

FAQ: Conservation Planning with Transitioning to Organic Producers

Terms Defined

Organic: Organic production is a system that is managed in accordance with the Organic Foods Production Act (OFPA) of 1990 and regulations in Title 7, Part 205 of the Code of Federal Regulations¹ to respond to site-specific conditions by integrating cultural, biological, and mechanical practices that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity. The USDA National Organic Program (NOP) develops, implements, and administers national production, handling, and labeling standards.

Certified Organic Operation: A crop or livestock production, wild-crop harvesting or handling operation, or portion of such operation that is certified by an accredited certifying agent as utilizing a system of organic production or handling (as described by the OFPA and standards of the NOP).

Transitioning to Organic producer: Transitioning to Organic is not defined by the NOP. The transition to organic period is generally understood as the time between the last application of a prohibited substance and when an operation or portion of an operation is eligible for organic certification. For organic certification, at a minimum, the land must have had no prohibited substances applied to it for a period of 3 years immediately preceding harvest of the crop. With sufficient documentation to prove that no prohibited substances have been applied in 3 years, producers can apply for and receive certification in a matter of months. The transition period can however last longer than 3 years and can even last indefinitely, it is entirely up to the producer.

Transitioning producers are not regulated by the NOP and do not have to register with them. Some certifying agents offer optional 'Transitional' certification status but this is not required or managed by the NOP and is only offered by a handful of certifiers.

Organic System Plan (OSP): A plan of management of an organic production or handling operation that has been agreed to by the producer or handler and the certifying agent and that includes written plans concerning all aspects of agricultural production or handling. The NOP dictates, in detail, all the information required in an OSP.

Exempt from certification producer: A production or handling operation that sells agricultural products as "organic" but whose gross agricultural income from organic sales totals \$5,000 or less annually is exempt from certification and from submitting an organic system plan but must comply with the applicable organic production, handling, and labeling requirements.

Individual state Departments of Agriculture or Certification Programs can require producers exempt from certification to 'register' with the state.

EQIP Organic Initiative Questions

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/organic/index.html>

1) How do you know if a producer qualifies for EQIP Organic Initiative?

Certified Organic Producer: National Screening Criteria Worksheet, Organic Production Applicant, Attachment C

Transitioning to Organic producer: National Screening Criteria Worksheet, Organic Production Applicant, Attachment B

Exempt from certification producer: National Screening Criteria Worksheet, Organic Production Applicant, Attachment C

2) Is the Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) 138 required before transitioning producers can access NRCS programs?

Absolutely not, it is a resource tool that they can use if they choose. They can opt for a regular NRCS conservation plan written by an NRCS conservationist.

3) Does NRCS require proof that a Transitioning producer eventually gets Certified Organic?

¹Title 7, Part 205 of the Code of Federal Regulations, National Organic Program, 06/14/2011:
http://ecfr.gpoaccess.gov/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=ecfr&tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title07/7cfr205_main_02.tpl

No, all NRCS needs is the name of the certifying agent with whom they plan on working. Providing a certifier name and contact info is sufficient to show that they have been in contact.

4) What NRCS practices standards are available to organic producers?

States must offer and make available any conservation practice that is likely to be needed by organic and transitioning to organic producers in the state. Available practices will vary by state and are determined by the State Conservationist with input from the State Technical Committees and Local Working Groups.

CAP 138: Transition to Organic Plan

1) What is the CAP 138 Transition to Organic Plan?

The CAP 138 is a Conservation Activity Plan that helps farmers who are interested in transitioning from conventional agronomic practices to organic production practices by addressing the natural resource concerns on their operation. It will include all the information contained in a regular conservation plan, including completed organic job specification for the practices recommended. It is only different from a regular NRCS conservation plan in that it is not written by NRCS employees.

CAP 138 Deliverables for the client include:

- Cover Page- name, address, phone of client and TSP; Total acres of the plan, signature blocks for the TSP, producer, and a signature block for the NRCS acceptance.
- Soils map and appropriate soil descriptions
- Resource assessment results (wind and water erosion, water availability, soil fertility, and others that may be needed)
- For management practices. The planned practices and the site specific specifications on how each practice will be applied; when the practice will be applied, and the extent (acres or number) that will be applied.
- For engineering/structural practices. The planned practice when it will be applied and extent, and located on the conservation map.
- **The additional criteria relating to the NOP standards shall be considered during the conservation plan development but do not need to be included as a deliverable.**

For more information please see the attached document, Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition Plan Criteria Practice/Activity Code 138.

2) Who can write a CAP 138?

As with all Conservation Activity Plans (CAP) that NRCS offers only a certified Technical Service Provider (TSP) can write a CAP 138 for a producer. The purpose of the CAPs is to allow producers to obtain assistance in special areas in which NRCS employees might not have the technical expertise. This does not mean that an NRCS planner cannot assist a transitioning to organic farmer by preparing a regular conservation plan that addresses natural resource issues on the farms.

3) How does a CAP 138 relate to an Organic System Plan (OSP) that is required of Certified Organic producers?

The CAP 138 may support an OSP, but it is not a replacement for one. The information included in both a CAP 138 or a regular NRCS conservation plan can be relevant and/or useful in filling out an OSP, however the producer is responsible to complete all of the OSP requirements that a conservation plan does not address.

4) How do I verify a TSP has expertise in organic agriculture and is qualified to write CAP 138?

Each TSP submits an application to NRCS for review and evaluation. If the TSP meets the proficiency criteria involving education, experience, knowledge and a sample of work as required by the conservation category or practices they select, then the TSP is "certified". TechReg is the registry where certified TSPs indicate their credentials, experience, and whether or not they have organic expertise. Clients can view these resumes posted on TechReg and make a determination as to which TSP will be best suited for the work at hand.

5) What if our state does not have any TSPs to write CAP 138s?

If a TSP is not available to perform CAP 138 work in the area, then contracting the CAP 138 in an EQIP contract will not be practical. Each State will need to determine how much marketing of the CAP 138 practice is feasible. Currently, there are very few certified TSPs on TechReg that are available to prepare the CAP 138. Efforts by the TSP Team at headquarters to recruit more qualified TSPs are ongoing. In the meantime, States can offer training to assist in getting more local TSPs qualified to write the CAP 138. There is a national CIG project that is working on addressing the training needs for TSPs in organic agriculture.

Remember that NRCS conservation planners are able to write conservation plans for farms transitioning to organic.

Technical Assistance for Transitioning to Organic Producers

1) How does an NRCS conservation plan help an organic producer in the development of their OSP?

The NRCS conservation plan identifies and offers conservation solutions that can help the organic producer meet several of the NOP standards. For crop production systems it includes controlling erosion, improving soil organic matter, managing nutrients and pest and using conservation buffers to protect from off farm contaminants. Conservation plans for livestock producers use a grazing management plan to help them manage their pastures for improved forage and pest management to protect water quality. It can also ensure that they have adequate pasture to meet the new NOP requirement that livestock obtain 30% of their dry matter intake from pasture during the grazing season.

