

An Overview of the

Ag Advisory Committee

William Fink, Country View Family Farms
Robert Waring, Brandon Farms & Colonial SWCD
Chesapeake Bay Commission, November 12, 2026

Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District

Brandon Farms

Country View Family Farms

Agriculture's Role in the Work Ahead



Image: Wheat is harvested along the Choptank River in Talbot County, MD. Dave Harp, Bay Journal.

Most remaining nitrogen reductions under the states' Phase III Watershed Implementation Plans are expected to come from agriculture.

AAC gives farmers and agricultural businesses a direct voice in shaping practical, economically viable conservation policies.

Why AAC Was Established

- Executive Council established AAC in December 2024. Members first met in March 2025.
- Farmers and agricultural businesses bring practical experience directly into Bay Program policy discussions.
- Conservation strategies must account for farm operations and economic viability.

Who AAC Represents

- Fourteen members: two from each watershed jurisdiction.
- Farm experience spans livestock, dairy, crops, horticulture and urban agriculture.
- Members connect producers, conservation districts, businesses and agricultural organizations.
- Bill Fink, Chair
  Bob Waring, Vice Chair



AAC Work Underway

- Soil health: working toward a joint workshop with STAC on water quality benefits.
- Farm viability: connecting conservation decisions with costs, risk and profitability.
- Implementation: examining verification, recognition and barriers to adoption.
- Innovation: reviewing manure treatment, biochar and emerging approaches.
- Governance: representing agriculture as the partnership implements its new structure.



Creating Value Through Conservation

Investment	Recognition	Measurement
Country View Family Farms makes investment - Grower Payments	PACS farm certification	PACS verification and National Pork Board We Care
Environmental requirements are built into farm costs and expected returns. Grower payments help support that investment.	Verifies stewardship beyond basic requirements so we can demonstrate it to growers and customers.	PACS verifies practices. We Care sustainability reporting documents practices and helps identify further opportunities.

Conservation is part of our cost of doing business.

Different Farms Begin at Different Points

- Production systems, infrastructure and previous investments shape each farm's conservation opportunities.
- At our new Pennsylvania CAFO facilities, required environmental planning and controls form part of the initial investment.
- Further improvements may involve nutrient efficiency, soil health, manure management or technology.
- Programs should support new improvements while recognizing and sustaining existing stewardship.

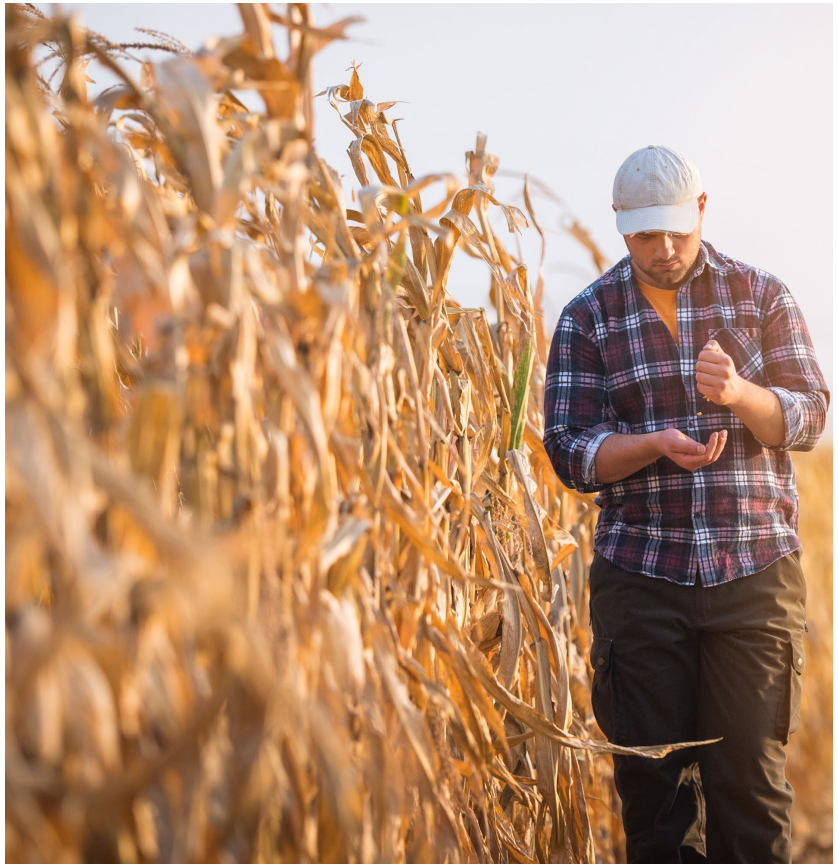
Country View's Investment and Stewardship

