



United States Department of Agriculture



Farm Bill 2018

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SEC. 2503(j). Administrative Requirements For Conservation Programs.

“(A) review the estimates for practice costs and rates of payments made to producers for practices on eligible land under this title; and

“(B) evaluate whether those costs and rates reflect a payment that—

“(i) encourages participation in a conservation program administered by the Secretary;

“(ii) encourages implementation of the most effective practices to address local natural resource concerns on eligible land; and

“(iii) accounts for regional, State, and local variability relating to the complexity, implementation, and adoption of practices on eligible land.

- **Are payments enough/too much?**
- **Are most effective practices being prioritized?**
- **Are there enough scenarios to cover most common needs?**



SEC. 2503(j). Administrative Requirements For Conservation Programs.

(2) GUIDANCE; REVIEW.—The Secretary shall—

“(A) issue guidance to States to annually review and adjust the estimates for practice costs and rates of payments made to producers to reflect the evaluation factors described in paragraph (1)(B); and

“(B) determine the appropriate practice costs and rates of payments for each State by—

“(i) annually reviewing each conservation program payment schedule and payment rate used in the State; and

“(ii) consulting with the State technical committee established under section 1261(a) in that State.

- **Payment rates for EQIP have been published.**
- **Scenarios are not yet available.**
- **Will look at changes for FY2021 starting in January.**



Some changes to consider

- **Paint required for metal coating**
- **Labor for rock grade stabilization structures**



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Conservation Stewardship Program



Mandated and discretionary changes with the new Farm Bill



Interim Program Rules are published in the Federal Register, 7 CFR Part 1470



Deadline for comments is January 13, 2020



**www.federalregister.gov,
84 FR 60883**



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Title	Published Date	Comment Due Date
Conservation Stewardship Program Interim Rule	11-8-19	
Proposed Revisions to the National Handbook of Conservation Practices for the Natural Resources Conservation Service	10-23-19	11-22-19
Adoption of Another Agency's Final Environmental Impact Statement to Implement the Feral Swine Eradication and Control Pilot Program	10-17-19	



CSP Changes

- **Now \$ based, no acre-limits.**
- **Public land can be enrolled.**
- **Requires funding for organic and transitioning to organic.**
- **No more annual payment limit.**
- **Participants who choose to not renew are ineligible for 2 years.**
- **Cover crops will get no less than 125% of estimated cost.**
- **Advanced grazing management is a new supplemental payment that is paid no less than 150% of estimated costs.**
- **Comprehensive conservation plans receive one-time payment based on the number of resource concerns addressed and types of land uses included in the plan.**
- **Agency must do more to promote soil health.**

Challenges

- Building the technical capacity of staff.
- Building the capacity and resources of partners.
- Participants don't want to be tied to government restrictions.
- Participants don't want to use or pay consultants.
- Outreach to new participants.

Benefits

- “Without programs like CSP, it would be very difficult to integrate new technology and practices that help enhance conservation efforts on our farm.”
- “By changing grazing and watering habits of my livestock, my grasses were more capable of holding soil erosion and water runoff.”
- “The renewal contract gave me the incentive and confidence to implement additional practices that I may not have done without CSP.”



2017- 2019 NM CSP- 76 contracts

Planting activities		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Extent</i>
Range Planting	3	135 acres
Tree and Shrub Planting- cultural	3	302 acres
Tree and Shrub Planting- wildlife cover	1	1 acre
Conservation Cover for pollinators	1	0.1 acre
Forage and biomass planting	2	27 acres


Structural activities		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Extent</i>
Wildlife friendly fencing- retrofitting	16	26,000 feet
Structures for wildlife	7	56
Roof runoff structure	1	2
Watering facility	3	3



Wildlife management activities		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Extent</i>
Leaving standing grain, crop rotation	1	6 acres
Forage harvest to allow wildlife to escape	1	1 acre
Forage harvest for wildlife cover	2	115 acres
Upland wildlife management	1	511 acres

Soil health activities		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Extent</i>
Crop rotation to improve soil health	1	107 acres
Conservation crop rotation	3	152 acres
Cover crop	4	2,162 acres
Reduced tillage	2	465 acres

Resource conserving crop rotation

Resource-conserving crop means a crop that is one of the following, as determined by NRCS: 

- (1) A perennial grass;
- (2) A legume grown for use as forage, seed for planting, or green manure;
- (3) A legume-grass mixture; or
- (4) A small grain or other resource-demanding crop grown in combination with a grass, legume, forbs, grass-forbs mixture, whether interseeded or planted in rotation.