While an NRCS conservation plan can be used to support the OSP it does not address nor provide enough detail to fulfill all of the OSP requirements.

2) How can the NRCS planning process be used to assist an organic producer in the transition process?

NRCS conservation planners can use the planning process to help transitioning producers understand how their farm's resources can be working for or against them in making a successful transition to organic farming. Asking simple questions like: does the topography make buffering from neighboring farms difficult, are there any difficult pest problems to overcome, how healthy are the soils, are soil organic matter or nutrient levels at adequate levels, can help provide valuable insight into resource challenges that might need to be addressed.

3) What are the most common resource concerns that need to be addressed by transitioning producers?

Transitioning producers will struggle with many of the same resource concerns as conventional producers. The decision to convert their operation to organic management will mean specific challenges will be highlighted. Prioritizing Soil Quality (and fertility) when transitioning from chemical based to biologically based soil management will be essential. Maintaining Plant health under evolving pest pressures will also be a challenge. Water & air quality on their farm will likely improve but the risk of contaminants from offsite will be very important to address. Organic pest management is very reliant on prevention and avoidance so Wildlife and Pollinator habitat can also be a priority.

4) What are some examples of NRCS conservation practices that can be installed during the transition period?

Please refer to Guidance for Selection of Conservation Practices to Support Organic Operations (Attachment A).

Conservation Stewardship Program

For more information on how transitioning (and organic) producers can access and utilize the Conservation Stewardship Program please visit:

- http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/new_csp/csp.html#jobs
- http://ofrf.org/policy/federal_legislation/farm_bill_implementation/csp_resource_page.html

Additional Resources & References

- National Organic Program (NOP) <http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/nop>
-The USDA NOP develops, implements, and administers national production, handling, and labeling standards.
- eOrganic <http://www.extension.org/organic%20production>
-A collection of land grant university publications on organic agriculture.
- National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, ATTRA <http://www.attra.ncat.org>
- The ATTRA project has served as the premier source of information about sustainable agriculture for U.S. farmers and other agriculturists for twenty years. ATTRA is funded by the USDA's Rural Business-Cooperative Service.
- Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) <http://www.omri.org/>
- The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) provides organic certifiers, growers, manufacturers, and suppliers an independent review of products intended for use in certified organic production, handling, and processing.
- Rodale Institute http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/new_farm
- Rodale Institute is a nonprofit dedicated to pioneering organic farming through research and outreach. They host the longest-running side-by-side U.S. study comparing conventional chemical agriculture with organic methods.
-The Rodale Institute's 15-hr FREE Organic Transition Course: <http://www.rodaleinstitute.org/course>
- Midwest Organic Sustainable Education Service, MOSES <http://www.mosesorganic.org/>
-MOSES is an education-outreach organization working to promote sustainable and organic agriculture. They host the largest organic agriculture conference in the country, as well as field days, and a variety of fact sheets related to organic.
- Organic Farming Research Foundation (OFRF) <http://ofrf.org/index.html>
- OFRF's integrated strategy of grant making, policy, education and networking initiatives supports organic farmers' immediate information needs while moving the public and policymakers toward greater investment in organic farming systems. Their website provides multiple resources for farmers looking to access NRCS programs.
- University of Minnesota (UMN) Organic Risk Management Guide <http://www.organicriskmanagement.umn.edu/>
- Tools for Managing Pest and Environmental Risks to Organic Crops in the Upper Midwest. This publication will help growers who are contemplating adopting organic production practices understand the risks that are associated with organic production and make choices that will minimize those risks.
- Soil Quality for Environmental Health <http://soilquality.org/>
-This website provides technical resources related to soil quality indicators, assessment, and management. While not specifically organic, it is relevant to organic soil management.

NRCS Organic Contacts

Sarah Brown, Organic Specialist, Oregon Tilth & NRCS
Providing organic technical assistance nationally.
WNTSC
503-273-2433
Sarah.brown@por.usda.gov

Julie Malvitz, EQIP Organic Specialist, NRCS
Providing national EQIP OI programmatic assistance.
NHQ
202-720-1834
Julie.malvitz@wdc.usda.gov

David Lamm, Organic, Small Farm & Specialty Crop Specialist,
NRCS
Providing organic technical assistance to the eastern region.
ENTSC
336-370-3339
David.lamm@gnb.usda.gov

Dana Larsen, National TSP Team Leader for CAP 138, NRCS
Providing training and assistance to TSPs and State TSP
coordinators on CAP 138.
NHQ
202-720-8970
Dana.larsen@wdc.usda.gov

For more information & to find your state contact for the Organic Initiative, please visit:
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/organic/index.html>

A. CROPLAND (row crop, orchard, etc)						
NOP Rule	<u>National Organic Program (NOP) Requirement</u>	NRCS Resource Concern Category	Sub Resource Concern	NRCS Practices to Consider	Definition, Purposes and Guidance Specific to Organic Operations	Payment Schedule Considerations
205.202	Land Requirements: (c) Have distinct, defined boundaries and buffer zones such as runoff diversions to prevent the unintended application of a prohibited substance to the crop or contact with a prohibited substance applied to adjoining land that is not under organic management.	Plant Condition	*Productivity, Health, and Vigor	327 Conservation cover, 386 Field Borders, 393 Filter Strips, 422 Hedgerow Planting, 391 Riparian Forest Buffer, 390 Riparian Herbaceous Buffer, 380 Windbreak and Shelterbelt Establishment, 650 Windbreak and Shelterbelt Renovation	Establish physical barriers and increase distances between organic and nonorganic crops to protect against airborne or surface contamination by prohibited substances or other nonorganic operations.	Consider increased cost associated with planting material, such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc., which may need to be certified for use with an organic operation.
205.203	Soil fertility and crop nutrient management standard: (a) The producer must select and implement tillage and cultivation practices that maintain or improve the physical, chemical, and biological condition of soil and minimize soil erosion.	Soil Erosion	*Sheet and Rill Erosion, *Gully Erosion, *Wind Erosion	327 Conservation Cover, 328 Conservation Crop Rotation, 332 Contour Buffer Strip, 330 Contour Farming, 331 Contour Orchards and other Fruit Areas, 340 Cover Crop, 342 Critical Area Planting, 588 Cross Wind Ridges, 589 Cross Wind Trap Strips, 386 Field Border, 393 Filter Strip, 410 Grade Stabilization Structure, 412 Grassed Waterway, 603 Herbaceous wind Barriers, 345 Residue and Tillage Management - Mulch Till, 329 Residue and Tillage Management - No Till, 346 Residue and Tillage Management - Ridge Till, 344 Residue and Tillage Management - Seasonal, 557 Row Arrangement, 585 Strip Cropping, 609 Surface Roughening, 600 Terrace, 601 Vegetation Barriers, 638 Water and Sediment Control Basin, 380 Windbreak and Shelterbelt Establishment, 650 Windbreak and Shelterbelt Renovation	Develop a system of conservation practices and management to address wind erosion as well as sheet, rill, and gully erosion. Keep wind erosion below crop tolerance and/or soil loss tolerance. Keep sheet and rill erosion at or below the tolerable soil loss. Stabilize all gullies (temporary and permanent).	Include estimated incurred costs associated with implementation of this practice such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc. Consider increased cost associated with planting material that may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Consider Forgone Income (FI) cost category for land taken out of production tied to average yield loss. If cover crop is not replacing a production crop, FI is not applicable.

