



Date: April 30, 2011

Subject: SW LWG 2012 EQIP08 Implementation Package

To: Dave Brown

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At the Southwest Team Local Work Group meeting on February 25, 2011 the group reviewed the types of applications in progress and discussed the new resource concern prioritization. Because the 2011 contracts were still in development, the group was not able to view the final results from each fund pool, but had an approximate number of applications that NRCS expected to fund at that time. We reviewed and verified the priorities used in 2010 with the new streamlined resource concerns. The group chose to keep our existing four fund pools, dissolving the cropland sub-fund pools that were used in 2010. The decision was made to rate the pesticide in surface water resource concern as a comparable priority to other surface water concerns, and allow these applications to compete for funding with the rest of the cropland subgroup. Since the non-cranberry cropland group is a fairly new one for the SW team to work with and had limited applications in 2011, the decision was made to leave the focus in the pool fairly general, to be revisited in 2012 after the next cycle of applications come in.

The decision was made to keep the fund pool percentages at 40% for the Confined Animals group and 20% for Multi Land Use, Cropland, and Forestland. The expectation is that leftover funds will be divided equally among the remaining fund pools. The group was pleased with the way that this worked in 2011. There were no applications in the Confined Animal pool and the funds rolled over evenly to the other fund pools.

The transition to Land Use fund pools worked out well for the SW Team since surface water quality is still the priority focus in the different land uses. For 2012 the consensus was to continue with Water Quality continuing to be the priority resource concern.

The four fund pools are:

1. **Confined Feeding Operations** – Livestock, Dairy, Poultry operations that meet the CFO & AFO definitions.
2. **Multi- Land Use** – operations that have grazing land or grazing land and cropland that do not meet CFO and AFO definition or size requirements.
3. **Cropland** – Cropland operations or application is for only cropland.
4. **Forest Land** – Forest land.

Again in 2012 surface water quality from nutrients and organics will be the focus for the Confined Feeding Operations. In the Multi-Land Use pool, Surface Water Quality is still the focus but some secondary resource concerns including Degraded Plant Condition-Productivity, Health and Vigor and Wildlife Habitat (including pollinators) have been included. The Forestland focus is on Soil Erosion, Surface Water Quality and Water Quantity and other

hydrologic resource issues generated from forest roads. Other secondary resource concerns are still included in the focus of the Forestland pool, similar to 2011.

The emphasis in change for the SW Team from 2011 to 2012 will be in the Cropland fund pool. For the past several years the focus on cropland has been the surface water quality-pesticide issue with the Cranberry producers in Grayland, WA. Application for assistance in 2011 had decreased with seven contracts.

The Cropland Subgroup of the LWG has recommended that the Cropland fund pool be managed as a single fund in 2012. This will make the pesticide in surface water resource concern one more resource concern to be treated on cropland, rather than the focus of a sub-fund. The General Cropland fund pool will still have water quality as its highest priority but is inclusive of several other cropland and soil related resource issues. Focus is on the use of Cover Crops (NRCS PS 340) that provides multiple resource benefits including water quality while being inclusive of smaller urban cropland operations. It will also include a secondary focus on encouraging pollinator habitat on cropland. There is a significant change in direction and focus on cropland operations for 2012. Surface water quality concerns are primary within the Cropland fund pool. In 2011 the Cropland subgroup had intended to include the seasonal high tunnel pilot practice as an eligible practice for the fund pool, this has been added to the 2012 EQIP package.

1. Objectives:

For 2012 EQIP, the SW Local Work Group will continue to target surface water quality concerns as its top priority to be addressed through EQIP along with multiple resource concerns on the three major land uses, cropland, forestland, and grazing land.

Surface water quality issues were reaffirmed and forestry was elevated as the SW LWG's primary resource concerns to be addressed by the EQIP program.

