



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

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

December 16, 2011

KANSAS BULLETIN NO. KS300-12-15

SUBJECT: LTP–Environmental Quality Incentives Program–Fiscal Year 2012 Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative

Action required by: February 6, 2012 (Field Office [FO])
April 2, 2012 (FO)
June 4, 20 (FO)
June 18, 2012 (Area Offices [AOs])
February 8, 2012 (State Office [SO])
April 4, 2012 (SO)
June 6, 2012 (SO)

Purpose. To provide guidance for administering the Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative

Expiration Date. September 30, 2013

Background

Through the EQIP Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will assist producers to extend the growing season for high-value crops in an environmentally safe manner. The initiative has the potential to assist producers in improving plant quality, improving soil quality, reducing nutrient and pesticide transport, improving air quality through reduced transportation inputs, and reducing energy use by providing consumers with a local source of fresh produce.

FOs will accept applications on a continuous basis. All eligible applications will be ranked in the Programs Contracts System (ProTracts) Application, Evaluation, and Ranking Tool (AERT).

(more)

DIST: A, F, S, C. Nelson

Application Ranking

The eligible land uses and resource concerns for the Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative are listed in Attachment A.

The eligible conservation practices and Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs) are listed in Attachment B.

NOTE: The ProTracts application type of “planning” must be associated with each CAP application. Ranking of these applications is not required. CAPs may be pre-approved after all eligibility requirements are met.

Attachment C provides a copy of the state and local ranking questions.

NOTE: National ranking questions are consistent for all EQIP applications.

Application Periods

Although applications for EQIP are accepted continuously, the following are the ranking periods for the Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative this FY:

- **Period 1:** The application ranking period cut-off date has been set for February 3, 2012. All eligible applications received by this date must be ranked and be pre-approved by the SO for funding by February 8, 2012. **Applications received will have rankings completed in ProTracts by close of business (COB) February 6, 2012.**
- **Period 2:** The application ranking period cut-off date has been set for March 30, 2012. All eligible applications received by this date must be ranked and be pre-approved by the SO for funding by April 4, 2012. **Applications received will have rankings completed in ProTracts by COB April 2, 2012.**
- **Period 3:** The application ranking period cut-off date has been set for June 1, 2012. All eligible applications received by this date must be ranked and be pre-approved by the SO for funding by June 6, 2012. **Applications received will have rankings completed in ProTracts by COB June 4, 2012.**

NOTE: The expectation is to have applications ranked and conservation plans completed as they are received.

Obligation Deadline

All Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative approved applications must be obligated by June 18, 2012.

Practice Clarification

As in previous years, the maximum practice extent for Conservation Practice (CP) 798, Seasonal High Tunnel, eligible for financial assistance shall be 2,178 square feet per **agricultural operation**. This may be single or multiple structures for a maximum of 2,178 square feet coverage. Conservation Programs Manual (CPM), Part 502, Section 502.0 defines an agricultural operation as “. . . a parcel or parcels of land whether contiguous or noncontiguous, constituting a cohesive management unit for agricultural purposes.”

NOTE: When a participant with cropped land signs up for Irrigation System Micro-irrigation and does not have the required Division of Water Resources (DWR) reports or Farm Service Agency (FSA) records verifying that they have met the two out of the last five years irrigation requirement, they will need to provide the FO with adequate documentation of irrigation history. The supervisory district conservationist and district conservationist will use his/her best professional judgment and document their decision in the case file.

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

(Signed)

ERIC B. BANKS
State Conservationist

Attachments