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February 8, 2012

KANSAS BULLETIN NO. KS300-12-38

SUBJECT: LTP—Fiscal Year 2012 Ogallala Aquifer Initiative Program Announcement and Implementation

Action required by: March 2, 2012 (Field Offices [FOs])
March 23, 2012

Action required by: March 30, 2012 (Area Offices [AOs])

Action required by: March 9, 2012 (State Office [SO])

Purpose. Provide guidance on the implementation of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Ogallala Aquifer Initiative (OAI) and distribute ranking criteria and eligible practices

Expiration Date. September 30, 2013

Available Funds

Kansas has received an EQIP allocation of \$2,000,000 for Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 OAI.

Priority Resource Concerns

The OAI uses EQIP funds to reduce the quantity of water removed from the aquifer and to reduce the contamination of water in the aquifer. Both primary and secondary resources are targeted; however, a primary resource concern must be addressed in order to treat a secondary resource concern.

Application Screening

All applications must be assigned a priority of high or medium in Program Contracts System (ProTracts).

- **High Priority** applications will include those that are located within the designated water quality or water quantity priority areas. In order to receive priority based on one of these, that resource concern must be treated (see Attachment 1).
- **Medium Priority** applications are those that are outside the designated high priority areas but are within the Ogallala Aquifer boundary.

Application Approvals

Application approval will be carried out starting with funding approval for all high priority applications and then moving to medium priority applications.

(more)

DIST: A, F, S, C. Nelson, FNM

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ProTracts Ranking Tool

ProTracts fund code for this EQIP initiative is Ogallala Initiative. AOs will be notified when the ranking tools have been released. Attachment 2 is the OAI state and local issues ranking questions. Guidance issued in Bulletin KS300-12-30 will be used to answer national priority questions. National questions are the same as general EQIP.

The ProTracts and Toolkit payment schedules will be uploaded to FO servers for this initiative once they are finalized.

Eligible Conservation Practices

Attachment 3 is the eligible practices list for the OAI. Contracts developed must include a core conservation practice. Supporting conservation practices are eligible if they facilitate the implementation of core conservation practices.

The selected resources concerns and conservation practices are shown in Attachment 4.

Deadlines

The FY 2012 application evaluation period cut-off date for Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) applications has been set for February 24, 2012.

FOs will have conservation plans, application rankings, and peer reviews of rankings completed by March 2, 2012.

The SO Programs Staff will make funding decisions by March 9, 2012.

All approved applications and documentation will be entered in electronic contracts (eContracts) by March 23, 2012.

Assistant state conservationists for field operations (ASTCs-FO) will ensure that all contracts have been obligated in ProTracts by March 30, 2012.

Approved applications over \$150,000 will follow guidance issued in Kansas Bulletin KS300-12-11. The ASTCs-FO will need to submit their request as soon as possible to meet the program deadlines.

Contact: Forward questions through established channels to Corey L. Nelson, Resource Conservationist, at corey.nelson@ks.usda.gov or (785) 823-4580.

(Signed)

ERIC B. BANKS
State Conservationist

Attachments