2. Funding Distribution:

The SW Local Work Group has decided to stay with funding pools to address the priority resource concerns by land use or agriculture operation. The proposed percentage split will be 40% to the Confined Feeding Operations fund pool, and 20% to each of the other three. Any residual allocation left over from a fund pool will be split equally among the three 20% allocation fund pools.

3. List of LWG Members:

A list of the attending SW Team Local Work Group Meeting held in Longview, WA February 25, 2011 is attached. No subcommittee meetings have been planned at this time although the Local Work Group recommends that the subgroups be given the opportunity to meet prior to the 2012 general LWG meeting.

4. Ranking Criteria:

See attached file entitled "SW 2012 EOIP08 Pack-RCs-Mod-Final.xls" for resource concerns; national, state, and local questions/modifiers; category weighting; individual score; eligible practices and definitions.

5. Eligible Practice List:

See page 4 of the attached spreadsheet file "SW 2012 EOIP08 Pack-RCs-Mod-Final.xls" for the list of eligible practices.

6. Cost Share/Incentive Payment Information:

A. Cost-share percentage for each practice:

Determined by State Technical Committee.

B. Cost-share for limited resource producers and beginning farmers

Determined by State Technical Committee.

C. Practice hold-downs

Hold downs on some practices will be reinstated.

D. Incentive Payment Limits

Incentive/management payments will be made at a flat rate for no more than three (3) years not to exceed the hold-down for the incentive/management practice.

<u>Local Ranking</u> <u>Questions/Modifiers</u>	SOUTHWEST TEAM	
(1) Do you need to develop a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan to address an existing nutrient and animal waste utilization problem on your livestock/poultry operation?		
		Score: 5
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Grant points if the application is a livestock/poultry operation with lands where animal manure is applied, and will include the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan that meets NRCS criteria. Evaluation may be based on case file information and applicant interview. An existing nutrient management resource problem must be present to receive these points.	
(2) Will you implement an animal waste storage and/or animal waste treatment facility for your livestock/poultry operation to treat a significant water quality resource problem?		
		Score: 25
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Grant points if a waste storage and/or animal waste treatment facility is needed and included in the application. Evaluation may be based on applicant interview, livestock/poultry numbers, and current storage capability.	
(3) Do you plan to implement an on-farm animal mortality facility to properly compost/treat animal mortality on your livestock/poultry operation?		
		Score: 15
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Grant points if an animal mortality facility is needed and included in the application. Evaluation may be based on applicant interview, livestock/poultry numbers, and current facility capability.	
(4) Will you implement practices that control or collect animal waste and contaminated surface runoff from concentrated livestock/poultry areas to storage or treatment facilities?		
		Score: 25
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Assign points for practices that control and collect animal wastes and other contaminated surface runoff from concentrated livestock/poultry areas to storage facilities or treatment facilities.	
(5) Will you implement treatments that either divert or exclude surface water runoff from livestock/poultry concentration or confinement areas?		
		Score: 25
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	

	Assign points for a practice or group of practices which will be applied that divert or exclude surface water runoff from concentrated livestock/poultry areas, or practices that contain/treat contaminated surface water runoff from concentrated livestock/poultry areas, and/or animal trails & walkways.	
(6) Will you implement practices which facilitate the improved transfer and/or application of animal wastes to eligible receiving ground?		
		Score: 10
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Assign points for practices which facilitate the transfer and/or application of animal wastes to receiving grounds (cropland, pasture, forage ground). Implementation of these practices will facilitate the applicant improve waste utilization, achieve the nutrient management goals prescribed in the CNMP and/or bring in new additional acres for waste application.	
(7) Will you implement a fenced buffer that will exclude livestock access into streams, water bodies and wetlands on your operation?		
		Score: 15
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Grant points if application includes a fenced buffer for livestock exclusion from water bodies and wetlands. Off channel watering facilities can be included when needed.	
(8) Will you implement either or both water developments and cross-fencing to achieve proper grazing distribution in order to facilitate the practice of prescribed grazing which will improve forage condition on your grazing lands?		
		Score: 5
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Grant points if there is sufficient indication that: (1) there is either a lack of adequate water quantity or availability and/or (2) there is lack of adequate cross-fencing and these are limiting factors for achieving proper grazing distribution. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, case file information, the National Range and Pasture Handbook, and applicant interview.	
(9) Will you implement a practice(s) that will improve the efficiency of your current irrigation system, facilitate the practice of proper irrigation water management, and/or conserve irrigation water?		
		Score: 10
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	

