

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations &
Conservation Technology Information Center
present:**

Conservation Agriculture Carbon Offset Consultation

October 28, 29, 30 2008
Beck Agricultural Center
West Lafayette, Indiana, USA

Session I.

Conservation agriculture for emission reduction/carbon sequestration: Experiences from institutes, associations, programs & bodies

Presentations from nations and regions that have existing carbon trading schemes for agriculture. Presentations will be 20 minutes in length, followed by questions and answers. After the presentations, a facilitated discussion with all participants will capture what is known/learned from as well as the challenges and opportunities encountered by these existing programs. Presentations may be heard from experts representing: Africa, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Caribbean, Central America, China, European Union, India, New Zealand, Russia, South America, United States and others.

Session II.

Demand for carbon offset markets

Panel discussions on two topics, followed by facilitated discussion with all participants.

Markets, standards and schemes

A comparative assessment of various markets standards, their requirements and their ability to enable low GHG agricultural activities while at the same time transfer technology, transfer knowledge, support sustainable development and increase livelihoods. The discussion will also address the issue of environmental integrity of the emissions reductions, such as are they real, measurable and additional. Possible topics include: CDM/JI, California Climate Action Registry, World Resources Institute, Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, Chicago Climate Exchange, Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards, European trading system, voluntary carbon standard, voluntary offset standard and more.

Financing and investing opportunities in conservation agriculture

A discussion of options for financing carbon offset markets followed by a facilitated discussion about general matching points and gaps between what exists and what is required to establish a global system.

October 28-30, 2008

Session III.

Remaining questions/issues regarding conservation agriculture in global carbon offset market

Panel discussions on the following topics (three breakout sessions):

Emission reduction potential and feasibility of technologies and agriculture GHG mitigation measures in carbon markets

Discussion to include the following: minimum till/no till, optimization of feeding strategies for livestock, reduced water use and water content of waste, reduced management needs (energy saving), waste treatment technologies and practices, mortality management, nutrient management planning, crop nutrient needs, crop residue management.

Conceptual framework for conservation agriculture project activities: consideration of key issues for integration of agricultural activities in carbon markets

Issues to be discussed include: defining project boundary (geographical vs. functional or combination of both), setting the baseline (including: emissions/changes in carbon pools that should be included in baseline), concept of leakage (increase in emission vs. change of emission, attributable to project activity; displacement of emissions to areas outside the project boundary), permanence/non-permanence (experiences with addressing issue of permanence as applied in the current non-CDM schemes shall be analyzed), uncertainties associated with emission reductions (complex biological and ecological processes and variability between season and locations for achieving consistent offset quantities), determining the carbon steady state for soils (when maximum storage in soils is reached), impact on other GHG emissions/reductions (determination of the conditions for these processes-nitrous oxides, methane).

Barriers and opportunities/implementation issues

Issues to be discussed include: costs within a carbon market – fees related to the transaction and costs to measure sequestered carbon and to monitor the practices and contract, property rights and implications for implementation of management changes, other barriers, such as availability of capital, the rate of capital stock turnover, the rate of technological development, risk attitudes, need for research and outreach, consistency with traditional practices, pressure for competing uses of agricultural land and water, demand for agricultural products, high costs for certain enabling technologies (e.g., soil tests before fertilization), and ease of compliance.

October 28-30, 2008

Session IV.

Compilation and next steps

Facilitated discussion about what was learned, what still needs to be determined and what next steps are needed to achieve the goal of engaging agriculture in a global carbon offset market. Participants will draft and agree to a declaration of this expert consultation for proposed steps forward. The outcome of this meeting will be a clear direction about the steps necessary to assess the potential in existing global carbon offset market and how these can enable agriculture in using no-till and/or conservation agriculture through carbon finance.