



25x'25 Adaptation Group Project Synopsis

Introduction

The effects of changing weather and climate present new challenges towards meeting our goal of providing 25 percent of our nation's energy from farms, forests, and ranches by the year 2025, all while continuing to meet the world's food, feed, and fiber needs. Whether it be thriving pests like the mountain pine beetle in the West, increases in dramatic rainfall events as seen in the Midwest and Northeast, record droughts such as those occurring in the Southwest, or greater uncertainty in planting and harvest seasons, climactic changes are already affecting agriculture and forestry across the country.

While the causes of climate change are widely debated, its impacts will need to be addressed in order for a 25x'25 future to be realized. For this reason, the 25x'25 National Steering Committee has formed an Adaptation Work Group composed of agriculture, forestry, business, academic, and conservation leaders. Together this group will explore the impacts of a changing climate on the agriculture and forestry sectors and make consensus based recommendations on the best ways to mitigate negative outcomes.

The project will be divided into three distinct phases:

- Developing an Action Plan for assessing impacts;
- Producing a White Paper documenting findings and recommendations;
- Sharing findings and recommendations with 25x'25 partners, agriculture and forest sector leaders, energy stakeholders, and policy makers.

Phase One: Developing an Action Plan

The first task of the Work Group will be to develop an Action Plan to guide its work and accomplish both its short and long-term goals. This plan, which will be adopted by the Work Group by the end of September 2011, will contain a list of the group's objectives, action steps for accomplishing each, as well as deadlines for their achievement. Throughout the multiple phases of the project, the Action Plan will be reexamined and revised as necessary.

Phase Two: Assessing Impacts and Formulating Recommendations

Phase two will begin with an exploration of the anticipated changes that the agriculture and forest sectors will need to address as a result of climactic shifts. In doing so, the Work Group will rely on analysis that has been conducted by a broad range of respected sources, including universities, government agencies, and internationally respected experts. This body of work will form a base of knowledge from which to consider climate change's impacts on, but not necessarily limited to:

- Crops
- Livestock
- Pollinators
- Pests
- Invasive Species
- Disease
- Infrastructure
- Water
- Soil
- Biodiversity

Next, the Adaptation Work Group will outline their findings in a White Paper that lays out a prioritized series of recommendations for actions that should be taken by government agencies, universities, and business partners, as well as farmers, ranchers, and forest land managers to address the adaptation challenges facing the agriculture and forest sectors in the coming decades. The White Paper will also identify areas where further research is merited in order to aid future decision-making.

Phase Three: Facilitating Ag Sector Dialogue on Findings

During the final phase of the project, the Adaptation Work Group's findings will be published and disseminated through a variety of media outlets and information multipliers to reach relevant audiences including producers, stakeholder organizations, and policymakers. As a coalition of nearly 1,000 organizations, 25x'25 has an extensive network and takes advantage of traditional and new media sources such as blogs and social media sites. In addition to widely disseminating its White Paper, the Work Group will organize webinars, discussion forums, and a national conference through which producers, researchers, technical service providers, government officials, and policy makers can engage in a dialogue about the impacts of climate change on the agriculture and forest sectors and the steps that will need to be taken to adapt.

Anticipated Outcomes

As a result of this project, 25x'25 will:

- Publish a report identifying the key challenges posed by climate change to the agriculture and forestry sectors and presenting a clear list of adaptation recommendations.
- Help educate and generate greater awareness and engagement within the agriculture and forestry sectors on the impacts of climate change.
- Facilitate dialogue and forge consensus on proactive policies and action steps that can help prevent significant economic disruption of our nation's agricultural and forestry systems.

Project Leaders

The following experts and agriculture leaders have agreed to participate and lead this project:

Fred Yoder (Chair) – Former President, National Corn Growers Association

Keith Alverson – Board Member, National Corn Growers Association

Wendy-Lin Bartels – Assistant Research Scientist, Southeast Climate Consortium and the Florida Climate Institute

Bob Bignami – President, American Jersey Cattle Association

Mike Branch - Manager of Forest Sustainability, RockTenn

Len Bull – Professor Emeritus of Animal Science and Former Associate Director of Animal & Poultry Waste Management Center, North Carolina State University

Chris Clayton – Ag Policy Editor, DTN/The Progressive Farmer

Neil Conklin – President, Farm Foundation

Jimmy Daukas – Managing Director of Agriculture & Environment, American Farmland Trust

John Diener – Owner, Red Rock Ranch

Robert Foster – President, Vermont Natural Ag Products; Vice-President, Foster Brothers Farm Inc.; President, AgReFresh

Chris Galik – Senior Policy Associate, Nicholas Institute for Environmental Policy Solutions, Duke University

Steve Gill - Owner, Gills Onions

Jerry Hatfield – Laboratory Director, National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment
Bill Hohenstein – Director of the Global Change Program Office, USDA (*ex officio*)
David Inouye – Department of Biology, University of Maryland
Steve Irsik – General Partner, Irsik Equities, L.P.
Kevin Jeffries – Board Member, National Association of Conservation Districts
Jamie Johansson – Second Vice President, California Farm Bureau
Roger Johnson – President, National Farmers Union
Reece Langley – Vice President of Government Affairs, USA Rice Federation
Matthew Langholtz – Natural Resource & Environment Economist, Oak Ridge National Laboratory
Dan Nelson – Executive Director, San Luis & Delta-Mendota Water Authority
Don McCabe – President, Soil Conservation Council of Canada
Nathan McClure – Director of Forest Energy and Development, Georgia Forestry Commission
Lois Wright Morton – Professor of Sociology, Iowa State University
Bobby Moser – Special Assistant for External Relations and Former Dean and Vice President for Agricultural Administrations, Ohio State College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
Paul Penner – Second Vice President, National Association of Wheat Growers
Jeremy Peters – Director of Federal Policy, American Farmland Trust
Jimmie Powell – Team Lead for Energy Strategies, The Nature Conservancy
Benjamin Preston – Senior Research and Development Staff, Environmental Sciences Division, Oak Ridge National Laboratory
Chuck Rice – Kansas State University Distinguished Professor and Professor of Soil Microbiology, Past-President of the Soil Science Society of America
Rudy Rice – Chairman, Native Pollinators in Agriculture Work Group
Tom Richard – Director, Penn State Institutes of Energy & the Environment
Matthew Roberts – Assistant Professor of Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics, Ohio State University
Merle Scheiber – Director of Insurance, State of South Dakota
Jon Scholl – President, American Farmland Trust
Allan Stokes - Environmental Programs Director, National Pork Board
Gene Takle – Climate Science Program Director, Iowa State University
Doug Williams – Certified Forester and President, The Williams Group
Roger Wolf – Director of Environmental Services, Iowa Soybean Association
Tim Fink – Project Manager, 25x'25 Alliance Adaptation Initiative
Ernie Shea – Project Coordinator, 25x'25 Alliance

For More Information

For more information on the 25x'25 Adaptation Work Group, contact Tim Fink at tfink@25x25.org or 410-252-7079. Additional information on the 25x'25 Alliance can be found at www.25x25.org.