	Grant points if the <u>current</u> irrigation system will be improved and irrigation water management will be applied. This includes replacing an open delivery system with pipeline, replacing leaky delivery pipeline, converting above ground portable mainlines to underground pipelines, converting or improving sprinkler systems to more efficient systems. The intent is not to increase irrigation capacity of the existing system or irrigated acreage.	
(10) Will you install any of the following types of buffers (Grass Buffer Strip, Field Border, Hedgerow, or Riparian Forest Buffer) on your operation that will provide a water quality benefit? If primary purpose is wildlife or pollinators use question 24 instead.		
		Score: 25
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Grant points if the application includes a buffer practice that will provide a water quality benefit. Filter strips, field borders, grassed waterways, hedgerow plantings, field windbreak, shelterbelts, contour grass strips, grass buffer strips, and riparian forest buffers are all examples of conservation buffers. Evaluation may be based on aerial photos, topographic maps, and applicant interview. If practice primary purpose is wildlife use question 24.	
(11) Will you install any of the following types of buffers (Grass Buffer Strip, Field Border, Hedgerow, Windbreak/Shelterbelt) on your operation to address resources concerns other than water quality. Benefits could be to air quality, or other non-water quality related concerns. If primary purpose is wildlife or pollinators use question 24 instead.		
		Score:10
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Grant points if the planned practices address air quality concerns, including chemical drift or odor, and/or provide visual screening. If practice primary purpose is wildlife use question 24.	
(12) Will you develop and implement an integrated pest management plan on cropland or grazing land (NRCS Practice 595) to NRCS quality criteria.		
		Score:10
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Grant points if the application includes cropland or grazing land with an existing need to manage pests and minimize environment risk. Each Pest Management 595 plan and specifications will include the documentation and maintenance of an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan and will encourage the minimum level of pest control necessary to meet crop production objectives. Basic Plan may be implemented up to 3 consecutive years.	
(13) Will you implement conservation practices that mitigate the adverse impact of pesticides to surface and/or ground water on cropland?		
		Score: 25
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	

	Grant points if the application includes cropland or grazing land where pesticide use is needed for production and there is a high risk of water contamination from their use. Practices will be implemented to reduce adverse effects of pesticides in ground and/or surface water. Practices can include mitigating practices that reduce contamination of water from pesticides. Evaluation may be based on pesticide risk analysis and/or documented adverse effects on ground and/or surface water.	
(14) Will you implement a cover crop on your operation (NRCS Practice 340).		
		Score: 30
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Grant points on cropland that requires vegetative cover for natural resource protection. Practice is only eligible to be implemented on <u>fields</u> that have had cover crop not more than 2 of the previous 3 years. Cover Crop may be paid up to, but may not exceed, 3 years of consecutive implementation. For example, if a cover crop was planted once in the previous 3 years, that field would be eligible for 2 consecutive years of implementation.	
(15) Will you implement a nutrient management plan on your operation (NRCS Practice 590)?		
		Score: 25
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Grant points if an existing nutrient management related resource concern is present on all lands where plant nutrients and soil amendments are applied. Resource concerns may include soil condition, water quality, or air quality. Basic plan may be implemented up to 3 consecutive years.	
(16) Will you conserve soil moisture and suppress weeds by mulching on cropland (NRCS p		
		Score: 5
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Grant points if the mulching is intended to control noxious and invasive plants, reduce tillage, modify soil temperature or help maintain soil moisture sufficient to reduce irrigation needs. Document that mulching isn't currently implemented in that field.	
(17) Will you implement a composting facility to address resource concerns associated with current on-farm composting activities (NRCS Practice 317)?		
		Score: 10
	<u>Modifier Definitions:</u>	
	Grant points if a composting facility will address existing surface or ground water quality resource concerns related to current on-farm composting activities. If implementing a composting facility a 590 plan must also be implemented.	
(18) Will you implement a Seasonal High Tunnel System for Crops to improve plant productivity (NRCS Practice 798)?		
		Score: 5
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	