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205.203	<p>Soil fertility and crop nutrient management standard: (b) The producer must manage crop nutrients and soil fertility through rotations, cover crops, and the application of plant and animal materials; (c) The producer must manage plant and animal materials to maintain or improve soil organic matter content in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, or water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances.</p>	Water Quality	<p>*Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Groundwater *Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water *Excessive Salinity in Groundwater *Excessive Salinity in Surface Water *Excessive Suspended Sediment and Turbidity in Surface Water *Harmful Levels of Pathogens in Groundwater *Harmful Levels of Pathogens in Surface Water *Harmful Levels of Pesticides in Groundwater *Harmful Levels of Pesticides in Surface Water</p>	328 Conservation Crop Rotation, 340 Cover Crops, 393 Filter Strips, 590 Nutrient Management	Establish a crop rotation that recycles nutrients and/or produces nitrogen. Implement a nutrient management system that address crop nutrient needs by applying the right source, at the right time, at the right rate, and the right placement within NOP Rules.	Include estimated incurred costs associated with implementation of this practice such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc. Consider increased cost associated with planting material that may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Consider Forgone Income cost category for land taken out of production tied to average yield loss. If cover crop is not replacing a production crop, FI is not applicable.
205.204	<p>Seeds and planting stock practice standard. (a) The producer must use organically grown seeds, annual seedlings, and planting stock.</p>	Plant Condition	<p>*Plants not adapted or suited *Productivity, Health, and Vigor</p>	<p>The NRCS EQIP program does not support practices or activities for the planting or establishment of production crops: 515.81 Eligible Conservation Practices B. Ineligible Practices. Ineligible conservation practices are those: (i) Where the sole purpose is to enhance production without an identifiable conservation benefit or natural resource concern.</p> <p>EQIP program does support use of approved planting material to support NRCS approved vegetative conservation practices. For these scenarios, NRCS practice design and plant/seed selections must also conform to NOP requirements for use of organically grown seeds, seedlings and planting materials.</p>	All seeding practices need to support alternatives and practice design for organically approved seed and planting stock. See also exceptions to NOP rule per 205.204(a).	Consider increased cost associated with planting material, such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc., which may need to be certified for use with an organic operation.

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205.205	<p>Crop rotation practice standard. The producer must implement a crop rotation including but not limited to sod, cover crops, green manure crops, and catch crops that provide the following functions that are applicable to the operation:</p> <p>(a) Maintain or improve soil organic matter content; (b) Provide for pest management in annual and perennial crops; (c) Manage deficient or excess plant nutrients; and (d) Provide erosion control.</p>	Soil erosion Soil condition Water Quality	<p><u>Soil Erosion:</u> *Ephemeral Gully *Irrigation Induced *Sheet and Rill *Wind <u>Soil Condition:</u> *Compaction *Damage from Sediment Deposition *Organic Matter Depletion <u>Water Quality:</u> *Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Groundwater *Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water *Excessive Salinity in Groundwater *Excessive Salinity in Surface Water *Excessive Suspended Sediment and Turbidity in Surface Water *Harmful Temperatures of Surface Water</p>	328 Conservation Crop rotation, 340 Cover Crops, 590 Nutrient Management, 595 Integrated Pest Management.	Offer alternatives which include a suite of conservation practices needed to maintain or increase soil organic matter, manage nutrients, reduce erosion, and mitigate pest pressures.	Consider cost associated with acquisition of technical knowledge, which may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Also consideration should be given for additional cost of using nonconventional methods of pest management.
205.206	<p>Crop pest, weed, and disease management practice standard. (a) The producer must use management practices to prevent crop pests, weeds, and diseases (b) Pest problems may be controlled through mechanical or physical methods per NOP rules.</p>	Plant Condition	<p>*Plants not adapted or suited *Productivity, Health, and Vigor *Noxious and Invasive Plants</p>	328 Conservation Crop rotation, 340 Cover Crops, 595 Integrated Pest Management.	Implement a system of practices to mitigate pest pressures.	Consideration should be given for additional cost of using nonconventional methods of pest management.

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B. FOREST LAND						
205.202	<p>Land Requirements: (c) Have distinct, defined boundaries and buffer zones such as runoff diversions to prevent the unintended application of a prohibited substance to the crop or contact with a prohibited substance applied to adjoining land that is not under organic management.</p>	Plant Condition	*Productivity, Health, and Vigor	<p>394 Firebreak, 391 Riparian Forest Buffer, 390 Riparian Herbaceous Buffer, 422 Hedgerow Planting, 380 Windbreak and Shelterbelt Establishment, 650 Windbreak and Shelterbelt Renovation</p>	<p>Establish physical barriers and increase distances between organic and nonorganic crops to protect against airborne or surface contamination by prohibited substances or other nonorganic operations.</p>	<p>Consider increased cost associated with planting material, such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc., which may need to be certified for use with an organic operation.</p>
205.203	<p>Soil fertility and crop nutrient management standard: (a) The producer must select and implement tillage and cultivation practices that maintain or improve the physical, chemical, and biological condition of soil and minimize soil erosion.</p>	Soil Erosion	<p>*Sheet and Rill Erosion, *Gully Erosion, *Wind Erosion</p>	<p>342 Critical Area Planting, 383 Fuel Break, 384 Forest Slash Treatment, 379 Multi Story Cropping, 394 Firebreak, 393 Filter Strip, 410 Grade Stabilization Structure, 490 Tree/Shrub Site Preparation, 654 Road-Trail-Landing Closure 638 Water and Sediment Control Basin, 655 Forest Trails and Landings, 666 Forest Stand Improvement,</p>	<p>Develop a system of conservation practices and management to address wind erosion as well as sheet, rill, and gully erosion. Keep wind erosion below crop tolerance and/or soil loss tolerance. Keep sheet and rill erosion at or below the tolerable soil loss. Stabilize all gullies (temporary and permanent).</p>	<p>Include estimated incurred costs associated with implementation of this practice such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc. Consider increased cost associated with planting material that may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Consider Forgone Income cost category for land taken out of production tied to average yield loss. If cover crop is not replacing a production crop, FI is not applicable.</p>

