



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
760 South Broadway  
Salina, Kansas 67401-4604

Phone: 785-823-4500  
FAX: 785-823-4540  
www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov

---

February 1, 2012

## **KANSAS BULLETIN NO. KS300-12-35**

### **SUBJECT: LTP—Environmental Quality Incentives Program— Funding Distribution and Decisions**

**Purpose.** Issue the Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding distribution and provide instructions on the approving of those funds

**Expiration Date.** September 30, 2013

#### **EQIP Allocation**

The FY 2012 Kansas EQIP financial assistance allocation is \$19,928,861. The distribution of these funds is represented on Attachments 1, 2, and 3. Area and management unit allocations were based on the extent of each ranking category's resource concern in that area or management unit.

The allocation will also be used to fund the following (see Attachment 1):

- Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)
- Ogallala Aquifer Initiative (OAI)
- Organic Initiative (OI)
- Lesser Prairie–Chicken Initiative (LPCI)
- National Water Quality Initiative (new for FY 2012)
- State reserve for application cost overruns and cost overruns from 2012 contracts

#### **EQIP Contracting Authority**

Per Title 440—Conservation Programs Manual (CPM), Conservation Program Contracting (CPC), Part 512, Section KS512.3(A), the state conservationist (STC) has delegated the authority for signing EQIP financial assistance agreements (contracts) to the assistant state conservationists for field operations (ASTCs-FO).

(more)

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

### **Funding Recommendations and Decisions**

Supervisory district conservationists (SDCs) will prepare funding decisions for the ASTCs-FO for management unit allocation ranking categories of Water Quality/Cropland Health and Grazing Lands Health. Any funds not distributed within the management unit after February 17, 2012, will be transferred to the area reserve. Funding decisions for Forestland Health, Livestock Waste, and Water Quantity will be prepared at the area level.

The EQIP manager will prepare funding recommendations for all Beginning Farmer/Rancher, Limited Resource Farmer/Rancher, and Socially Disadvantaged Farmer/Rancher fund codes; along with Sedimentation of Federal Reservoirs, Water Quantity–Quick Response Areas, Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan Conservation Activity Plan, Nutrient Management Conservation Activity Plan, and Irrigation Water Management Conservation Activity Plan. These decisions will be provided to the ASTCs-FO.

Per CPM, CPC, Part 512, Section KS512.25 (E), each ranking category ranking list will be archived hard copy, filed, and retained in the appropriate office file.

The following guidance will be used to make decisions during the funding process:

- The Conservation Programs Geographic Information System (GIS) Interface (CPGI) and Program Contracts System (ProTracts) Application and Evaluation Ranking Tool (AERT) will be used to evaluate and rank all eligible applications. The AERT will be used to make funding decisions.
- Applications will be evaluated using statewide evaluation ranking criteria issued with Bulletin KS300-12-25 and will include only eligible practices issued with Bulletin KS300-12-29, and will be in accordance with CPM, EQIP, Part 515, Section KS515.81.
- The ASTCs-FO will ensure that any application made by a Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employee is reviewed by area office staff.
- State management practice payment limitations outlined in Bulletin KS300-12-29 will be followed.
- ProTracts Task Guides 3 and 4 will be utilized for preparing and ranking applications. The Task Guides are available at <http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/protracts.html>.
- The ASTCs-FO and SDCs should consider a reserve for application cost overruns in the ranking categories for which they are responsible as they begin to make funding decisions.

- A management unit allocation will not be used elsewhere in an area until all eligible management unit allocation ranking category applications have been funded in that county.
- Unused ranking category funds from a management unit should be used to fund other management units (within their NRCS administrative area) applications in that ranking category before they are redistributed to other ranking categories.
- All applications in an area ranking category must be funded before funds are redistributed to another ranking category.
- If ASTCs-FO have funded all eligible applications received by the application evaluation period cut-off date and funds remain, the funds will be returned to the state office for redistribution.
- In redistributing funds to other ranking categories, the ASTCs-FO should take into consideration the Kansas Technical Committee (KTC) recommendations as shown in the distribution on Attachment 1, as well as their area goals.
- Once application approvals have been made, field offices will compile appropriate documents and submit documentation to the Financial Management Staff for second level review. Once second level review has been "accepted," the ASTC-FO will obligate the contract.

The ASTCs-FO will notify Corey L. Nelson, Resource Conservationist, Programs Staff, of approved applications over \$150,000 after second level review has been completed. These applications will be reviewed by the area office for concurrence and will then be forwarded by the state office to the central regional conservationist for contract obligation. Follow guidance provided in Bulletin KS300-12-11 for filling out the questionnaires. The ASTCs-FO will submit questionnaires to Corey by close of business March 2, 2012.

Guidelines for management unit allocations, as outlined on Attachment 3, are as follows:

- There will be FY 2012 EQIP allocations to the management unit level in the following ranking categories: Water Quality/Cropland Health and Grazing Lands Health.
- Fifty percent of the allocation under each ranking category will be used for that ranking category. The remaining 50 percent may be used for that ranking category or the other management unit allocation ranking category, based on the past advice of the local work groups (LWGs) and the best professional judgment of the SDC. The number of applications, or their total cost, will not be a factor in the funding decision. Allocations under \$10,000 may be used for any management unit allocation ranking category.

- If there are no applications in a management unit allocation ranking category, the SDC may transfer those funds to the other management unit allocation ranking category.
- If there are not enough funds to fund the first application in a management unit allocation ranking category, the ASTC-FO should attempt to fund with their area reserve.

LWGs will be held in early summer to obtain recommendations for FY 2013 programs.

**Contact:** Please forward feedback and questions through established channels to Corey L. Nelson, Resource Conservationist, at (785) 823-4580.

*(Signed)*

ERIC B. BANKS  
State Conservationist

Attachments