



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

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

April 15, 2013

KANSAS BULLETIN NO. KS300-13-54

SUBJECT: LTP—Environmental Quality Incentives Program—Fiscal Year 2013 Drought Recovery Initiative

Action required by: (Field Offices [FOs])
May 17, June 21, June 26, July 5, July 24,
and July 31

Action required by: (Area Offices [AOs])
June 26, June 28, July 12, July 24, July 26,
and August 7

Purpose. To provide guidance for administering the fiscal year (FY) 2013 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Drought Recovery Initiative (DRI)

Expiration Date. September 30, 2014

Background

National headquarters has allocated drought recovery funding under EQIP to eight states including Kansas. State conservationists must ensure that conservation practices (CPs) using EQIP financial assistance will support efforts that will mitigate short-term or long-term drought relief for producers. Through this initiative, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Kansas will emphasize assistance to producers with grazing lands health and livestock water concerns.

Eligible Land Uses, Resource Concerns, and CPs

The eligible land uses, resource concerns, and CPs are available in Attachment 1.

State Allocation

The NRCS in Kansas will distribute the state allocation to area subaccounts using the same allocation formula as EQIP—Grazing Lands Health, but at the area level. The formula calculates an area allocation using the area sum of grassland acres plus expired or expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres to calculate a percent of the state total. The state allocation is then distributed using the percent by area.

Funds may be redistributed between the areas, but only after the second signup.

(more)

DIST: A, F, S, Volkman

Screening Criteria

FOs must utilize the state screening criteria (Attachment 3) to support DRI to manage workload associated with application evaluation and ranking. Use of this screening worksheet is required and all eligible applications must have an assigned priority of “HIGH,” “MEDIUM,” or “LOW” recorded in Program Contracts System (ProTracts).

To substantiate the priority of “HIGH” or “MEDIUM,” adequate documentation must be recorded. Documentation may include Form NRCS-CPA-6, Conservation Assistance Notes; an application screening criteria worksheet from the Water Quantity and Drought Pilot; or documentation that the application was previously ranked but not approved for FY 2013 EQIP—Grazing Lands Health.

ProTracts Ranking Tool

The ProTracts fund code for this EQIP initiative is “Drought Recovery.” There will be a separate fund code available for each area allocation.

National ranking questions are consistent for all EQIP applications. Refer to Bulletin KS300-13-19 for additional guidance on answering national questions.

A copy of the state and local ranking questions are provided in Attachment 2.

All eligible “HIGH” and “MEDIUM” priority applications shall be entered into the Conservation Programs Geographic Information System Interface (CPGI). All answers available on the CPGI report will be used to answer the corresponding question on the ProTracts Application Evaluation and Ranking Tool (AERT). The application identification number in CPGI will match the application identification number from ProTracts.

Note: To reduce workload, “LOW” priority applications should not be ranked until notified by the AOs or SO.

Additional Requirements

- The unit of concern will be converted to a grazing plan during the life of the contract that will:
 - On grazed range, achieve 50 percent or less use for the year on the key forage species in identified grazing areas.
 - On pastureland or hayland, meet electronic Field Office Technical Guide (eFOTG) requirements for regrowth by the end of the growing season.
- On native rangeland, producer will implement a monitoring system using grazing exclusion cages approved by the NRCS that will verify the degree of use of the key forage species in identified key grazing areas, in the defined or planned grazing system, during the life of the contract.
- Cropland converted to grazing land will make up no more than 20 percent of the application acres to be eligible for this ranking category.
- Boundary fencing will be present prior to any financial assistance being paid on any practice on grazing land.

Application Periods and Deadlines

Although applications for EQIP are accepted continuously, there will be two FY 2013 application evaluation period cutoff dates.

- **Application Period 1:**
 - All eligible “HIGH” and “MEDIUM” priority applications received by the deadline of May 17, 2013, will be ready for funding decisions no later than June 26, 2013.
 - AOs will ensure that conservation plans, application ranking, and ranking reviews have been completed prior to funding decisions.
 - Funding decisions will be made by the AO no later than June 28, 2013.
 - All approved applications and documentation will be entered in electronic contracts (eContracts) by July 5, 2013.
 - Assistant state conservationists for field operations (ASTCs-FO) will ensure that all contracts have been obligated in ProTracts by July 12, 2013.

- **Application Period 2:**
 - All remaining “HIGH”, “MEDIUM”, and “LOW” priority eligible applications received by the deadline of June 21, 2013, will be ready for funding decisions no later than
 - July 24, 2013.
 - AOs will ensure that conservation plans, application ranking, and ranking reviews have been completed prior to funding decisions.
 - Funding decisions will be made by the area office no later than July 26, 2013.
 - All approved applications and documentation will be entered in eContracts by
 - July 31, 2013.
 - ASTCs-FO will ensure that all contracts have been obligated in ProTracts by
 - August 7, 2013.

Approved applications over \$150,000 will follow guidance issued in Bulletin KS300-13-50. 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 Chad G. Volkman, Resource Conservationist, at chad.volkman@ks.usda.gov or (785) 823-4580.

/(Signed) JEFFREY L. GROSS, ACTING FOR

ERIC B. BANKS
State Conservationist

Attachments