	Seasonal high tunnel will be installed on currently cropped farm ground, for production of in-ground crops.	
(19) Are you planning to correct impaired water management features on existing forest roads which treat erosion, sediment delivery, inadequate drainage, and other water		
		Score: 50
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Grant points if there are road related erosion, sediment delivery, inadequate drainage or other water management problems. Eligible roads are private, non-industrial roads on all eligible lands. Road construction is not eligible. Problem areas can be identified by RMAP Plans, aerial or onsite photo interpretation, and from landowner descriptions.	
(20) Will you implement treatments that enhance an existing forest riparian zone on your o		
		Score: 15
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Grant points for enhancing existing riparian areas. Conservation practices will be implemented that expand the current buffer widths or improve plant diversity, establish native species, or improve streamside habitat to meet NRCS Riparian Forest Buffer standards. Commercial thinning and/or harvesting are not eligible for cost share. Evaluations may be based on aerial photos, topographic maps, and applicant interview.	
(21) Do you plan to implement Forest Stand Improvement (666) in order to manage stand density on your forestland for one or more resources purposes?		
		Score: 15
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Points will be awarded if the applicant agrees to apply forest stand improvement practice(s) on the proposed contract acres. The definition of forest stand improvement is to manipulate species composition, stand structure, and stocking by cutting or killing selected trees and understory vegetation. The purposes are: to improve understory forage production, aesthetics, wildlife & fish habitat, recreation, hydrologic conditions; to improve or sustain timber production; to initiate forest stand regeneration; or a combination of purposes. Documentation for this practice includes: the extent and size of the treatment area; spacing, density and numbers of preferred species and understory species; stocking rates in terms of basal area, spacing or trees per acre by species and size class distribution; and the method, felling direction and timing of tree cutting.	
(22) Will you implement forest management practices for the purpose of treating or correcting adverse forest health (insect, disease, animal damage, noxious/invasive species, fire hazards) related concerns or issues on your forestland.		
		Score: 15
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	

	Grant points if the applicant agrees to implement forest management treatments that will treat or correct adverse forest health concerns. These will be health related issues above and beyond those forest health benefits derived from forest stand improvement practice (666). These would be adverse health conditions or threats resulting from insect damage, disease, animal damage, noxious invasive species and fire hazard, situations that pose a threat to forest productivity, health and vigor.	
(23) Will you convert cropland/pastureland back to native forest species.		
		Score: 15
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Points will be awarded if the applicant agrees to implement afforestation by converting historic or current cropland/pastureland back to native forest species.	
(24) Do you have an existing Forest Stewardship, Conservation, and/or forest management plan on the forest acreage identified to be treated if contracted?		
		Score: 5
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Points will be awarded if the applicant has a forest management plan for the forestland acres which will be treated. Forest management plan can include a plan. Applicant needs evidence of a management plan to receive points.	
(25) Will you implement treatments that will improve, restore, or enhance wildlife habitat limiting factors on your land? Wildlife improvement can include developing pollinator habitat.		
		Score: 10
	<u>Modifier Definition:</u>	
	Points will be awarded if the applicant agrees to implement treatments that will improve, restore, or enhance wildlife habitat limiting factors (identified by tech note 14) on their land as a primary purpose, not just as a secondary benefit.	