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205.203	<p>Soil fertility and crop nutrient management standard: (b) The producer must manage crop nutrients and soil fertility through rotations, cover crops, and the application of plant and animal materials; (c) The producer must manage plant and animal materials to maintain or improve soil organic matter content in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, or water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances.</p>	Water Quality	<p>*Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Groundwater *Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water *Excessive Salinity in Groundwater *Excessive Salinity in Surface Water *Excessive Suspended Sediment and Turbidity in Surface Water *Harmful Levels of Pathogens in Groundwater *Harmful Levels of Pathogens in Surface Water *Harmful Levels of Pesticides in Groundwater *Harmful Levels of Pesticides in Surface Water</p>	<p>393 Filter Strips, 384 Forest Slash Treatment, 379 Multi Story Cropping, 381 Silvopasture Establishment, 391 Riparian Forest Buffer, 590 Nutrient Management, 612 Tree/Shrub Establishment,</p>	<p>Establish a crop rotation that recycles nutrients and/or produces nitrogen. Implement a nutrient management system that address crop nutrient needs by applying the right source, at the right time, at the right rate, and the right placement within NOP Rules.</p>	<p>Include estimated incurred costs associated with implementation of this practice such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc. Consider increased cost associated with planting material that may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Consider Forgone Income cost category for land taken out of production tied to average yield loss. If cover crop is not replacing a production crop, FI is not applicable.</p>
205.204	<p>Seeds and planting stock practice standard. (a) The producer must use organically grown seeds, annual seedlings, and planting stock.</p>	Plant Condition	<p>*Plants not adapted or suited *Productivity, Health, and Vigor</p>	<p>The NRCS EQIP program does not support practices or activities for the planting or establishment of production crops: 515.81 Eligible Conservation Practices B. Ineligible Practices. Ineligible conservation practices are those: (i) Where the sole purpose is to enhance production without an identifiable conservation benefit or natural resource concern. EQIP program does support use of approved planting material to support NRCS approved vegetative conservation practices. For these scenarios, NRCS practice design and plant/seed selections must also conform to NOP requirements for use of organically grown seeds, seedlings and planting materials.</p>	<p>All seeding practices need to support alternatives and practice design for organically approved seed and planting stock. See also exceptions to NOP rule per 205.204(a).</p>	<p>Consider increased cost associated with planting material, such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc., which may need to be certified for use with an organic operation.</p>

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205.205	<p>Crop rotation practice standard. The producer must implement a crop rotation including but not limited to sod, cover crops, green manure crops, and catch crops that provide the following functions that are applicable to the operation:</p> <p>(a) Maintain or improve soil organic matter content; (b) Provide for pest management in annual and perennial crops; (c) Manage deficient or excess plant nutrients; and (d) Provide erosion control.</p>	Soil erosion Soil condition Water Quality	<p><u>Soil Erosion:</u> *Ephemeral Gully *Irrigation Induced *Sheet and Rill *Wind <u>Soil Condition:</u> *Compaction *Damage from Sediment Deposition *Organic Matter Depletion <u>Water Quality:</u> *Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Groundwater *Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water *Excessive Salinity in Groundwater *Excessive Salinity in Surface Water *Excessive Suspended Sediment and Turbidity in Surface Water *Harmful Temperatures of Surface Water</p>	311 Alley Cropping, 379 Multi-Story Cropping, 590 Nutrient Management, 595 Integrated Pest Management.	Offer alternatives which include a suite of conservation practices needed to maintain or increase soil organic matter, manage nutrients, reduce erosion, and mitigate pest pressures.	Consider cost associated with acquisition of technical knowledge, which may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Also consideration should be given for additional cost of using nonconventional methods of pest management.
205.206	<p>Crop pest, weed, and disease management practice standard. (a) The producer must use management practices to prevent crop pests, weeds, and diseases (b) Pest problems may be controlled through mechanical or physical methods per NOP rules.</p>	Plant Condition	<p>*Plants not adapted or suited *Productivity, Health, and Vigor *Noxious and Invasive Plants</p>	666 Forest Stand Improvement, 660 Tree/Shrub Pruning 595 Integrated Pest Management.		Consideration should be given for additional cost of using nonconventional methods of pest management.

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C. PASTURE LAND (dairy, cow/calf/stocker/goats/sheep)						
205.202	<p>Land Requirements: (c) Have distinct, defined boundaries and buffer zones such as runoff diversions to prevent the unintended application of a prohibited substance to the crop or contact with a prohibited substance applied to adjoining land that is not under organic management.</p>	Plant Condition	*Productivity, Health, and Vigor	575 Animal Trails and Walkways, 382 Fence, 386 Field Borders, 393 Filter Strips, 422 Hedgerow Planting, 391 Riparian Forest Buffer, 390 Riparian Herbaceous Buffer, 380 Windbreak and Shelterbelt Establishment, 650 Windbreak and Shelterbelt Renovation	Establish physical barriers / distances between organic and nonorganic crops to protect against contamination of pollen or other prohibited substances. Fencing materials must meet NOP standards (nontreated wood post). Plant materials (organic sources if available) and fertilizer must meet NOP.	Consider increased cost associated with planting material, such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc., which may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Nontraditional fencing materials may also result in additional cost.
205.203	<p>Soil fertility and crop nutrient management standard: (a) The producer must select and implement tillage and cultivation practices that maintain or improve the physical, chemical, and biological condition of soil and minimize soil erosion.</p>	Soil Erosion	*Sheet and Rill Erosion, *Gully Erosion, *Wind Erosion	528 Prescribed Grazing, 512 Pasture and Hayland Planting, 314 Brush Management, 614 Watering Facility, 578 Stream Crossing, 574 Spring Development, 516 Pipeline, 378 Pond, 382 Fence, 575 Animal Trails and Walkways, 561 Heavy Use Area Protection	Develop a system of conservation practices and management to address wind erosion as well as sheet, rill, and gully erosion. Keep wind erosion below crop tolerance and/or soil loss tolerance. Keep sheet and rill erosion at or below the tolerable soil loss. Stabilize all gullies (temporary and permanent). Fencing materials must meet NOP standards (nontreated wood post). Plant materials (organic sources if available) and fertilizer must meet NOP.	Include estimated incurred costs associated with implementation of this practice such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc. Consider increased cost associated with planting material that may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Consider Forgone Income cost category for land taken out of production tied to average yield loss.

