



Natural Resources Conservation Service
210 Walnut Street, Room 693
Des Moines, IA 50309-2180

October 2, 2012

IOWA BULLETIN NO. IA440-13-1

SUBJECT: PGM – FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2013 EQIP PROCESS TIMELINE, PRACTICE LIST,
RANKING, AND COST LIST

ACTIONS REQUIRED: TO STATE OFFICE BY OCTOBER 12, 2012

PURPOSE: To provide FY13 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) timeline and request field office (FO) review and update of local implementation of FY13 EQIP.

EXPIRATION DATE: September 30, 2014

District conservationists are to review and update county EQIP program description, practice list, and application ranking, and revise as needed.

1. EQIP Timeline

The FY13 timeline for EQIP is as follows:

October 12, 2012	District Conservationist sends FY13 Program Description and FY13 Practice List to Area Office (AO) for review.
October 19, 2012	Area Office sends FY13 Program Description and FY13 Practice Lists to State Office (SO) for posting on the Iowa NRCS website. Area Office enters county ranking criteria in ProTracts.
October 19, 2012	Cutoff for batching first signup period EQIP applications.
November 9, 2012	Deadline to rank for first signup period applications in ProTracts.
December 21, 2012	Cutoff for batching second signup period EQIP.
January 11, 2013	Deadline to rank for second signup period applications in ProTracts.
February 15, 2013	Cutoff for batching third signup period EQIP applications.
March 8, 2013	Deadline to rank for third signup period applications in ProTracts.
April 19, 2013	Cutoff for batching fourth signup period EQIP applications.
May 10, 2013	Deadline to rank for fourth signup period applications in ProTracts.
July 1, 2013	National deadline to have 100 percent of the state allocation obligated.

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2. EQIP Program Description

Review the 2012 Program Description on Iowa's NRCS website for your county and revise to show changes for 2013. **The attached template must be used with no format changes, insert your local information into the template labeled (county name)13WebsiteInfo.doc (example: Polk13WebsiteInfo.doc) and e-mail to the area office. Area offices are to review the website information, make any necessary corrections and place the files in the statewide shared drive at "S:\Service_Center\NRCS_statewide_shared\440_PGM_Programs\EQIP\2013 EQIP\2013 EQIP Web Site Info" no later than October 19, 2012.**

3. Website Practice List

Review the "2012 County Practice List" for your county and revise to show changes for 2013. **Area offices are to review the Practice Lists, make any necessary corrections and place the files in the statewide shared drive at "S:\Service_Center\NRCS_statewide_shared\440_PGM_Programs\EQIP\2013 EQIP\2013 EQIP Practice Lists" no later than October 19, 2012.**

Only practices which are in the local Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Section IV, are eligible for financial assistance.

The format of the Practice List is unchanged. If there are no changes to last year's Practice List, you can reuse last year's list and change the date in the title to 2013. If you need to make changes from last year's Practice List (check for updated practice names and life spans), use the attached template with the county name entered in the file name ([county name]13WebPracticeList.doc, example: Polk13WebPracticeList.doc) for the EQIP website. Conservation practice and payment rates must meet the following requirements:

- a) No local Practice List may have a cap for a waste storage/treatment facility of less than \$50,000. Practices are 316 – Animal Mortality Facility, 317 – Composting Facility, 362 – Diversion, 634 – Waste Transfer, 521A – Pond Sealing or Lining, Flexible Membrane, 521B – Pond Sealing or Lining, Soil Dispersant, 521C – Pond Sealing or Lining Bentonite Sealant, 521D – Pond Sealing or Lining, Compacted Clay Treatment, 558 – Roof Runoff Management, 632 – Solid/Liquid Waste Separation Facility, 635 – Vegetated Treatment Area, 313 – Waste Storage Facility, 360 – Waste Storage Closure, 367 – Roofs and Covers, 533 – Pumping Plant, 561 – Heavy Use Area Protection, 620 – Underground Outlet, 629 – Waste Treatment, 359 – Waste Treatment Lagoon, 591 – Amendments for the Treatment of Agricultural Waste, and 366 – Anaerobic Digester.
- b) Financial assistance may be offered for developing the following Conservation Activity Plans:
 - 102 Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP)
 - 104 Nutrient Management Plan
 - 106 Forest Management Plan
 - 110 Grazing Management Plan
 - 114 Integrated Pest Management Plan
 - 118 Irrigation Water Management Plan
 - 122 Agricultural Energy Management Plan – Headquarters (AgEMP) (Energy Initiative Only)
 - 124 Agricultural Energy Management Plan – Landscape (AgEMP) (Energy Initiative Only)
 - 130 Drainage Water Management Plan

