

FPP02 - On-Farm Pilot Project



Enhancement Description

On-Farm Pilots showcase conservation activities that have proven environmental benefits, but have not been widely adopted in the local farm community. Participants select and agree to install, monitor and promote conservation activities (practices, components or management techniques) that have been identified by the NRCS State Conservationist as addressing specific resource needs.

Land Use Applicability

Each approved pilot project will have a land use designated, e.g. Cropland, Pastureland, Rangeland and/or Forest land.

Benefits

Conservation activities can show promise in research but until they are proven in actual field use farmers may be reluctant to adopt them. Pilot projects will provide a mechanism to prove that a new conservation activity is viable in the project area. Publicizing the implementation of the conservation activity can help other farmers learn about new conservation techniques by observing their peers.

Conditions Where Enhancement Applies

This enhancement applies to all crop, pasture, range or forest land use acres.

Criteria

- Producers will select from a pre-approved list of pilot projects (if available).
- Pilots include practices, components, or management techniques that have shown environmental benefits but have not been adopted by farmers in the project area.
- The pilots must be implemented and monitored according to protocols developed specifically for the project.
- Protocols include:
 - Specifics of the practice, component or management technique being piloted
 - Acreage required to adequately conduct the pilot
 - How many years the pilot is to be conducted
 - What the participant is required to provide (materials, labor, maintenance etc.)
 - Type(s) of publicized events that will be used (field days, signage, winter meetings, etc.) to meet the minimum number of three (3) events. This activity will be scheduled once per year that an educational event takes place.



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2012 Ranking Period 1

- Data on the costs and performance must be collected for the demonstration project as specified for each individual pilot project. The data collection needs are available in a separate document.

Adoption Requirements

This enhancement is considered adopted when the pre-approved pilot project has been implemented and monitored according protocols developed specifically for the project and events to publicize the project have been held.

Documentation Requirements

- Documentation of the events held to publicize the project.
- Data collected for the project will include as directed by the individual states:
 - Practice cost, field operations conducted, etc.
 - Frequency of collection
 - Data collection forms



Conservation Stewardship Program On-Farm Pilot Project Requirements

Overview

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) encourages participants to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by undertaking additional conservation activities, and improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities. This enhancement is eligible for cropland, pastureland, rangeland, and non-industrial private forestland. CSP enhancements means a type of activity installed and adopted to treat natural resources and improve conservation performance. Many of the CSP enhancements are related to existing NRCS conservation practice standards, but at a management intensity level that exceeds minimum practice standards.

On-Farm Pilots showcase conservation activities that have proven environmental benefits, but have not been widely adopted in the local farm community. Participants select and agree to install, monitor and promote conservation activities (practices, components or management techniques) that have been identified by the NRCS State Conservationist as addressing specific resource needs. Using field days, signage and/or other innovative publicity methods, conservation activities that have shown promise in research plots can be promoted on a larger scale, thus removing farmers' reluctance to adopt them. Participants in On-Farm Pilots learn about new conservation activities first hand, becoming advocates for how these new conservation techniques can be applied. On-Farm Pilots are not intended to pay for the cost of setting up or administering a pilot. CSP applicants that choose this activity will be awarded conservation performance points that increase their ranking score and payment level for participation in the program.

Pilot Project Requirements

Each year NRCS will identify broad national technology focus areas for which new and innovative conservation activities are needed. States will select specific pilot projects to emphasize and will develop a list of acceptable projects, guidelines for implementation and publicity requirements. This should be done in consultation with the State Technical Committee. Conservation partners are encouraged to help promote and organize On-Farm Pilots, but the activity is not intended to provide any financial assistance for doing so. Individual or groups of farmers are also encouraged to submit project proposal following the criteria listed below. Ideas for On-Farm Pilots should be submitted to the State Conservationist along with supporting documentation as to how the idea relates to a focus area and selected conservation activities (practices, components and/or management techniques).