- Manure storage, nutrient management and NPDES permitting are part of the initial farm investment.
- Projects must earn a return after these costs. High upfront costs can limit new farm development.
- Country View's grower payments help support the investment in farms and their conservation systems.
- PACS recognition and We Care reporting help us demonstrate stewardship and identify opportunities to improve.

CERTIFIED FARM

PA AGRICULTURE CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP™

Looking Forward



- The Advisory Committees are a two-way street with key partners. Members bring expert advice and insight, while serving as ambassadors out into their networks.
- **AAC Priorities**
  - ID new technologies that have the greatest potential to impact water quality
  - Advise on policies or strategies to advance those practices
  - Move the conversation in the ag community from a yield-driven approach to a profit-driven approach

Conservation Practices and Farm Returns

Per acre unless noted	Brandon Farms Regenerative	Farm #2 Traditional
Tillage	$0.00	$59.00
Seed corn	$112.00	$93.00
Broadcast fertilizer/starter at planting	$66.70	$163.40
Broadcast nitrogen at planting	$12.00	$29.00
Chemical application at planting	$15.90	$30.10
Sidedress nitrogen applications	$59.00	$65.80
Postemergence chemical application	$23.80	$0.00
Cover crop seed	$40.00	$0.00
Total listed input costs	**$329.40**	**$440.30**
Yield (bushels per acre)	211	191
Crop revenue at $4 per bushel	$844.00	$764.00
Return above listed input costs	**$514.60**	**$323.70**
Total N Applied	**120 lb**	**185 lb**

