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EPA Committee Completes Report on Agricultural Issues

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) federal advisory committee on agricultural issues, the Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Committee (FRRCC), has submitted its report to the agency on agricultural and water quality issues. The report offers recommendations on the most effective approaches for dealing with water quality issues related to agricultural production and improving water quality across the United States. It also provides suggestions for increasing support for certainty programs, increasing stewardship, and coordinating resources with USDA, land grant universities, and the farm community to support a strong partnership effort.

The report emphasizes the importance of trust and the value of state programs, flexibility, and voluntary conservation practices in achieving water quality goals. It notes the willingness that the agency has shown in maintaining and advancing an open dialogue with key stakeholders on how to address agricultural nonpoint source pollution as a critical first step.

In four meetings over the past 15 months, the committee held deliberations uncovering critical and complex interactions between agriculture and the environment as well as a wide range of policy and technical issues that can span entire watersheds and production systems, along with the federal, state, and local regulatory systems that govern them. The committee gathered information from a wide range of experts on water quality, regulatory programs, conservation, and major water systems including the Chesapeake Bay, Mississippi River Basin, Puget Sound, Florida, and the Great Lakes.

The FRRCC is a federal advisory committee consisting of approximately 25 members representing academia, industry (e.g., farm groups and allied industries), non-governmental organizations, and state, local, and tribal governments.

The FRRCC was established by EPA in 2008 to provide advice, information, and recommendations to the administrator on a broad range of environmental issues of importance to agriculture and rural communities.

To view the FRRCC report: http://epa.gov/ofacmo/frcc/reports_advice.htm