

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

1. Producers will select from a pre-approved list of pilot projects (if available).
2. Pilots include practices, components, or management techniques that have shown environmental benefits but have not been adopted by farmers in the project area.
3. The pilots must be implemented and monitored according protocols developed specifically for the project.
4. Protocols include:
 - a. Specifics of the practice, component or management technique being piloted
 - b. Acreage required to adequately conduct the pilot
 - c. How many years the pilot is to be conducted
 - d. What the participant is required to provide (materials, labor, maintenance etc.)
 - e. 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.



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

2013 Ranking Period 1

5. 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

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

CSP 2013-1
MISSISSIPPI SUPPLEMENT
FPP02- On-Farm Pilot Projects

Notice to Employees: All potential on-farm pilot projects must be Routed through the Area Office and approved by the State Office.

On-farm pilots consist of the installation, monitoring and publicizing of projects that fit within the identified state priority areas. Pilots should be practices, components, or management techniques that have shown environmental benefits through research but are not used by farmers in the project area. Practices, components, or management techniques must be implemented, monitored and publicized according to protocols developed specifically for the project. In Mississippi the state priority areas are **wildlife and energy conservation**. Follow guidance from the **2013 National CSP On-Farm Pilot Project Requirements**.

Wildlife

The practices were selected for the purpose of providing pollinator habitat/corridors, restoring upland wildlife habitat; wetland wildlife habitat; threatened and endangered species habitat; habitat for declining species of National or State significance; declining native habitats of National or State significance, such as longleaf pine ecosystem; aquatic habitat; and other types of wildlife habitat on eligible land.

Priority Community/Ecosystem Concerns

- A. Lack of desirable early successional components:
 - 1. Lack of transition zones in cropland, pastureland and hayland fields.
 - 2. Lack of quality nesting habitat and rearing areas in old fields, pastureland, hayland, and utility rights-of-ways.
 - 3. Lack of corridor habitat, including pollinator corridors, in open areas such as agricultural fields, pastureland, hayland, and old fields.

Solution: Use any of these practices alone or in combination: Wildlife Buffers (647), Wildlife Transition Zones/Corridors (645), Light Strip Disking (645), Prescribed Burning (338), Firebreaks (394), Herbicide Conversion of Fescue, Bermudagrass, And Cogongrass to Native Vegetation (645), Early “Successional Vegetation” establishment (including Legumes) (647), Tree/Shrub Planting (612), Quality Vegetation Management in Abandoned Fields (647)

Species or ecosystems benefited: bobwhite quail, Bachman’s sparrow, cottontail and swamp rabbits eastern wild turkey, grassland guild of birds, Black Belt and Jackson Prairies, and native and non-native pollinators.

- B. Lack of winter water for waterfowl habitat, shallow water areas, and other seasonally flooded wetland areas for wildlife.

Solutions - Use the practices: shallow water for wildlife (644) may include structure for water control and/or dike to create shallow water impoundments; winter water for wildlife (646) may include pumping, structure for water control, and/or dike to provide for winter water by November 15th each year; installation of water control structures may include beaver resistant water level control devices (644 and 646).

Species or ecosystems benefited: Migratory birds, including ducks, geese, shore and wading birds, also turkey, deer, reptiles, amphibians, and wetlands.

- C. Lack of early successional wildlife habitat components in the under and mid-story of woodlands dominated by pine or pine/hardwood.

Solutions - Reduce the amount of invasive, undesirable woody vegetation in the under and mid-story canopies and remove litter with the practices of prescribed burning (338), and/or strip disking (645) in pine stands with canopies that have been thinned enough to allow ground level vegetation to respond. Use imazapyr to restore a diverse wildlife favorable under and mid-story habitat in a pine stand (645). Utilize firebreaks (394) to create additional wildlife habitat by planting desirable vegetation.

Species or ecosystems benefited: Bobwhite quail, cottontail and swamp rabbits, red-cockaded woodpecker, eastern wild turkey, native and non-native pollinators, gopher tortoise, several guilds of song birds, and longleaf pine forests.

- D. Restoration of declining native habitats.

Solution - Use the practices: Early Successional Vegetation (native grass) Establishment (including native legumes) (647), Tree/Shrub Establishment (612), Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management (644), Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645), and Wetland Restoration (657).

Species or ecosystems benefited: Black Belt and Jackson prairie; longleaf pine; wetlands, and other native habitats.

- E. Lack of habitat components for both Federal and State Listed Threatened and Endangered Species (TES).

Solutions - Benefits to TES and protection of the landowner's future options for use of the property should be protected through the voluntary agreement with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. That agency has an established program called "Safe Harbor". Points will be given for TES benefits when selected practices are applied within the identified area on the TES maps.

Species or ecosystems benefited:

- Gopher tortoises are benefited by the practices of hedgerow planting (645), prescribed burning (338), light strip disking (645), conversion of fescue and bermuda (645), planting long leaf pines (612) and early successional vegetation (native grass) establishment (including native legumes) (647). Any bonus points awarded under gopher tortoise criteria will cover any points potentially earned for Mississippi sandhill crane, dusky gopher frog, Eastern indigo snake, southern hognose snake, and black pine snake. The ranges of these species fall within that of the gopher tortoise and beneficial practices for these species are a subset of those for the tortoise.
- Red-cockaded woodpeckers are benefited in pine and pine/hardwood forests by prescribed burning (338).
- Black bear are benefited by corridor habitat, including riparian forest corridors (612) and transition zones (645) between cropland and forest land.

- F. Infestations of invasive plants within wildlife habitats that have extremely adverse effects on native plant growth, habitat condition, and other environmental resources.

Solutions - Reduce the amount of invasive, undesirable vegetation on forestland, pasture or hay lands with the practices of prescribed burning (338), light strip disking (645), and/or utilizing chemical weed control for Cogongrass and/or Kudzu control (645), herbicide conversion of Fescue and Bermuda grass to native vegetation (645), application of the selective herbicide, imazapyr to remove invasive, dense, undesirable woody species in pine stands (645) and in abandoned fields (647).

Species or ecosystems benefited: bobwhite quail, Bachman's sparrow, cottontail and swamp rabbits eastern wild turkey, grassland guild of birds, Black Belt and Jackson Prairie, red-cockaded woodpecker, gopher tortoise, several guilds of forest song birds, and longleaf pine forests.

Energy

The practices were selected for the purpose of reducing energy they shall not be enhancements from the CSP list.

Priority Concerns

A. High dependency on fossil fuels:

1. Animal housing
2. Irrigation
3. Nitrogen
4. Tillage

Solution: Any practice or suit of practices that will reduce energy needs.

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.

Criteria

1. Pilots should be practices, components, or management techniques that have shown environmental benefits but have not been adopted by farmers in the project area.
2. The pilots must be implemented and monitored according protocols developed specifically for the project.
3. The farmer must conduct at least 3 events to publicize the project to other farmers in the area. These events can be field days conducted Conservation Districts or other similar entities.
4. Data on the costs and performance must be collected for the demonstration project. The exact data collection needs will be identified for the project.

Documentation Requirements

1. Documentation of the events held to publicize the demonstration.
2. Data collected for the demonstration.