$110.90

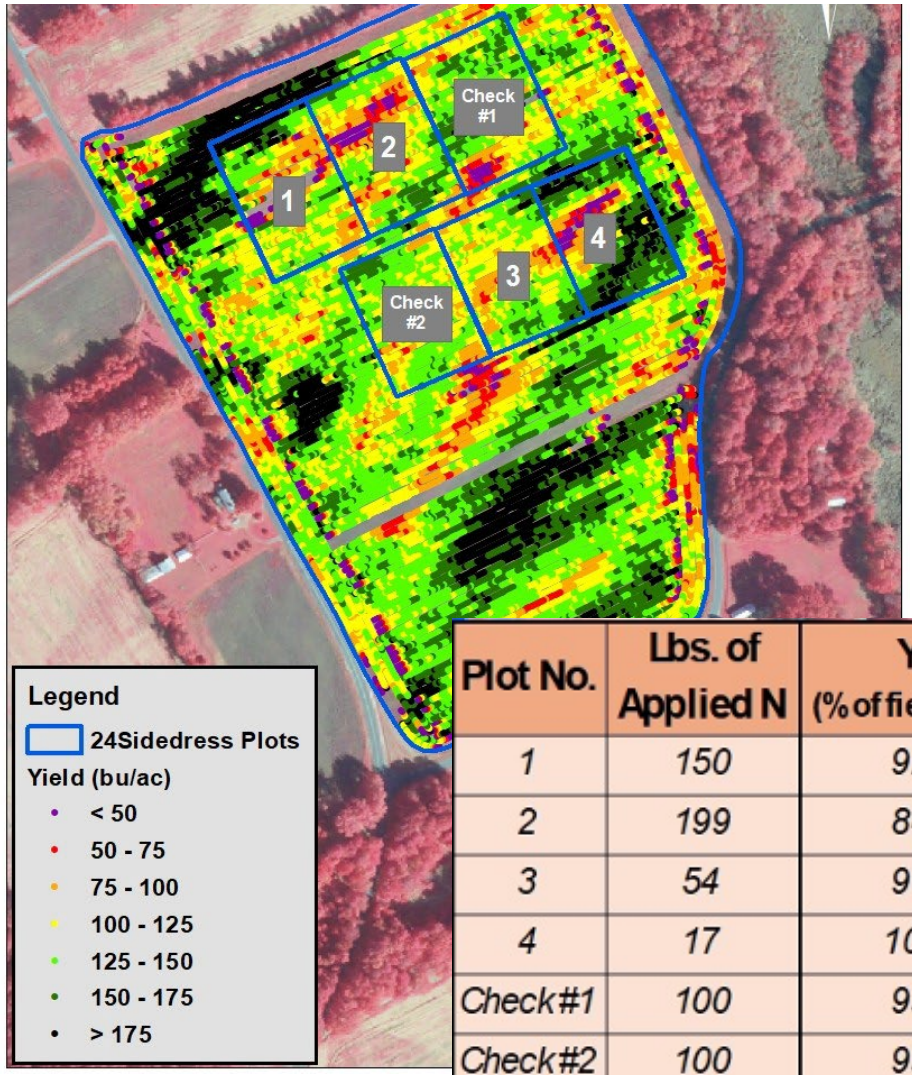
Lower listed input costs per acre

$190.90

Higher return above listed inputs per acre

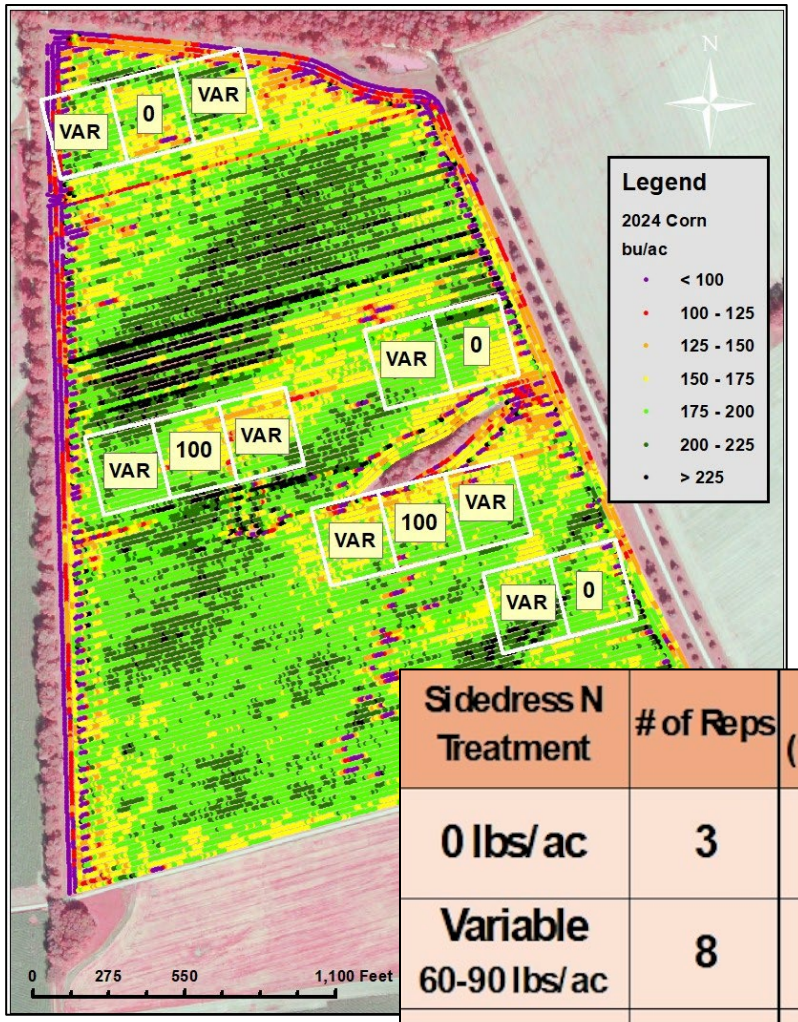
Illustrative partial budget. Excludes land, labor, fuel, insurance, financing and other costs. Results reflect these plots and conditions.