NOP Rule	<u>National Organic Program (NOP) Requirement</u>	NRCS Resource Concern Category	Sub Resource Concern	NRCS Practices to Consider	Definition, Purposes and Guidance Specific to Organic Operations	Payment Schedule Considerations
205.203	<p>Soil fertility and crop nutrient management standard: (b) The producer must manage crop nutrients and soil fertility through rotations, cover crops, and the application of plant and animal materials; (c) The producer must manage plant and animal materials to maintain or improve soil organic matter content in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, or water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances.</p>	Water Quality	<p>*Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Groundwater *Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water *Excessive Salinity in Groundwater *Excessive Salinity in Surface Water *Excessive Suspended Sediment and Turbidity in Surface Water *Harmful Levels of Pathogens in Groundwater *Harmful Levels of Pathogens in Surface Water *Harmful Levels of Pesticides in Groundwater *Harmful Levels of Pesticides in Surface Water</p>	<p>528 Prescribed Grazing, 512 Pasture and Hayland Planting, 614 Watering Facility, 578 Stream Crossing, 574 Spring Development, 516 Pipeline, 378 Pond, 382 Fence, 575 Animal Trails and Walkways, 561 Heavy Use Area Protection, 590 Nutrient Management</p>	<p>Establish forage base and prescribed grazing method that recycles nutrients and/or produces nitrogen. Implement a nutrient management system that address crop nutrient needs by applying the right source, at the right time, at the right rate, and the right placement within NOP Rules. Fencing materials must meet NOP standards (nontreated wood post). Plant materials (organic sources if available) and fertilized must meet NOP.</p>	<p>Include estimated incurred costs associated with implementation of this practice such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc. Consider increased cost associated with planting material that may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Consider Forgone Income cost category for land taken out of production tied to average yield loss.</p>
205.204	<p>Seeds and planting stock practice standard. (a) The producer must use organically grown seeds, annual seedlings, and planting stock.</p>	Plant Condition	<p>*Plants not adapted or suited *Productivity, Health, and Vigor</p>	<p>The NRCS EQIP program does not support practices or activities for the planting or establishment of production crops: 515.81 Eligible Conservation Practices B. Ineligible Practices. Ineligible conservation practices are those: (i) Where the sole purpose is to enhance production without an identifiable conservation benefit or natural resource concern. EQIP program does support use of approved planting material to support NRCS approved vegetative conservation practices. For these scenarios, NRCS practice design and plant/seed selections must also conform to NOP requirements for use of organically grown seeds, seedlings and planting materials. 512 Pasture and Hayland Planting</p>	<p>All seeding practices need to support alternatives and practice design for organically approved seed and planting stock. See also exceptions to NOP rule per 205.204(a).</p>	<p>Consider increased cost associated with planting material, such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc., which may need to be certified for use with an organic operation.</p>

NOP Rule	<u>National Organic Program (NOP) Requirement</u>	NRCS Resource Concern Category	Sub Resource Concern	NRCS Practices to Consider	Definition, Purposes and Guidance Specific to Organic Operations	Payment Schedule Considerations
205.205	<p>Crop rotation practice standard. The producer must implement a crop rotation including but not limited to sod, cover crops, green manure crops, and catch crops that provide the following functions that are applicable to the operation:</p> <p>(a) Maintain or improve soil organic matter content; (b) Provide for pest management in annual and perennial crops; (c) Manage deficient or excess plant nutrients; and (d) Provide erosion control.</p>	Soil erosion Soil condition Water Quality	<p><u>Soil Erosion:</u> *Ephemeral Gully *Irrigation Induced *Sheet and Rill *Wind <u>Soil Condition:</u> *Compaction *Damage from Sediment Deposition *Organic Matter Depletion <u>Water Quality:</u> *Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Groundwater *Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water *Excessive Salinity in Groundwater *Excessive Salinity in Surface Water *Excessive Suspended Sediment and Turbidity in Surface Water *Harmful Temperatures of Surface Water</p>	528 Prescribed Grazing, 338 Prescribed Burning, 512 Pasture and Hayland Planting, 314 Brush Management, 561 Heavy Use Area Protection, 328 Conservation Crop rotation, 340 Cover Crops, 595 Integrated Pest Management.	Establish forage base and prescribed grazing method that recycles nutrients and/or produces nitrogen. Implement a nutrient management system that address froage nutrient needs by applying the right source, at the right time, at the right rate, and the right placement within NOP Rules. Fencing materials must meet NOP standards (nontreated wood post). Plant materials (organic sources if available) and fertilized must meet NOP.	Consider increased costs associated with materials and acquisition of technical knowledge, which may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Also consideration should be given for additional cost of using nonconventional methods of pest management.
205.206	<p>Crop pest, weed, and disease management practice standard. (a) The producer must use management practices to prevent crop pests, weeds, and diseases (b) Pest problems may be controlled through mechanical or physical methods per NOP rules.</p>	Plant Condition	<p>*Plants not adapted or suited *Productivity, Health, and Vigor *Noxious and Invasive Plants</p>	528 Prescribed Grazing, 338 Prescribed Burning, 512 Pasture and Hayland Planting, 314 Brush Management, 328 Conservation Crop rotation, 340 Cover Crops, 595 Integrated Pest Management.	Establish forage base and prescribed grazing method that recycles nutrients and/or produces nitrogen. Implement a nutrient management system that address froage nutrient needs by applying the right source, at the right time, at the right rate, and the right placement within NOP Rules. Fencing materials must meet NOP standards (nontreated wood post). Plant materials (organic sources if available) and fertilized must meet NOP.	Consideration should be given for additional cost of using nonconventional methods of pest management.

NOP Rule	<u>National Organic Program (NOP) Requirement</u>	NRCS Resource Concern Category	Sub Resource Concern	NRCS Practices to Consider	Definition, Purposes and Guidance Specific to Organic Operations	Payment Schedule Considerations
D. RANGELAND						
205.202	<p>Land Requirements: (c) Have distinct, defined boundaries and buffer zones such as runoff diversions to prevent the unintended application of a prohibited substance to the crop or contact with a prohibited substance applied to adjoining land that is not under organic management.</p>	Plant Condition	*Productivity, Health, and Vigor	575 Animal Trails and Walkways, 382 Fence, 386 Field Borders, 393 Filter Strips, 422 Hedgerow Planting, 391 Riparian Forest Buffer, 390 Riparian Herbaceous Buffer, 380 Windbreak and Shelterbelt Establishment, 650 Windbreak and Shelterbelt Renovation	Establish physical barriers / distances between organic and nonorganic forage crops to protect against contamination of pollen or other prohibited substances. Fencing materials must meet NOP standards (nontreated wood post). Plant materials (organic sources if available) and fertilized must meet NOP.	Consider increased cost associated with planting material, such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc., which may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Nontraditional fencing materials may also result in additional cost.
205.203	<p>Soil fertility and crop nutrient management standard: (a) The producer must select and implement tillage and cultivation practices that maintain or improve the physical, chemical, and biological condition of soil and minimize soil erosion.</p>	Soil Erosion	*Sheet and Rill Erosion, *Gully Erosion, *Wind Erosion	528 Prescribed Grazing, 550 Range Planting, 314 Brush Management, 614 Watering Facility, 578 Stream Crossing, 574 Spring Development, 516 Pipeline, 378 Pond, 382 Fence, 575 Animal Trails and Walkways,	Develop a system of conservation practices and management to address wind erosion as well as sheet, rill, and gully erosion. Keep wind erosion below crop tolerance and/or soil loss tolerance. Keep sheet and rill erosion at or below the tolerable soil loss. Stabilize all gullies (temporary and permanent). Fencing materials must meet NOP standards (nontreated wood post). Plant materials (organic sources if available) and fertilized must meet NOP.	Include estimated incurred costs associated with implementation of this practice such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc. Consider increased cost associated with planting material that may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Consider Forgone Income cost category for land taken out of production tied to average yield loss. If cover crop is not replacing a production crop, FI is not applicable.