- 138 Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition (Organic Initiative Only)
 - 142 Fish and Wildlife Habitat Management Plan
 - 146 Pollinator Habitat Enhancement Plan
 - 154 Integrated Pest Management Herbicide Resistance Weed Conservation Plan
- c) All Conservation Activity Plans must be contracted in single item contracts. No statewide sub-accounts will be created for the Conservation Activity Plans.
- d) CNMP Conservation Activity Plans must be written prior to beginning design of the associated waste storage facility. If an EQIP plan of operations includes an animal waste storage, management, or treatment facility, the participant must develop and implement as scheduled, a CNMP, prior to the installation of the waste storage, management, or treatment facility.
- e) Contracts that include forestry practices require a Forest Management Plan prior to installation of the first practice. Contracts that include practices to convert to organic farming require an Organic Management Plan prior to installation of the first practice. All practices (contracted or not contracted) included in the management plans must be fully applied.
- f) Iowa will follow National Initiatives guidance per National Bulletins as they are received.
- Energy Initiative
 - High Tunnel Initiative
 - Mississippi River Basin Initiative
 - National Water Quality Initiative
 - Northern Prairie Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative
 - Organic Initiative
- g) FY13 State sub-accounts are:
- Beginning Farmer/Rancher
 - CCPI Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation 2009 project
 - CCPI Trout Unlimited Driftless Area-2009 Project
 - Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative
 - Limited Resource
 - Socially Disadvantaged
 - Tribal
 - Wildlife Forestry Habitat
 - Wildlife-Grassland Habitat
 - Wildlife-Riverine Habitat
 - Wildlife-Wildlife Habitat Management
- i) Ponds are only eligible for EQIP when used as a water supply for grazing system improvements.
- j) Payments are based on the payment schedule. The document, FY13 Iowa EQIP Practice Descriptions and Payment Rates.doc, will be sent to district conservationists providing payment rates and a detailed description of the scenarios for each practice.
- k) Residue and Tillage Management (345) is only offered in the Energy and Organic Initiatives.

- l) Residue and Tillage Management Standards (329 – no-till or strip till) and (346 – ridge till) are eligible if determined to be needed locally. When Residue and Tillage Management is included in the contract for no-till, strip-till or ridge-till, and the item is scheduled for more than one year, the scheduled years must run consecutively.
- m) Financial assistance for tile, when Subsurface Drain (606) is associated with a grassed waterway, is limited to no more than the amount needed to maintain the grassed waterway, not to exceed six inch diameter tile. When additional tile is needed for upland drainage outlet(s), it may be installed at the participant's expense as long as all other requirements involving wetland conservation compliance are met.
- n) A sample ADDENDUM TO NRCS-CPA-1202 CONSERVATION PROGRAM CONTRACT is attached. The sample includes several suggested addenda items. Other items may be added.
- o) Any practice cap levels set locally must be based on the amount of financial assistance (caps are not allowed based on the amount of units except for interim practices). The following table lists state wide practice cap levels.

FY13 Iowa EQIP Payment Rate CAPs			
Practice Code	Practice Name	FY13 CAP	FY13 Caps for HU, Organic and CCPI
329	Residue & Tillage Management, No-Till/Strip-Till	\$24,000.00	\$36,000.00
346	Residue and Tillage Management - Ridge Till	\$10,000.00	\$15,000.00
590	Nutrient Management	\$16,000.00	\$24,000.00
595	Pest Management	\$10,000.00	\$15,000.00
798	Seasonal High Tunnel System For Crops	2,178 sq.ft.	2,178 sq.ft.

