

PART 409 – CONSERVATION PLANNING POLICY

ME409.10 Minimum Standards for Providers of Conservation Technical Assistance Associated with Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (See Exhibit 4 for Certification Flow Chart)

(g)(1) **General Requirements.** The following are the general requirements for completion of certification criteria for any of the three CNMP elements:

- (i) Successfully pass pre or post test for NRCS NEDC Conservation Planning Course Modules 1-5.
- (ii) Complete NRCS NEDC Agricultural Waste Management Systems: A Primer Course.
- (iii) Complete the NRCS – NEDC – Introduction to Field Office Technical Guide course.
- (iv) Attend training where criteria associated with various elements of a CNMP as contained in the NRCS “Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning Technical Guidance” is covered.
- (v) Attend training where applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations that impact the elements of a CNMP are covered.

(g)(2)(i) **Manure and Wastewater Handling and Storage Element.** The following are required for certification in this element:

- (A) Employee(s) have engineering job approval authority or individual certification rating for practices in CNMP used to address this element. As a minimum, ratings will be at the “Perform Independently and Proficiently” for conservation practices used to address this element. (See Exhibit 3b)
- (B) Successfully complete NRCS NEDC Agricultural Waste Management Systems Level 2 Course.
- (C) Successfully complete NRCS NEDC Introduction to Water Quality course.

(ii) **Land Treatment Practices Element.** The following are required for certification in this element:

- (C) Is a NRCS Certified Conservation Planner.
- (D) Employee(s) have engineering job approval authority or individual certification rating for practices in CNMP used to address this element. As a minimum, ratings will be at the “Perform Independently and Proficiently” for conservation practices used to address this element. (See Exhibit 3b)

(iii) **Nutrient Management Element.** The following are required for certification in this element:

- (A) Successfully completes NRCS NEDC Introduction to Water Quality course.
- (B) Demonstrates skill in using Nutrient Risk Assessment Tools (N and P Manure Priority Matrix and Leaching Index) by submitting to State Conservationist’s designee, a conservation plan that uses these tools.
- (C) Successfully completes Nutrient Track of the NRCS NEDC Nutrient and Pest Management Considerations in Conservation Planning course.
- (D) Demonstrates skill in developing “Nutrient Management” Plans in compliance with NRCS Nutrient Management (Code 590) by developing a conservation plan which includes this practice for an Animal Feeding Operation (AFO) and submitting it for review to State Conservationist’s designee.
- (E) Certified by MDAFRR as Nutrient Management Planning Specialist.

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ME409.10(a)(2) Maintaining Certifications

- (i) The certified CNMP specialist's supervisor will determine the type and minimum hours of training necessary to maintain the certified CNMP specialist designation. Training to maintain and update CNMP planning skills must at a minimum, occur once every three years. The supervisor of the certified CNMP specialist, in recommending the recertification of the certified CNMP specialist, is certifying that this continued training requirement has been met.
- (j) For a certified CNMP Specialist to become re-certified – the certified CNMP Specialist's supervisor will review employee's work and skills in the area of CNMP and if work and skills meet required level, supervisor will recommend to SRC and SCE that certification in the CNMP element(s) be extended
- (k) List of NRCS Certified Specialists is maintained by State Resource Conservationist.
- (l) All CNMPs will be signed by NRCS Certified Specialists (see Attachment E). Certified Specialists will certify only elements they are certified in (see Attachment D).
- (m) See Attachment H for list of positions that are required to be Certified Specialists in CNMP Elements.
- (n) If quality of a certified individual's technical work is documented as not meeting NRCS requirements and policy, this individual may be decertified.