NOP Rule	<u>National Organic Program (NOP) Requirement</u>	NRCS Resource Concern Category	Sub Resource Concern	NRCS Practices to Consider	Definition, Purposes and Guidance Specific to Organic Operations	Payment Schedule Considerations
205.203	<p>Soil fertility and crop nutrient management standard: (b) The producer must manage crop nutrients and soil fertility through rotations, cover crops, and the application of plant and animal materials; (c) The producer must manage plant and animal materials to maintain or improve soil organic matter content in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, or water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances.</p>	Water Quality	<p>*Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Groundwater *Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water *Excessive Salinity in Groundwater *Excessive Salinity in Surface Water *Excessive Suspended Sediment and Turbidity in Surface Water *Harmful Levels of Pathogens in Groundwater *Harmful Levels of Pathogens in Surface Water *Harmful Levels of Pesticides in Groundwater *Harmful Levels of Pesticides in Surface Water</p>	<p>528 Prescribed Grazing, 550 Range Planting, 614 Watering Facility, 578 Stream Crossing, 574 Spring Development, 516 Pipeline, 378 Pond, 382 Fence, 575 Animal Trails and Walkways, 561 Heavy Use Area Protection</p>	<p>Establish forage base and prescribed grazing method that recycles nutrients and/or produces nitrogen and protect soil quality. Implement a nutrient management system that address froage nutrient needs by applying the right source, at the right time, at the right rate, and the right placement within NOP Rules. Fencing materials must meet NOP standards (nontreated wood post). Plant materials (organic sources if available) and fertilized must meet NOP.</p>	<p>Include estimated incurred costs associated with implementation of this practice such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc. Consider increased cost associated with planting material that may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Consider Forgone Income cost category for land taken out of production tied to average yield loss. If cover crop is not replacing a production crop, FI is not applicable.</p>
205.204	<p>Seeds and planting stock practice standard. (a) The producer must use organically grown seeds, annual seedlings, and planting stock.</p>	Plant Condition	<p>*Plants not adapted or suited *Productivity, Health, and Vigor</p>	<p>The NRCS EQIP program does not support practices or activities for the planting or establishment of production crops: 515.81 Eligible Conservation Practices B. Ineligible Practices. Ineligible conservation practices are those: (i) Where the sole purpose is to enhance production without an identifiable conservation benefit or natural resource concern.</p> <p>EQIP program does support use of approved planting material to support NRCS approved vegetative conservation practices. For these scenarios, NRCS practice design and plant/seed selections must also conform to NOP requirements for use of organically grown seeds, seedlings and planting materials.</p>	<p>All seeding practices need to support alternatives and practice design for organically approved seed and planting stock. See also exceptions to NOP rule per 205.204(a).</p>	<p>Consider increased cost associated with planting material, such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc., which may need to be certified for use with an organic operation.</p>

NOP Rule	<u>National Organic Program (NOP) Requirement</u>	NRCS Resource Concern Category	Sub Resource Concern	NRCS Practices to Consider	Definition, Purposes and Guidance Specific to Organic Operations	Payment Schedule Considerations
205.205	<p>Crop rotation practice standard. The producer must implement a crop rotation including but not limited to sod, cover crops, green manure crops, and catch crops that provide the following functions that are applicable to the operation:</p> <p>(a) Maintain or improve soil organic matter content; (b) Provide for pest management in annual and perennial crops; (c) Manage deficient or excess plant nutrients; and (d) Provide erosion control.</p>	Soil erosion Soil condition Water Quality	<p><u>Soil Erosion:</u> *Ephemeral Gully *Irrigation Induced *Sheet and Rill *Wind <u>Soil Condition:</u> *Compaction *Damage from Sediment Deposition *Organic Matter Depletion <u>Water Quality:</u> *Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Groundwater *Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water *Excessive Salinity in Groundwater *Excessive Salinity in Surface Water *Excessive Suspended Sediment and Turbidity in Surface Water *Harmful Temperatures of Surface Water</p>	528 Prescribed Grazing, 338 Prescribed Burning, 550 Range Planting, 314 Brush Management, 328 Conservation Crop rotation, 340 Cover Crops, 595 Integrated Pest Management.	Establish forage base and prescribed grazing method that recycles nutrients and/or produces nitrogen. Implement a nutrient management system that address froage nutrient needs by applying the right source, at the right time, at the right rate, and the right placement within NOP Rules. Fencing materials must meet NOP standards (nontreated wood post). Plant materials (organic sources if available) and fertilized must meet NOP.	Consider increased costs associated with materials and acquisition of technical knowledge, which may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Also consideration should be given for additional cost of using nonconventional methods of pest management.
205.206	<p>Crop pest, weed, and disease management practice standard. (a) The producer must use management practices to prevent crop pests, weeds, and diseases (b) Pest problems may be controlled through mechanical or physical methods per NOP rules.</p>	Plant Condition	<p>*Plants not adapted or suited *Productivity, Health, and Vigor *Noxious and Invasive Plants</p>	528 Prescribed Grazing, 338 Prescribed Burning, 550 Range Planting, 314 Brush Management, 561 Heavy Use Area Protection, 328 Conservation Crop rotation, 340 Cover Crops, 595 Integrated Pest Management.	Establish forage base and prescribed grazing method that recycles nutrients and/or produces nitrogen. Implement a nutrient management system that address froage nutrient needs by applying the right source, at the right time, at the right rate, and the right placement within NOP Rules. Fencing materials must meet NOP standards (nontreated wood post). Plant materials (organic sources if available) and fertilized must meet NOP.	Consideration should be given for additional cost of using nonconventional methods of pest management.

NOP Rule	<u>National Organic Program (NOP) Requirement</u>	NRCS Resource Concern Category	Sub Resource Concern	NRCS Practices to Consider	Definition, Purposes and Guidance Specific to Organic Operations	Payment Schedule Considerations
E. GRAZED LAND						
205.202	<p>Land Requirements: (c) Have distinct, defined boundaries and buffer zones such as runoff diversions to prevent the unintended application of a prohibited substance to the crop or contact with a prohibited substance applied to adjoining land that is not under organic management.</p>	Plant Condition	*Productivity, Health, and Vigor	575 Animal Trails and Walkways, 382 Fence, 472 Access Control, 386 Field Borders, 393 Filter Strips, 422 Hedgerow Planting, 391 Riparian Forest Buffer, 390 Riparian Herbaceous Buffer, 380 Windbreak and Shelterbelt Establishment, 650 Windbreak and Shelterbelt Renovation	Establish physical barriers / distances between organic and nonorganic forage crops to protect against contamination of pollen or other prohibited substances. Fencing materials must meet NOP standards (nontreated wood post). Plant materials (organic sources if available) and fertilized must meet NOP.	Consider increased cost associated with planting material, such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc., which may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Nontraditional fencing materials may also result in additional cost.

