory schemes. First, program consistency makes certain that farmland preservation and soil conservation programs do not counteract each other. Second, cross-compliance mechanisms provide that, at a minimum, landowners and farmers who receive direct and indirect government incentives and benefits must comply with land use and resource requirements. Third, resource planning and plans identify and establish uses of soils, water, and farmland that are threatened by soil erosion and farmland conversion. Planning and plans place proper land use and resource requirements on the farm or land in an individualized manner. Fourth, land use objectives and priorities are set forth so that land use, treatment, and government funds and assistance are applied to control uses of farmland, soils, and water and their impact on communities' social and economic conditions.

The mechanisms help to establish coordinated programs but do not change or add to existing policies. They provide for coordinated programs to advance policies by furthering programs objectives and priorities. With these mechanisms, coordinated programs and schemes can recognize and respond to broader issues and concerns: (1) interdependency and its effect on combined losses of farmland, soil, and farming; (2) the variety of direct and indirect benefits and incentives; (3) off-the-farm policy influences on farming, farmland, and farm communities; (4) the need to tie landowner obligations to both government benefits and land use objectives; and (5) the need for administrative agencies making land use and resource decisions to cooperate with each other and consult regularly. Coordination advances policies by establishing consistent, prioritized objectives among separate regulatory programs that are implemented on the same farmland or farms.

To be effective on farmland and farms, consistent objectives and priorities need to be enforceable obligations if they are to advance the declared policies of separate programs and schemes.

Coordination of conservation and farmland preservation programs is a must if both programs are to achieve their desired objectives.

Land use obligations must be tied to government benefits and incentives that are available to achieve established objectives and priorities. Those obligations should require landowners to apply multiple-purpose mechanisms that are to be implemented under resource planning and plans.

Policymaking actions

A major legal limitation. Coordinated programs with forceful obligations and multipurpose mechanisms should be a valid exercise of police power because these programs and mechanisms together further legitimate state interests in agricultural productivity and in land and water use. Coordinating farmland preservation and soil conservation programs may not allow owners and users to make the highest and best uses or to defer indefinitely both conservation land use or treatment of erodible farmland. Owners and users may argue that restrictions on the use and management of their farmland and its resources constitute regulatory takings of private property for public use in violation of the takings clause of the fifth and fourteenth amendments to the U.S. Constitution. States have exercised their police power to establish land use and resource regulations to preserve farmland and its uses, control urban growth, preserve open space, and protect water quality. Police power has been exercised in a valid sense even when land use regulations were enacted to benefit the holder of a different property interest, to impose a financial burden on the landowner, to burden the owner's economic or investment expectations, and to restrict use and intensity of an owner's use. In some instances these regulations were held not to constitute a taking when they provided owners some reciprocal benefits or value, such as orderly growth, transfer of development rights, or protection from harm, to lessen the burdens or hardships. Because coordinated programs consider the benefits, restrictions, and burdens imposed on each landowner under several programs and then grant economic and legal benefits, one might conclude that it is a more prudent exercise of police power that fully considers the burden imposed by separate, inconsistent programs. These programs, therefore, should be held by state and federal courts not to constitute regulatory takings.

Economic, social, and political issues. Many communities need farming and agribusinesses to help sustain the rural way of life. Federal production and conservation and state conservation and preservation policies and programs influence farming, farmland uses, and agribusinesses. These policies and programs prohibit farmland conversion, restrict farmland uses, limit crop production, or divert farmland from crop production. As

these policies and programs are implemented, they bring about impacts on local and state economic, social, and political conditions. These policies and programs could influence economic growth and change social conditions within communities by changing the economic base, tax base, and social standing associated with farming, agribusiness, and land ownership. Moreover, when these policies and programs do not recognize urban and rural social, economic, and political needs, they may foster rural-urban political conflicts. Urban dwellers see farmland and surface water as open space with immense aesthetic qualities that are enjoyable and recreational. Farmland and urban runoff are nonpoint sources of pollution that reduce urban and rural surface and subsurface water quality. In short, conservation and preservation programs affect the social, economic, and political conditions of rural and urban sectors.

Several policy concerns and policymakers influence governmental regulations or decisions to protect soil and water resources and farmland. The direction of American agricultural policy is greatly influenced by national and international affairs. Policies regarding food supply, farming, foreign affairs, and environmental concerns suggest that agricultural land policies will not be determined by landowners and rural or farm communities alone. Moreover, a small percentage of farmers produce the largest percentage of crops, but these farmers own a small percentage of American agricultural land.

Coordinating existing programs. Coordinating conservation and preservation programs requires the interfacing of separate regulatory schemes, building interagency cooperation, enforcing land use obligations, and applying more than one single-purpose mechanism. Separate regulatory programs and schemes must put forth consistent objectives and priorities that avoid competition and conflict among land use and natural resource agencies. Interagency cooperation means establishing working arrangements or relationships among land use, natural resource, and other agencies. Coordination of conservation and preservation programs and schemes does not change the roles of land use and natural resource agencies in the administration of their respective programs and schemes.

Forceful land use obligations imposed upon owners of erodible land in use or production is most crucial in meeting individualized land use and resource requirements. If owners can choose not to comply with or apply conservation and preservation requirements, then these requirements will not achieve declared policies. Forceful obligations alone may not be sufficient. Multipurpose mechanisms may be needed to implement conservation and preservation regulations together to accomplish coordinated objectives and priorities. Coordination does not give preference to either soil conservation, farmland preservation, or water quality. Preference or priority is a state and local policy decision from which land use and resource decisions follow.

Coordination does not change or modify the existing authority and functions of federal, state, and local land use and natural resource agencies. Coordinated regulatory schemes recognize and require the expertise of both land use and natural resource agencies to develop coordinated programs and schemes that prevent combined losses of and protect interdependent farmland, soils, and water resources. Coordination of conservation and preservation programs maintains state and local land use control over farmland conversion, soil erosion, and water quality problems that are locally situated. □