- p) In order for land to be eligible for an irrigation-related practice, that land must have been irrigated in two out of the last five years. This means that irrigation must have been part of managing the cropping system to meet the needs of the plant and to maintain the yields of an irrigated crop. To ensure the practice meets the program purpose, the irrigation practice must be addressing an identified resource concern, such as Soil Erosion – Irrigation Induced or Water Quantity – Inefficient Water Use. To document irrigation history use the attachment titled: Irrigation History Documentation.docx

4. ProTracts Cost List

Historically Underserved (HU) producers receive a higher payment rate. Statewide sub-accounts have been established for HU producers. The HU producers include: beginning farmers or ranchers, socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers, or limited resource farmers or ranchers. A link to information on these types of producers is provided here: <http://www.lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

The FY13 cost list will be uploaded by the SO to ProTracts for each county. The cost lists for EQIP include Code 900 series codes for Technical Service Providers. The cost list will be sent in a separate e-mail to the district conservationist login with a copy to the AO. These files will be used as the Toolkit cost list. Save the appropriate cost list spreadsheets on each computer that utilizes Toolkit in F:\FOTG\Section_1.

Some important things to remember about cost lists used in ProTracts are:

- Do not change the template format in any way, including the addition of headers/footers or footnotes.
- Cost list errors cannot be corrected in ProTracts. Errors are corrected by deleting the cost list, correcting the errors in the original spreadsheet, and uploading the cost list again.
- Deleting a cost list has no impact if it is not linked to any applications.
- If a cost list is linked to pending applications, the link is deleted along with all contract items. This ensures that applications are always linked to active cost lists.
- If a cost list is linked to an application selected for funding, the cost list associated with the application can be deleted if the application status is reset to pending.
- If a cost list is linked to an obligated contract, it cannot be deleted.

5. Ranking Criteria

Section 515.72 of the EQIP Manual provides very specific guidance on establishing the ranking process and criteria. Local ranking criteria have been developed for each of the four separate CRAs and will be loaded into ProTracts by the area program specialists.

A FY13 Prescreening Tool is being developed to help prioritize applications for ranking in ProTracts. All subaccounts with applications for livestock waste treatment practices must use the Prescreening Tool. Instructions will be attached with the Prescreening Tool when this has been completed and provided to the FO at a later date.

National and state ranking factors include questions about 303(d) Impaired Waters, Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), and Threatened and Endangered Species or Species at Risk (T&E).

Use the current 2010 303(d) watershed maps for EQIP that have been posted to the FO servers. The maps will be available in each FO at: f:\geodata\project_data\nrcs\equip. These maps will be updated since the 2010 impaired waters list is now final.

Links to information on these issues are provided here:

http://www.iowadnr.gov/Portals/idnr/uploads/watermonitoring/impairedwaters/2010/IA%202010%20Integrated%20Report_Cat-5_30Jun2011.pdf

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/WaterQuality/WatershedImprovement/WatershedResearchData/WaterImprovementPlans/PublicMeetingsPlans.aspx>

TMDLs must be approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

For T&E species, select the county of the application and click on submit. Select the PDF for information on habitat improvements that benefit the species affected. Points can only be awarded if the practice benefits the species. For species that do not have a PDF, contact the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) private lands biologists or wildlife biologist.

<https://programs.iowadnr.gov/naturalareasinventory/pages/Query.aspx>

Additional information on T&E Species may be found at:
<http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/lists/state-ia.html>

When habitat improvements may benefit or harm federally listed T&E species, NRCS must initiate consultation with United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Decisions regarding ranking issues:

Local resource concerns will be developed locally. Local criteria must adhere to the above guidance and as a minimum:

- Address only the resource concern(s) from the FOTG identified for the local program.
- Address national priorities identified for the local program.
- Address only the resource concern(s) which the client wishes to address through the EQIP application in the ranking of that application.
- The degree of cost effectiveness will be calculated automatically as the application is ranked, through a formula which helps determine the extent of cost effectiveness and environmental benefits. This is done by multiplying the Conservation Practice Physical Effects (CPPE) for the practice by the Practice Service Life (PSL), then dividing by the associated Practice Average Cost (PAC).
- Local funding pools are required for different land use types.
- Limit practices for payment rates to only those not well-adopted locally in solving the identified resource concern(s).

I look forward to another great year of serving our customers in implementing conservation plans through timely EQIP assistance.

/s/Jon Hubbert
Acting State Conservationist

Attachments:

NRCS-CPA-1202 Addendum.docx
County13WebSiteInfo.docx
County13WebPracticeList.docx
Irrigation History Documentation.docx