



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

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

January 14, 2013

KANSAS BULLETIN NO. KS300-13-35

SUBJECT: LTP—Fiscal Year 2013—Agricultural Water Enhancement Program Announcement and Implementation

Action required by: March 22, 2013 (Field Offices [FOs])
April 15, 2013

Action required by: April 30, 2013 (Area Offices [AOs])

Action required by: March 25, 2013 (State Office [SO])

Purpose. Provide guidance on the implementation of the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) and distribute ranking criteria and eligible practices

Expiration Date. September 30, 2014

Kansas has received an allocation of \$2,927,431 for the approved AWEP project areas for fiscal year (FY) 2013.

Project Areas

The allocation will be distributed among the following approved Kansas AWEP project areas following the formula developed from the amounts requested in their AWEP proposals. Five percent will go toward Historically Underserved (HU):

- Equus Beds Groundwater Management District (GMD) No. 2
- Southwest Kansas GMD No. 3
- Big Bend GMD No. 5

NOTE: The AWEP proposal for Northwest Kansas GMD No. 4 did not request funds for FY 2013.

(more)

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

The eligible priority areas are outlined on Attachment 1. The entire GMD No. 2 is eligible under their proposal. The eligible areas in GMD No. 3 are located in parts of Finney, Ford, Grant, Gray, Haskell, Kearney, Meade, Morton, Seward, Stanton, and Stevens Counties. The GMD No. 5 designated the Rattlesnake Creek subbasin as their project area.

GMD No. 5 is offering additional payments to participants. Questions from participants on these payments will be referred to the GMD.

Program Deadlines

The FY 2013 AWEP application evaluation period cutoff date is **February 15, 2013**.

All applications must be ranked and contracts uploaded to Program Contracts System (ProTracts) by **March 8, 2013**.

Application evaluation peer reviews will be completed by **March 15, 2013**. This review should focus on the ranking and eligibility of the application.

Supervisory district conservationists (SDCs) and district conservationists (DCs) should announce the program using the forthcoming Kansas AWEP news release.

Applications will be ready for funding decisions by close of business, **March 22, 2013**.

Approved applications over \$150,000 will follow guidance issued in Bulletin KS300-12-11. The assistant state conservationists for field operations (ASTCs-FO) will need to submit the request by **April 8, 2013**.

Documentation will be forwarded to the Financial Management (FNM) Staff for second level review as soon as all documentation is obtained, but no later than **April 15, 2013**. Per the Kansas Quality Assurance Plan (KQAP), a contract peer review should be completed prior to second level review. A contract peer review should focus on contract documentation.

All approved applications will be obligated by **April 30, 2013**.

Ranking Categories

Ranking categories were established in ProTracts as such:

- Equus Beds GMD No. 2
- Equus Beds GMD No. 2—Beginning Farmer/Rancher (BF/R)
- Equus Beds GMD No. 2—Limited Resource Farmer/Rancher (LRF/R)
- Equus Beds GMD No. 2—Socially Disadvantaged Farmer/Rancher (SDF/R)
- Southwest Kansas GMD No. 3
- Southwest Kansas GMD No. 3—BF/R
- Southwest Kansas GMD No. 3—LRF/R
- Southwest Kansas GMD No. 3— SDF/R
- Big Bend GMD No. 5

- Big Bend GMD No. 5—BF/R
- Big Bend GMD No. 5—LRF/R
- Big Bend GMD No. 5—SDF/R

NOTE: LRF/R, BF/R, and SDF/R may apply under the ranking category specific to their resource concern or the ranking category specifically for their HU group.

Eligible Practices

The FY 2013 AWEP eligible practices lists contain the conservation practices (CPs) eligible for financial assistance in each project area. See Attachments 2, 3, and 4. The SO will enter the AWEP payment schedule data into ProTracts and the Customer Service Toolkit (CST). New payment scenarios will be posted to the payment schedule data in the electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG), Section I—Cost Data.

The following Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) has been added to the eligible practice list for GMD No. 3 and GMD No. 5.

- CP 134—Conservation Plan Supporting Transition from Irrigation to Dryland Farming Plan

Management practices where participants are transitioning from irrigation to non-irrigated are eligible to receive AWEP financial assistance for those practices for up to five years.

Under the Equus Beds GMD No. 2 ranking category, there will be a conservation practice cap for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) CP 441, Irrigation System—Microirrigation. **This cap must be entered manually** into the contract item in ProTracts. SDCs are responsible for ensuring that these caps have been entered correctly.

There are program specific narratives in CST for AWEP contracts. If an application is not selected for funding, the CST conservation plan will need to be updated with non-program type narratives.

Ranking Criteria

All applications will be entered in ProTracts as “Partnership” under Application Type. “State or Local Government” should be entered for partnership type.

The ProTracts Ranking Tool will be used to rank AWEP eligible applications. Guidance issued in Attachment 5 will be used to answer national priority questions.

Each section of the ranking tool is weighted as such:

- Efficiency—10 percent
- National Priorities—25 percent
- State Issues—40 percent
- Local Issues—25 percent

Eligible land uses, state and local issue questions and points assigned, and additional requirements for each project area are outlined on Attachments 6, 7, and 8. Applications are evaluated by LOCATION county. LOCATION county will be determined by the location of the point of diversion being treated.

Additional requirements for the GMD No. 5 include a **COPY** of an affidavit to be provided to the NRCS by the participant prior to obligation (see Attachment 9 for your information). Questions on this affidavit will be referred to GMD No. 5. **NRCS employees are not to answer questions on this form.**

Some of the ProTracts Ranking Tool questions require the use of geo-spatial data. The Conservation Programs Geographic Information System Interface (CPGI) will be used to obtain this data. The application number in CPGI will match the application identification number from ProTracts.

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

(Signed)

ERIC B. BANKS
State Conservationist

Attachments