Criteria for On-Farm Pilot Conservation Activities (Practices, Components and/or Management Techniques)

- Practices, components or management techniques:
 - Should have been demonstrated to provide environmental benefits either through research or practical field experience
 - Should not have been widely adopted in a given geographic area
 - Could be an activity that has been proven in another state or geographic area within the state and shows promise in addressing the resource needs in the targeted area
 - Address one of the State identified focus areas:
 - Air
 - Animal
 - Energy
 - Plant
 - Soil Erosion
 - Soil Quality
 - Water Quality
 - Water Quantity
- States will develop a pilot project protocol that includes:
 - Specifics of the practice, component or management technique being piloted
 - Acreage required to adequately conduct the pilot
 - How many years the pilot is to be conducted
 - What the participant is required to provide (materials, labor, maintenance etc.)
 - Type(s) of publicized events that will be used (field days, signage, winter meetings, etc.) to meet the minimum number of three (3) events. This activity will be schedule once per year that an educational event takes place.
 - This information can be presented to interested participants as a fact sheet that outlines their involvement.
- States will develop data collection criteria that includes:
 - Type of data collected (practice cost, field operations, etc.)
 - Frequency of collection
 - Data collection forms



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IDAHO ADDENDUM 2012

FPP02 – On Farm Pilot Projects

Additional guidance for on-farm research and demonstration:

Pick **ONE** of the following on-farm pilot projects for FY2012 in Idaho. Descriptions of each project are provided below.

- 1) **POLLINATOR ENHANCEMENT DEMONSTRATION SCENARIOS**
(This cannot be used with PLT15).
- 2) **COVER CROP PILOT STUDY** (This cannot be used with ENR12, SQL02, SQL04, or WQL10)

Potential Duplicate Practices:

327 – Conservation Cover, 386 – Field Border, 612 – Tree and Shrub Establishment, 512 – Forage and Biomass Planting, 550 – Range Planting, 380 – Windbreak and Shelterbelt Establishment

POLLINATOR ENHANCEMENT DEMONSTRATION SCENARIOS

1. Strip Plantings – Strips of wildflowers are alternated with strips of native grasses. Strips may be either mixed species or single species.
2. Island Plantings – Islands of containerized native wildflowers are planted in seeded areas to provide seed sources to spread naturally within the planting.

Each pilot must be publicized in some way such as inclusion on conservation field day tours, signage, etc. The NRCS Biologist will coordinate work with the producer to decide on the level of publicity required for the project.

For additional information and guidance, contact:

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COVER CROP PILOT STUDY

A cover crop is a crop that is not harvested or generally grazed but is grown to benefit the soil health and or future crops in numerous ways. Soil Health is the capacity of a soil to function. Managing for soil health (improved soil function) is mostly a matter of maintaining suitable habitat for the myriad of creatures that comprise the soil food web. This can be accomplished by disturbing the soil as little as possible, growing as many different species of plants as practical, keeping living plants in the soil as often as possible, and keeping the soil covered at all time.

Producer will evaluate a single species cover crop and evaluate a mixture that contains the single species with at least 3 cover crop species (example: Vetch, Radish, Small grain). Split the study plating area in half to evaluate the mixture.

Focus areas for the pilot project: Reduce wind and water erosion, Improve soil health, Promote biological nitrogen fixation.

Acreage minimum: 5 acres

Conduct pilot study for 3 years

When implementing the cover crop pilot project, the producer should follow the 340 Cover Crop Practice Standard.

Participant will show case cover crop plots through a simple field day that explains the pilot study project. This could be done in cooperation with the local Soil Conservation District, Extension, or other sponsored producer field days or tours. A minimum of three activities (field day, signage, newsletter article, etc.) to show case the pilot is required.

Data collected: Document data on 340 Cover Crop Job sheet, USDA NRCS Idaho. Include the following:

- Seeding rate and date
- General records of management (irrigation, fertilizer, weed control, etc.)
- Yield of above ground biomass when cover crop is terminated.
- Percent nitrogen in the above ground biomass (if cover crops are used for nutrient management purposes).

Reference:

Cover Crops, Agronomy Technical Note No. 56, USDA NRCS Idaho.

For additional information and guidance on this pilot, contact:

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