NOP Rule	<u>National Organic Program (NOP) Requirement</u>	NRCS Resource Concern Category	Sub Resource Concern	NRCS Practices to Consider	Definition, Purposes and Guidance Specific to Organic Operations	Payment Schedule Considerations
205.203	<p>Soil fertility and crop nutrient management standard: (a) The producer must select and implement tillage and cultivation practices that maintain or improve the physical, chemical, and biological condition of soil and minimize soil erosion.</p>	Soil Erosion	<p>*Sheet and Rill Erosion, *Gully Erosion, *Wind Erosion</p>	#####	<p>Develop a system of conservation practices and management to address wind erosion as well as sheet, rill, and gully erosion. Keep wind erosion below crop tolerance and/or soil loss tolerance. Keep sheet and rill erosion at or below the tolerable soil loss. Stabilize all gullies (temporary and permanent). Fencing materials must meet NOP standards (nontreated wood post). Plant materials (organic sources if available) and fertilized must meet NOP.</p>	<p>Include estimated incurred costs associated with implementation of this practice such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc. Consider increased cost associated with planting material that may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Consider Forgone Income cost category for land taken out of production tied to average yield loss. If cover crop is not replacing a production crop, FI is not applicable.</p>

NOP Rule	<u>National Organic Program (NOP) Requirement</u>	NRCS Resource Concern Category	Sub Resource Concern	NRCS Practices to Consider	Definition, Purposes and Guidance Specific to Organic Operations	Payment Schedule Considerations
205.203	<p>Soil fertility and crop nutrient management standard: (b) The producer must manage crop nutrients and soil fertility through rotations, cover crops, and the application of plant and animal materials; (c) The producer must manage plant and animal materials to maintain or improve soil organic matter content in a manner that does not contribute to contamination of crops, soil, or water by plant nutrients, pathogenic organisms, heavy metals, or residues of prohibited substances.</p>	Water Quality	<p>*Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Groundwater *Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water *Excessive Salinity in Groundwater *Excessive Salinity in Surface Water *Excessive Suspended Sediment and Turbidity in Surface Water *Harmful Levels of Pathogens in Groundwater *Harmful Levels of Pathogens in Surface Water *Harmful Levels of Pesticides in Groundwater *Harmful Levels of Pesticides in Surface Water</p>	<p>528 Prescribed Grazing, 512 Pasture and Hayland Planting, 550 Range Planting, 614 Watering Facility, 578 Stream Crossing, 574 Spring Development, 516 Pipeline, 378 Pond, 382 Fence, 575 Animal Trails and Walkways, 561 Heavy Use Area Protection, 328 Conservation Crop Rotation, 340 Cover Crops, 393 Filter Strips, 590 Nutrient Management</p>	<p>Establish forage base and prescribed grazing method that recycles nutrients and/or produces nitrogen and protect soil quality. Implement a nutrient management system that address froage nutrient needs by applying the right source, at the right time, at the right rate, and the right placement within NOP Rules. Fencing materials must meet NOP standards (nontreated wood post). Plant materials (organic sources if available) and fertilized must meet NOP.</p>	<p>Include estimated incurred costs associated with implementation of this practice such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc. Consider increased cost associated with planting material that may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Consider Forgone Income cost category for land taken out of production tied to average yield loss. If cover crop is not replacing a production crop, FI is not applicable.</p>
205.204	<p>Seeds and planting stock practice standard. (a) The producer must use organically grown seeds, annual seedlings, and planting stock.</p>	Plant Condition	<p>*Plants not adapted or suited *Productivity, Health, and Vigor</p>	<p>The NRCS EQIP program does not support practices or activities for the planting or establishment of production crops: 515.81 Eligible Conservation Practices B. Ineligible Practices. Ineligible conservation practices are those: (i) Where the sole purpose is to enhance production without an identifiable conservation benefit or natural resource concern.</p> <p>EQIP program does support use of approved planting material to support NRCS approved vegetative conservation practices. For these scenarios, NRCS practice design and plant/seed selections must also conform to NOP requirements for use of organically grown seeds, seedlings and planting materials.</p> <p>512 Pasture and Hayland Planting, 550 Range Planting.</p>	<p>All seeding practices need to support alternatives and practice design for organically approved seed and planting stock. See also exceptions to NOP rule per 205.204(a).</p>	<p>Consider increased cost associated with planting material, such as seed, fertilizer, amendments, etc., which may need to be certified for use with an organic operation.</p>

NOP Rule	<u>National Organic Program (NOP) Requirement</u>	NRCS Resource Concern Category	Sub Resource Concern	NRCS Practices to Consider	Definition, Purposes and Guidance Specific to Organic Operations	Payment Schedule Considerations
205.205	<p>Crop rotation practice standard. The producer must implement a crop rotation including but not limited to sod, cover crops, green manure crops, and catch crops that provide the following functions that are applicable to the operation:</p> <p>(a) Maintain or improve soil organic matter content; (b) Provide for pest management in annual and perennial crops; (c) Manage deficient or excess plant nutrients; and (d) Provide erosion control.</p>	Soil erosion Soil condition Water Quality	<p><u>Soil Erosion:</u> *Ephemeral Gully *Irrigation Induced *Sheet and Rill *Wind <u>Soil Condition:</u> *Compaction *Damage from Sediment Deposition *Organic Matter Depletion <u>Water Quality:</u> *Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Groundwater *Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water *Excessive Salinity in Groundwater *Excessive Salinity in Surface Water *Excessive Suspended Sediment and Turbidity in Surface Water *Harmful Temperatures of Surface Water</p>	528 Prescribed Grazing, 338 Prescribed Burning, 512 Pasture and Hayland Planting, 550 Range Planting, 314 Brush Management, 561 Heavy Use Area Protection 328 Conservation Crop rotation, 340 Cover Crops, 595 Integrated Pest Management.	Fencing materials must meet NOP standards (nontreated wood post). Plant materials (organic sources if available) and fertilized must meet NOP.	Consider cost associated with acquisition of technical knowledge, which may need to be certified for use with an organic operation. Also consideration should be given for additional cost of using nonconventional methods of pest management.
205.206	<p>Crop pest, weed, and disease management practice standard. (a) The producer must use management practices to prevent crop pests, weeds, and diseases (b) Pest problems may be controlled through mechanical or physical methods per NOP rules.</p>	Plant Condition	<p>*Plants not adapted or suited *Productivity, Health, and Vigor *Noxious and Invasive Plants</p>	528 Prescribed Grazing, 338 Prescribed Burning, 512 Pasture and Hayland Planting, 550 Range Planting, 511 Forage Harvest Management, 314 Brush Management, 328 Conservation Crop rotation, 340 Cover Crops, 595 Integrated Pest Management.	Establish forage base and prescribed grazing method that recycles nutrients and/or produces nitrogen. Implement a nutrient management system that address froage nutrient needs by applying the right source, at the right time, at the right rate, and the right placement within NOP Rules. Fencing materials must meet NOP standards (nontreated wood post). Plant materials (organic sources if available) and fertilized must meet NOP.	Consideration should be given for additional cost of using nonconventional methods of pest management.