2024 Legume Nitrogen Rate Study

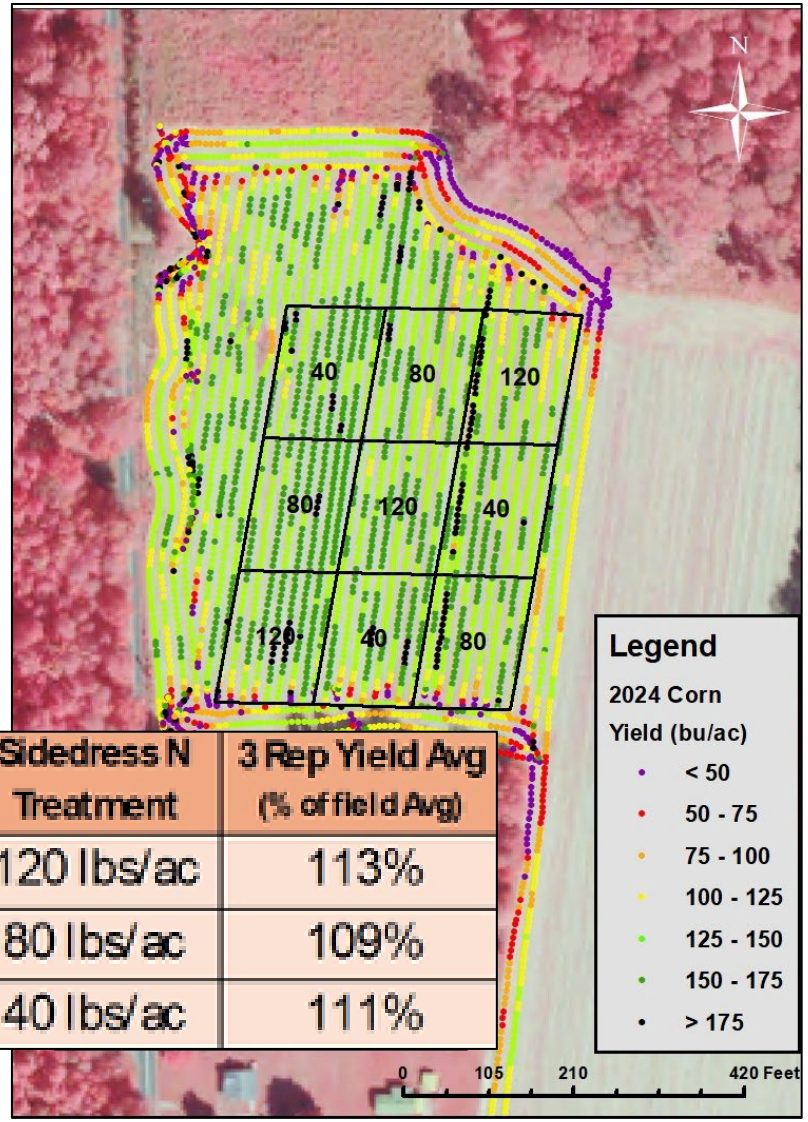


Plot No.	Lbs. of Applied N	Yield (% of field average)
1	150	92.3%
2	199	84.6%
3	54	91.8%
4	17	107.7%
Check#1	100	93.4%
Check#2	100	93.4%

2024 Legume Nitrogen Rate Study



Sidedress N Treatment	# of Reps	Yield (% of field avg)
0 lbs/ac	3	101.6%
Variable 60-90 lbs/ac	8	100.3%
100 lbs/ac	2	91.8%



Sidedress N Treatment	3 Rep Yield Avg (% of field Avg)
120 lbs/ac	113%
80 lbs/ac	109%
40 lbs/ac	111%

Opportunities for the Partnership

- Match conservation assistance to different farm systems and starting points.
- Recognize verified stewardship and support measurable improvements.
- Engage producers early in policy and program development.
- Design pay-for-outcomes programs that reward measurable water-quality benefits while supporting farm viability.
    - Simplify reporting and verification across programs.

Economically viable farms have greater capacity to invest in lasting conservation.

Contact Information



William (Bill) Fink
AAC Chair
Country View Family Farms
wfink@cvff.com



Robert (Bob) Waring
AAC Vice Chair Chair
Brandon Farms
brandonfarms3012@gmail.com

Colonial Soil and Water Conservation District

Brandon Farms

Country View Family Farms