

Agricultural Energy Management Plan

Overview

An Agricultural Energy Management Plan (AgEMP), commonly called an on-farm energy audit, is a valuable tool that helps you understand how energy is used on your farm. It provides guidance to help you prioritize actions and plan equipment upgrades that improve your energy efficiency. Improved energy efficiency usually translates into increased savings on fuel and electricity. It may provide additional benefits such as improved livestock comfort and increased safety for workers.

Specifically, the AgEMP separates farm energy use into specific groups by evaluating your equipment against your actual utility and fuel invoices. (Farm residence energy use is excluded although it may share the same meter.)

The AgEMP is not a feasibility study for the installation of renewable energy sources like solar, wind, or biofuels; nor is it a simple assessment like those found in online tools.

There is now only one type of AgEMP:

- Agriculture Energy Management Plan (Code 128)
The objective of an AgEMP is a detailed documentation and inventory of the energy consuming activities and components of the current agricultural operation. The plan will document a typical prior year of on-farm energy consumption, and the strategy by which the producer will explore and prioritize their on-farm energy conservation concerns, objectives, and opportunities.

Completing an AgEMP will take about 4-6 hours working with an energy auditor to inventory equipment and operations, and to discuss the completed report. Landscape AgEMPs may require more time, depending on the complexity and diversity of your operation.

EQIP Contracts for an AgEMP

- Any producer eligible for EQIP may apply for AgEMP funding through NRCS.
- An AgEMP contract is like any other EQIP contract, except it is exclusively for an AgEMP.
- One AgEMP contract may include multiple farming enterprises and tracts as separate line items.
- You can apply for an AgEMP even if you have an existing EQIP contract on the same farm.
- AgEMP applications may be submitted anytime; however, approval periods are announced each year. NRCS field staff can provide dates.

Energy conservation – using less energy

Energy efficiency – the same output for less energy, or an increased output for the same amount of energy input.

- An AgEMP must be completed by a certified Technical Service Provider (TSP). TSPs submit their qualifications, resumes, and sample plans to NRCS for review prior to certification.
- You are not required to implement recommendations made in the AgEMP. However, funding may be available for recommended upgrades through another EQIP contract.

Once the NRCS field office notifies you that your contract is approved, you need to ...

- Ask the field office for a list of certified TSPs in your state (or find one online at <http://techreg.usda.gov/>). Be sure the TSP is certified for the AgEMP type (Headquarters or Landscape) in your contract.
- Select and call the TSP. Discuss contract terms, conditions, scheduling, and personnel. Expect to sign an agreement and provide payment information. The agreement is between you and the TSP **not** the TSP and NRCS.
- Take time to read the criteria for your AgEMP so you have a clear understanding of what the TSP is being hired to do and why.
- Your agreement with the TSP should specify that the final AgEMP report provided to you by the TSP must meet NRCS criteria prior to payment.
- Gather your utility bills for a 12-month period (your utility suppliers and fuel dealer can help). This information is critical – without it the AgEMP will not meet NRCS criteria.
- Jot down notes about your equipment and buildings, and any plans you have made for improvements. Plan on a discussion of this with your TSP.
- Make sure you thoroughly review the AgEMP report with your TSP and understand the information.
- Ask the TSP to email a copy of the report directly to your NRCS office/conservation planner (you may have to provide the email address).
- The EQIP contract payment will be made once NRCS has a copy of the AgEMP and it has been determined it meets NRCS criteria.

What information can you expect to review from an AgEMP?

- An AgEMP examines current energy use on the farm by using an inventory of the major activities and by separating utility bills into specific groups.
- Recommendations for energy saving upgrades are made based on the inventory of systems and equipment. The estimated cost of upgrades with the payback period are summarized in the report. Estimates of potential reductions of emissions are also included.
- More information is available from your NRCS office, or you may refer to the NRCS EQIP Energy Initiative online at http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ct/programs/?cid=nrcs142p2_011039. Information is also available from SaveEnergy on the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy website at <http://www.usdairy.com/sustainability/for-farmers/farm-energy-efficiency>.