EQIP Organic Initiative
National Screening Criteria Worksheet – Fiscal Year 2011
Transition to Organic Production Applicant

Instructions:			
This screening worksheet must be completed for each eligible producer applying for EQIP Organic Initiative assistance. The goal of this screening tool is to ensure that conservation technical assistance and EQIP program benefits are efficiently allocated to address priority conservation needs related to organic provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill.			
Completion of this worksheet and documentation does not constitute agreement to provide EQIP program benefits or approval of an EQIP contract. The original screening worksheet must be filed with the applicant case file or EQIP program file and the screening priority (High, Medium, and Low) must be recorded in ProTracts. Upon request, a copy of any completed screening worksheet may be provided to the applicant. If the applicant is certified organic or in the exempt category, do not use this worksheet, use the Organic Production screening worksheet.			
Detailed Screening Criteria Worksheet – Complete for each eligible EQIP Applicant			
Applicant Name:		County:	
Application Number:		Field Office:	
Evaluator Name:		Date:	
Instructions: For each eligible application submitted by March 4, 2011, complete the following worksheet. Applications submitted after this date must be deferred until the next funding cycle. Use of this screening tool is mandatory and must be completed prior to final ranking.			
Step One – Basic Eligibility:		Yes	Action
A	Is the applicant eligible? (EQIP 515.51 and CPM 512.22): Applicant has provided documentation to indicate producer eligibility for the EQIP Organic Initiative.		No, do not process until application is complete.
B	Is the land eligible? (EQIP 515.52 and CPM 512.22): Applicant has provided documentation and evidence to indicate land meets program eligibility requirements and proof of control.		No, application is ineligible
C	Do the planned practices address one or more of the national primary resource concerns for the EQIP Organic Initiative (i.e., soil condition, soil erosion, domestic animals, plant condition, water quality, or fish and wildlife)?		No, application is ineligible
D	Has the applicant provided the contact information of their accredited certifying agent, and is the applicant implementing conservation practices consistent with an organic system plan? (Sec. 1240(B))		No, application is ineligible
Step Two – Priority Determination for ProTracts – Select One:			
High Priority Category: -Application will result in implementation of at least five State-approved conservation practices. OR -Application will result in implementation of a State-approved suite of three or more conservation practices. (A suite of organic practices approved in any State will tie practices together to address resource concerns) OR -Application is for development of an EQIP Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) Supporting Organic Transition.			High Priority Status in ProTracts
Medium Priority Category: -Application will result in implementation of at least two State-approved conservation practices.			Medium Priority Status in ProTracts
Low Priority Category: -Application will result in implementation of only one State-approved conservation practice.			Low Priority Status in ProTracts
Application is for conservation practices that do not assist the producer's transition to an organic production system, are not consistent with requirements of an OSP, or both. Defer application (or refer application to other program).			Defer

The priority determination of High, Medium, or Low must be recorded in ProTracts for this applicant.

D.C. Approval:		Date Approved:	
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EQIP Organic Initiative
National Screening Criteria Worksheet – Fiscal Year 2011
Organic Production Applicant

Instructions:			
This screening worksheet must be completed for each eligible producer applying for EQIP Organic Initiative assistance. The goal of this screening tool is to ensure that conservation technical assistance and EQIP program benefits are efficiently allocated to address priority conservation needs related to organic provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill.			
Completion of this worksheet and documentation does not constitute agreement to provide EQIP program benefits or approval of an EQIP contract. The original screening worksheet must be filed with the applicant case file or EQIP program file and the screening priority (High, Medium, and Low) must be recorded in ProTracts. Upon request, a copy of any completed screening worksheet may be provided to the applicant. If the applicant operation is not certified organic or in the exempt category do not use this worksheet, use the Transition to Organic Production screening worksheet.			
Detailed Screening Criteria Worksheet – Complete for each eligible EQIP Applicant			
Applicant Name:		County:	
Application Number:		Field Office:	
Evaluator Name:		Date:	
Instructions: For each eligible application submitted by March 4, 2011, complete the following worksheet. Applications submitted after this date must be deferred until the next funding cycle. Use of this screening tool is mandatory and must be completed prior to final ranking.			
Step One – Basic Eligibility:		Yes	Action
A	Is the applicant eligible? (EQIP 515.51 and CPM 512.22): Applicant has provided documentation to indicate producer eligibility for the EQIP Organic Initiative.	Yes, Continue to B	No, do not process until application is complete.
B	Is the land eligible? (EQIP 515.52 and CPM 512.22): Applicant has provided documentation and evidence to indicate land meets program eligibility requirements and proof of control.	Yes, Continue to C	No, application is ineligible
C	Do the planned practices address one or more of the national primary resource concerns for the EQIP Organic Initiative (i.e., soil condition, soil erosion, domestic animals, plant condition, water quality, or fish and wildlife)?	Yes, Continue to D	No, application is ineligible
D	For certified organic producers, has applicant provided NRCS with a copy of their current approved organic system plan (OSP) and agreed to implement conservation practices consistent with EQIP statute and the OSP (Sec. 1240(B))? For exempt producers, has applicant provided documentation that they sell less than \$5,000 in organic products annually and agreed to implement conservation practices consistent with an OSP?	Yes, Continue to Step 2	No, application is ineligible
Step Two – Priority Determination for ProTracts – Select One:			
High Priority Category: -Application will result in implementation of at least five State-approved conservation practices. OR -Application will result in implementation of a State-approved suite of three or more conservation practices. (A suite of organic practices approved in any State will tie practices together to address resource concerns)			High Priority Status in ProTracts
Medium Priority Category: -Application will result in implementation of at least two State-approved conservation practices.			Medium Priority Status in ProTracts
Low Priority Category: -Application will result in implementation of only one State-approved conservation practice.			Low Priority Status in ProTracts
For certified organic producers, application is for conservation practices that do not help producer maintain or implement conservation practices documented in an organic system plan. Or for exempt producers, application is for conservation practices that are not consistent with an OSP. Defer application (or refer application to other program).			Defer

The priority determination of High, Medium, or Low must be recorded in ProTracts for this applicant.

D.C. Approval:		Date Approved:	
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