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April 30, 2001

**NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT MANUAL, Third Edition, 1996**  
**180-V NFSAM**  
**Idaho Notice No. 6**

**Purpose:** Distribution of National Food Security Act Manual Amendment 6

Attached is the Amendment 6 for the Third Edition of the National Food Security Act Manual.

**Filing Instructions:** Please file the attachment as instructed on the amendment.

**NOTE:** Pages 518-15.1 and 518.15.2 to be removed may be on the back of pages that must be kept in the manual.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard W. Sims".

RICHARD W. SIMS  
State Conservationist

Attachment



NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT MANUAL, (NFSAM), Third Edition,  
180-V-NFSAM  
Amendment 6

March 30, 2001

**SUBJECT:** CPA - NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY ACT MANUAL (NFSAM)

Purpose: Transmit the 180-V-NFSAM, Third Edition, Amendment 6, March 2001.

Effective Date: This amendment is effective upon receipt.

Explanation of Changes: Clarifies policy and make corrections in the National Food Security Act Manual. Sections and pages listed below have been incorporated.

Significant revisions to the Third Edition of the NFSAM made by Amendment 6, March 2001:

Section	Change
512.10c	Clarifies policy on substantial increase requirements
512.10d	Clarifies policy on no substantial increase requirements
518.21e	Clarifies policy for sodbuster violations
520.11b	Clarifies policy for determining conservation compliance for sodbusting
520.11d	Corrects paragraph numbering error from c to d and deletes irrelevant material

Filing Instructions: Remove and insert pages as indicated below.

Remove Pages	Insert Pages
512-3, -4	512-3, -4
518-15.1, 15.2	518-15.1, 15.2,
520-5, 6	520-5, 6

-MORE-

DIST: NFSAM

The Natural Resources Conservation Service,  
formerly the Soil Conservation Service, works  
hand-in-hand with the American people to  
conserve natural resources on private lands

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Contacts: If there are questions about this amendment, please contact Beth Schuler at (615) 646-9741.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas A. Weber". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

THOMAS A. WEBER  
Deputy Chief for Programs

Attachment

## Subpart A - Conservation Systems

### 512.10 Definition of a Conservation System and Substantial Reduction

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**a**  
**Definition of a Conservation System**

A conservation system is a combination of one or more conservation measures or management practices.

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**b**  
**Technical Requirements of a Conservation System**

Conservation systems must be based on:

- local resource conditions;
- available conservation technology; and
- the standards and guidelines contained in the NRCS-FOTG.

Conservation systems must be designed to achieve, in a cost-effective and technically practicable manner on a field or group of HEL fields:

- a substantial reduction in soil erosion when compared to the level of soil erosion existing before the application of conservation measures or systems; or
  - a substantial improvement in soil conditions when compared to the soil conditions that existed before the application of the conservation measures and management practices.
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## 512.10 Definition of a Conservation System and Substantial Reduction, Continued

**c**                      When comparing the before annual level of erosion to the expected annual level of erosion, it is necessary to compare the same portion of the field(s). Determine substantial erosion reduction levels as follows:

**What is Substantial Reduction?**

IF the field...	THEN a substantial reduction...
was used to produce crops prior to December 23, 1985, and has an approved, applied, and maintained conservation plan or system,	has already been met, providing the conservation plan or system is applied and maintained, or the revised system has an equal or greater reduction in erosion.
was used to produce crops prior to December 23, 1985 and has a conservation system or plan that has been approved after July 3, 1996,	is a 75% reduction of the potential erodibility, not to exceed 2 times the soil loss tolerance level for the predominantly highly erodible map unit in the HEL field.
has no history of crop production prior to July 3, 1996,	does not apply. Furthermore, in no case will there be a substantial increase in soil erosion for land sodbusted from native vegetation. See 512.10(d).
had conservation systems contained in conservation plans approved prior to July 3, 1996,	the substantial soil erosion reduction requirement is met if the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• same person continues to use the conservation system, ore revises the system to provide the equal or better level of erosion protection; or</li> <li>• the new owner/operator accepts the approved conservation system/plan and continues application and maintenance.</li> </ul>

**d**                      When developing a conservation system for land converted from native vegetation, a substantial increase in soil erosion is defined as any soil erosion level that is greater than the sustainable level (soil loss tolerance-T) of the predominantly HEL mapping unit in the HEL field. In cases of determining substantial increase, the LS factor will be determined in the field.

