FRD01 – On Farm Research and Demonstration

Enhancement Description
On farm research and demonstration consists of the implementation of applied research projects on working farms to gather information and demonstrate the efficacy of the activity. The projects must fit within identified state priority topic areas.

Land Use Applicability
Cropland, Pastureland, Rangeland and/or Forest land, each approved project will have a land use designated.

Benefits
Researchers often need willing farmers to help them carryout out research projects on working farms. Participating in such projects can help farmers learn about new technologies while helping researchers determine the results of new technologies. The results of the research can help NRCS identify new and innovative techniques to address on farm conservation problems.

Conditions Where Enhancement Applies
This enhancement applies to all crop, pasture, range or forest land use acres.

Criteria
On-Farm Research and Demonstration projects consists of implementing applied research on working land to gather information and demonstrate the effectiveness of new and innovative conservation activities. The research projects must be conducted by an entity that seeks to determine the value of a conservation practice, component, treatment, or process. The entity must have the means and expertise to conduct the research, analyze the findings and develop conclusions from the findings that are relevant to NRCS. Projects are preapproved by the NRCS State Conservationist in each state.

This is not intended to require farmers to initiate on farm research and demonstrations but rather to encourage them to participate in new or ongoing research projects sponsored by other responsible parties such as universities or other research oriented entities. However, if farmers have the necessary capability to conduct scientific research, they can initiate their own projects within the topic areas identified by their state and the criteria of this activity.

Participants will need to follow criteria as outlined for each project that include:

- Goals of the research and demonstration
- A schedule showing completion of the project during the contract period
- A chronological list or plan of activities expected to take place during the project

- Planned end products or outcomes from the project
- Acreage needed
- Years research is to be conducted
- Farm inputs, equipment needs, etc.
- Expected assistance with data collection

Adoption Requirements
This enhancement is considered adopted when the pre-approved applied research project has been implemented and monitored according protocols developed specifically for the project and events to publicize the project have been held.

Documentation Requirements
- Results or conclusions from the research and demonstration
- Documentation of the CSP participant's participation in the research project including:
    - A schedule of activities undertaken by the participant
    - Fields or other areas of the farm involved in the research

North Dakota Requirements
All projects under this enhancement must be conducted by USDA or a university.

Conservation Stewardship Program
On-Farm Research and Demonstration Projects and Research Entity Requirements

Overview

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) encourages participants to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by undertaking additional conservation activities, and improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities. This enhancement is eligible for cropland, pastureland, rangeland, and non-industrial private forestland. CSP enhancements means a type of activity installed and adopted to treat natural resources and improve conservation performance. Many of the CSP enhancements are related to existing NRCS conservation practice standards, but at a management intensity level that exceeds minimum practice standards.

On-Farm Research and Demonstration projects consists of implementing applied research on working land to gather information and demonstrate the effectiveness of new and innovative conservation activities. The research projects must be conducted by an entity that seeks to determine the value of a conservation practice, component, treatment, or process. These projects are designed to encourage applicants to participate in new or ongoing research where participation is needed from working land. Interested researchers gain access to farmers that are willing to follow research protocols on their farm across a broad landscape. Farmers participating in such projects learn about new technology first hand, helping to determine how new technology will be applied.

NRCS invites interested researchers to submit their projects for inclusion as eligible On-Farm Research and Demonstrations. The purpose of this activity is not to provide primary funding for a research project, but to expand the area and acreage from which research data is collected. CSP applicants that choose to participate in On-Farm Research and Demonstrations are awarded conservation performance points that improve their CSP ranking and increase annual payment levels.

Project Criteria:

Eligible Entities

Research Entity Requirements

Entities must be able to demonstrate their means and expertise to conduct on-farm research, analyze findings, and develop conclusions that are relevant to NRCS. Eligible research institutions include land grant universities and others, who have ongoing research or the potential for research in the focus areas. Individual farmers are encouraged to participate in identified on-farm projects. However, if they have the necessary capability to conduct scientific research they can initiate their own proposal for consideration.

Research Project Requirements

Projects must address one of the resource concerns identified by NRCS as a national technology focus area and be conducted by a creditable research entity. States will identify specific projects within the national focus areas that they want to offer to CSP applicants in their states. Research projects should follow scientific methods that include project goals, hypotheses, data collection methods, results, summary, etc.

Project Documentation

Creditable research entities must submit a copy of their research project documentation for a State to use in selecting those projects that will be offered to applicants. The document should include:

a. Title of Research Project
b. Research Director/Manager work affiliation and contact information (phone, email, etc.)
c. Name and brief description of the research entity submitting the proposal, along with similar information for other collaborating researchers, if applicable
d. General description and/or summary of research to be conducted, specifying the national focus that is being addressed:
   - Air
   - Animal
   - Energy
   - Plant
   - Soil Erosion
   - Soil Quality
   - Water Quality
   - Water Quantity
e. The geographic location (e.g. state, county) or farm enterprise (peach growers, cattle producers) targeted by the research
f. Researcher expectation of participants, explaining what the participants will need to provide as part of the project. This should include acreage, number of years research is to be conducted, farm inputs, equipment needs, and/or assistance with data collection.
g. Total number of on-farm research sites needed
h. Copy of research projects final report for NRCS use

Evaluation Criteria

States should select research projects that will be offered to applicants based on the following or similar evaluation criteria:

a. Research purpose and goals as related to the resource focus area
b. Potential for success and adoption on a broad scale
c. Number of participants the research can appropriately involve
d. Demonstration of new and innovative approach to conservation
e. Design and implementation of research based on sound methodology and/or demonstrated technology
f. Capability of the entity to conduct scientific research
g. Potential to transfer the approach or technology nationally or to other geographic or socio-economic areas
h. Development or improvement of NRCS technical or related materials that will help foster expanded adoption of the innovative technology or approach

This information can be presented to interested participants as a fact sheet that outlines their involvement. Enhancement Job Sheet must be provided for additional information. States will notify the Field of the selected projects and associated entities that will be offered and available to applicants.