

Exhibit N – FY 2017 Innovative Conservation Agriculture Project

Initiative Name and Acronym – Innovative Conservation Agriculture Project

Initiative Description/Summary:

The Allamakee County Soil and Water Conservation District (ASWCD) will be the lead partner on this project and is a conservation-driven subdivision of state government that is responsible for carrying out state laws and programs within district (county) boundaries.

The natural resource challenges that this project will be addressing are soil quality degradation, soil health degradation, and water quality degradation. Approximately 75 percent of the soils in Allamakee County are labeled as being highly erodible (HEL) and are susceptible to sheet, rill, and gully erosion leading to concerns about sediment and nutrient transport. This region is dominated by karst topography that creates unique conservation challenges due to features such as sinkholes, losing streams, springs, and seeps. There are also many spring-fed, high-quality trout streams in the county that are vulnerable to degradation by sediment deposition. The karst features make it difficult to target specific watersheds because many streams receive groundwater flow that originates in different surface watersheds creating very connected systems of watersheds.

This project will be focused in Allamakee and Clayton Counties in Iowa. The project size was selected based on the staffing capabilities, administrative boundaries of the Allamakee and Clayton SWCDs, and working history with county producers. These counties are in the Driftless Area or Paleozoic Plateau region that is dominated by karst topography. Approximately 75% of the soils in these counties are listed as being highly erodible (HEL) and are susceptible to erosion from overland flow. The shallow limestone bedrock that dominates this karst topography is characterized by unique features such as sinkholes, springs, and losing streams that act as direct conduits between surface water and groundwater. The topography and geology of this area provide challenges for protecting against erosion and nutrient transport to surface water and groundwater leading to soil and water quality degradation. This results in a need for farming practices that minimize erosion and sediment and nutrient loss.

Participating Counties See Exhibit O:

Allamakee and Clayton Counties in Iowa.

Program Contact Information:

Paul Goldsmith at (515) 323-2224 or paul.goldsmith@ia.usda.gov

Project Financial Assistance through EQIP:

- \$393,590

ProTracts Requirements:

1. Subaccount Guidance:

One subaccount is available in ProTracts to support this Initiative under RCPP EQIP 2014 titled “Innovative Conservation Agriculture.”

Batching Dates will be the regular EQIP Batching Dates and will be placed on the NRCS Web Page.

2. Application, Evaluation, and Ranking Tool Guidance – Choice Lists and Matrix Data:

- a. Approved Land Types – The following applicable land types are eligible for this initiative:

Cropland
Other
Pastureland
Associated Ag Land

- b. RCPP Application Type - State

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c. Approved Natural Resource Concerns:

Water Quality Degradation – Excess Nutrients in Surface and Groundwater
Nutrients in Surface Water
Water Quality Degradation – Excess Sediment in Surface Water
Excessive Sediment in Surface Water

Soil Quality Degradation – Organic Matter Depletion
Organic Matter Depletion
Soil Quality Degradation – Compaction
Compaction

Soil Erosion – Sheet, Rill, & Wind Erosion
Sheet and Rill Erosion
Soil Erosion – Concentrated Flow Erosion
Ephemeral Gully Erosion
Classic Gully Erosion

Degraded Plant Condition – Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health
Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health

Livestock Production Limitation – Inadequate Water
Inadequate Water

Note: No additional resource concerns may be added or used in ProTracts AERT to support this initiative.

d. For this initiative the FYXX EQIP Cost List will be used for the Eligible Practices listed below using Initiative EQIP or Initiative EQIP HU Payment Rates.

Conservation Practices (Initiative EQIP and Initiative EQIP HU Payment Rates)

Practice Name	Practice Code
Access Control	472
Cover Crops	340
Conservation Crop Rotation	328
Fence	382
Forage and Biomass Planting	512
Heavy Use Area Protection	561
Livestock Pipeline	516
Prescribed Grazing	528
Pumping Plant	533
Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till	329
Watering Facility	614

e. The current FY20XX EQIP Cost List will be uploaded into ProTracts for the RCPP Projects each fiscal year. This Cost List will be provided to the Field Office to be loaded into Toolkit.

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3. Application, Evaluation, and Ranking Tool Guidance – Ranking Criteria Questions:

Ranking will be uploaded into ProTracts each fiscal year.

4. Additional Initiative Guidance:

The primary project partner for this project is the Allamakee County Soil and Water Conservation District.