

Idaho Bulletin: 300-13-4

Subject: LTP –Idaho EQIP and WHIP Program Guidance – FY 2013 Date: December 6, 2012

Action Required By: May 1, 2013

Purpose. To provide guidance to support the following Fiscal Year 2013 programs through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP):

- National Organic Initiative (EQIP)
- National On-Farm Energy Initiative (EQIP)
- National Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative (EQIP)
- Sage Grouse Initiative (EQIP)
- Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW)- Sage Grouse Initiative (WHIP)
- General EQIP
 - All Division Fund Pools
 - EQIP AFO/CAFO
 - EQIP Animal Health Initiative
 - EQIP Dry Crop Divisions 3-6
 - EQIP Forestry
 - EQIP Species of Concern
 - EQIP Streambank
 - EQIP Beginning Farmer/Rancher Irrigated
 - EQIP Beginning Farmer/Rancher Non-Irrigated
 - EQIP Socially Disadvantaged Irrigated
 - EQIP Socially Disadvantaged Non-Irrigated

Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI), Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP), and Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure (SPCC) guidance will be forthcoming in a separate bulletin as soon as Idaho receives guidance from headquarters.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2013

Background. This bulletin consolidates guidance for general EQIP and several national and landscape initiatives to be offered through EQIP and WHIP.

Explanation. As released in Idaho bulletin 300-12-22, the following dates have been established for the FY 2013 funding cycle:

- November 16, 2012 – Application cutoff date
- November 30, 2012 – Applications entered into Protracts
- January 11, 2013 – Final eligibility completed
- March 1, 2013 – Ranking completed and cost estimates entered in Protracts
- May 1, 2013 – Obligation deadline

All EQIP applicants must meet Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) eligibility requirements in order to participate. The EQIP producer eligibility requirements can be found in the Conservation Programs Manual (CPM), Section 515.51. The EQIP land eligibility requirements can be found in the CPM, Section 515.52.

All WHIP applicants must meet Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) eligibility requirements in order to participate. The WHIP producer eligibility requirements can be found in the CPM, Section 517.22A. The WHIP land eligibility requirements can be found in the CPM, Section 517.22I.

Please complete the following prior to **January 11, 2013**:

- Ensure eligibility is met in ProTracts. At least 30 days prior, send ‘pending’ letter if eligibility is not current.
- Enter Direct Deposit (SF-1199A) and ensure that Vendor Code is **Active** in Protracts.
- Enter Dun and Bradstreet Number (DUNS) for applications submitted by entities and joint operations using an Employer Identification Number (EIN).
- Ensure the race, sex, national origin, and disability (RSNOD) data in SCIMS is correct. Entities as well as individuals should have updated RSNOD data.
- Ensure applicants that have self-certified as Historically Underserved complete the HU worksheet (attached).
- Select the appropriate fund code, payment schedule and planning type for each application.
- For applications containing engineering practices, assure NRCS personnel with the proper “Planning” and “Design” engineering job approval authority have reviewed the proposed conservation practices. Landowners must give permission for “non-management” practices to be installed on land that they are not operating.
- Inform the applicant what records will be required should their control of land or HU self-certification be selected for an annual 5% spot check.

Note: Enforcement authority for Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) under the 2008 Farm Bill expired 9/30/2012. Effective October 1, 2012, and until further notice, FY 2013 participants are not subject to Adjusted Gross Income limits. However, we can make no assumptions as to what the yet enacted legislation will contain. There is language in the CPC Appendix that states the following: “...In the event that a statute is enacted during the period of this contract which would materially change the terms and conditions of the contract, the CCC may require the participant to elect between modifying this contract consistent with the provisions of such statute or contract termination.”

Payment Schedules. The following payment schedules are available in Protracts for FY 2013 programs specified in this bulletin:

- EQIP General and EQIP General HU
- EQIP Special Initiatives and EQIP Special Initiatives HU
- WHIP General and WHIP General HU
- EQIP CAP

NOTE: All of the payment schedules available in Protracts (with the exception of the CAP payment schedule) have the entire list of conservation practices. This does NOT mean all the practices are available to be used in any given contract. Please refer to the attachments to this bulletin for the approved practices available for each program and initiative specified in this bulletin.

Ranking. Ranking tools are available in Protracts for each fund pool. Ranking and cost estimates will be completed for by **March 1, 2013**.

After applications have been determined eligible, ranking is complete, and a cost estimate is entered in Protracts, the following steps will be completed for contract development:

1. The State Programs staff will preapprove applications as funds are available. Notification will be sent via email.
2. Upload the contract to ProTracts, check rules, and ensure that all information is accurate on the application and applicant info screens.
3. Email the State Programs staff to request approval.
4. Once approved, print the NRCS-CPA-1202, Appendix and NRCS-CPA-1155 and obtain participant signatures.
5. Send documents, along with the completed Protracts Obligation Checklist, via e-mail or fax to Financial Management for second level review.
6. When you are notified that the State Programs staff has signed and obligated the contract, print the 1155 and 1202 signature pages and place them in the case file.

The **obligation deadline** for all contracts is **May 1, 2013**.

Please refer to the attachments for specific guidance regarding national Initiatives and general EQIP.

Contact. Please contact your Area Farm Bill Specialist if you have any questions.

/s/ Rob Sampson Acting for

Jeff Burwell
State Conservationist

Attachments: Attachment A – National Organic Initiative
Attachment B – National On-Farm Energy Initiative
Attachment C – National Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative
Attachment D – Sage Grouse Initiative
Attachment E – General EQIP Protocols
Attachment F – General EQIP Approved Practice List
Attachment G – Approved CAPs and associated Protracts Subaccounts
Attachment H – EQIP Public Lands Guidance
Attachment I – Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasure (SPCC)
HU Worksheet
General EQIP Screening Tool
Farm Bill Program \$150,000 Application Questionnaire
Protracts Obligation Checklist