**Substantial Increase Defined**

**e**                      NRCS, in providing technical assistance for conservation plans or systems, will provide the following information, as appropriate:

**Conservation Options**

- cost-effective, applicable erosion control alternatives;
- information pertaining to crop flexibility; and
- any other conservation assistance options.

## 518.21 Scheduling and Conducting Status Reviews,

Continued

e  
Sodbuster Field  
Reviews

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If a sodbusted field is discovered that does not have an approved conservation system documented in a conservation plan, the field review shall be documented as follows:

- date of conversion to cropland from native vegetation; and
- cropping history since the conversion from native vegetation.

In determining the system being applied, use the current cropping year information and crop management history, since the date of sodbusting. The cropping sequence evaluation starts with the date of the conversion and ends at harvest of the current year.

In no case will the carryover effect of the previous native vegetation (sod or trees) be considered when calculating the predicted soil loss for the conservation system as applied.

The rotation and tillage (cropping system) that is being or will be used on the sodbusted field(s) shall be used to calculate the predicted soil loss. The predicted soil loss for sodbusted fields must be no higher than the allowable soil loss tolerance for the predominantly highly erodible soil map unit for the field. (See 512.10(d)).

If a sodbusting violation is discovered during the first year of conversion from native vegetation, and the soil loss to date is less than tolerance, there may not be enough information to determine compliance with requirements for no substantial increase for the entire system being used. Grant an AM variance and schedule status reviews until sufficient crop management information is available to determine compliance with the conservation provisions.

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## 518.21 Scheduling and Conducting Status Reviews,

Continued

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### f Review After Variance

Status reviews on tracts in the year following issuance of a variance may be limited to:

- determine that the reason for the variance has been alleviated; and
- determine that the producer is using an acceptable conservation system.

NOTE: A complete status review does not need to be repeated unless the need to do so is determined by the DC or the tract is again randomly selected for a status review.

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### g WEQ and Compliance Determinations

When using WEQ for evaluating conservation system planning and application, the following shall be adhered to:

- If the system is planned using the Critical Period Method, then the system application shall be evaluated using the Critical Period Method.
- If the system is planned using the Management Period Method, then the system application shall be evaluated using the Management Period Method.

NOTE: Do not, under any circumstances, mix the use of the two WEQ calculation methods. A false evaluation will result.

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## 520.11 Determining Conservation Compliance on HEL and CRP Land, Continued

**b**  
**Accepting an Existing System**

Person acquiring HEL fields with existing conservation systems may accept and agree to maintain the current system. (See 512.14)

If the person does not agree to accept or maintain the existing system, the following criteria will be followed:

<b>IF the field, as determined by FSA...</b>	<b>THEN complying persons must...</b>
had an agricultural commodity produced on it prior to December 23, 1985,	<p>apply a conservation system that meets the substantial soil loss reduction criteria, or achieves equal or greater soil loss reductions than the original system.</p> <p>NOTE: Substantial Reduction is defined as: A 75% reduction of the potential erodibility, not to exceed 2 times the sustainable soil loss tolerance level for the predominant HEL map unit for the field.</p>
was converted from native vegetation (sodbuster) after December 23, 1985,	<p>Apply a conservation system that does not result in a substantial increase in soil erosion from the pre-cropped condition. In no case will the conservation system used exceed "T".</p> <p>NOTE: Substantial Increase is defined as: Any erosion level that is greater than the soil loss tolerance level of the predominant HEL map unit for the field. (LS factors are to be determined in the field.)</p>

**c**  
**Preparing a New Plan or System**

Conservation systems for persons who acquire HEL fields shall be developed according to the previous table, and as explained in Section 512.

*Continued on next page*

## 520.11 Determining Conservation Compliance on HEL and CRP Land, Continued

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**d**  
**Requirements**  
**for Expired**  
**CRP Contracts**

Land released from the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) shall not be held to a higher conservation standard than that applied to other HEL cropland located in the same area.

NOTE: Same area is defined as the area served by the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG).

If there are practices needed (structural) that must be applied in sequence, the person will have up to two years following contract expiration to comply with the system.

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