NM has a state supplement

Chile farm includes a cover crop in 3-year rotation
\$21.36/acre

Use soil health assessment with Cover crop
\$12.74/acre

Nutrients are matched to crop stage
\$17.39/acre

Pesticides are applied with precision equipment
\$11.06/acre

Reduction of attractants to human-subsidized predators in sensitive wildlife species habitat

- Raven populations have soared in desert communities.
- Ravens are now the a major threat to Mojave desert tortoise.
- **What human-subsidized predators are a growing threat to wildlife in NM?**
- **How can attractants be reduced?**





Photo Credit: DTRO/USFWS



Crop management activities		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Extent</i>
Pumping plant evaluations	1	4
Advance IWM	1	16 acres
Improving nutrient uptake efficiency	3	1,618 acres
Utilize precision pesticide application	1	1025 acres
Utilize IPM techniques	1	110 acres

Range management activities		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Extent</i>
Brush management	12	565 acres
Herbaceous weed control	6	384 acres

Grazing management activities		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Extent</i>
Animal health (Nutbal) 	41	300,180 acres
Range health monitoring 	15	133,681 acres
Grazing for riparian and watershed	2	57,555 acres
Incorporating wildlife refuge areas	7	49,683 acres
Grazing for wildlife	2	35,703 acres



Requires use of a consultant.

Management Intensive Rotational Grazing

“Management intensive, multi-paddock grazing system where livestock are regularly and systematically moved to fresh forage...”

Intensive grazing is generally characterized by stocking densities – 50,000 to 500,000 animal pounds per acre. Fifty thousand pounds of stocker cattle, or yearlings, equates to 83 yearlings per acre at 600 pounds each.

- **New Mexico rules of thumb and requirements?**

NEW



John Coleman Locke manages a stocking density of 100,000 lbs/acre with 12 moves per day.
Photo credit: PastureMap

Installing electrical fence offsets and wire for cross-fencing

NEW

- What works in NM?
- What new technologies need to be demonstrated to ranchers?



Use of body condition score for livestock on a monthly basis

NEW

- A written plan to monitor and document Body Condition Scores monthly using Land Grant University Scoring Guidelines.
- Supplemental feed and/or mineral will be balanced with the forage consumption to meet the desired nutritional level for the kind and class of grazing and/or browsing livestock.
- Animals must maintain ideal/Land Grant University recommended BCS for their breed, phase of production, or livestock type. (animals should not be emaciated to thin, or fat to obese).

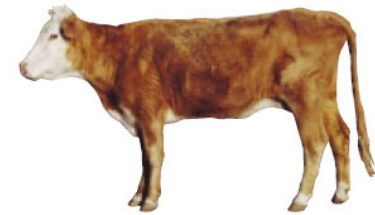


Figure 3. BCS 2: Ribs and bone structure easily visible, but no

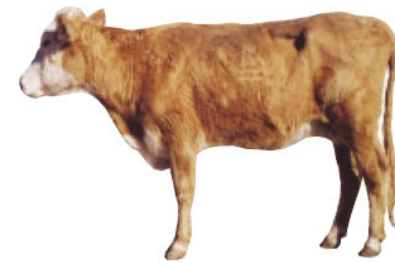


Figure 4. BCS 3: Very thin. No visible fat is on the ribs or brisket. Individual muscles in the hindquarters are easily visible and spinous processes are very apparent.

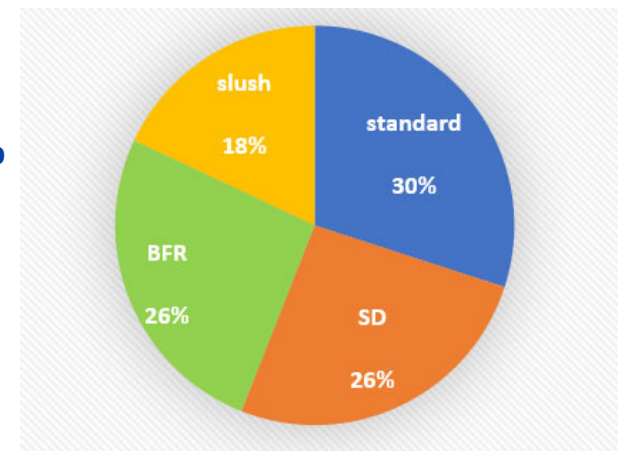


LWG recommendations

- Keep statewide ranking pools.
- Use same priority resource concerns as EQIP.
- Need to tailor enhancements to local needs.
- Need to do more workshops to explain enhancements to farmers and ranchers.

Tentative spending plan:

- **Agland: Standard 20%, SD: 20%, BFR 20%**
- **Irrigated Agland: Standard 5%, SD 5%, BFR 5%**
- **NIPF: Standard 5%, SD 1%, BFR 1%**





A CEP

- **Agricultural Land Easements**
- **Wetland Reserve Easements**
 - **Healthy Forest Reserve**
 - **Floodplain Easements**
- **Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program**



ALE- multiple ranking pools?

State priority is agricultural land

- 1) in Valencia county with riparian habitat adjacent to the Rio Grande.
- 2) with riparian habitat adjacent to the Rio Grande.
- 3) in close proximity to the Rio Grande, Pecos, Gila or San Juan river.
- 4) near an urban area.
- 5) with riparian or perennial streams.

Ranking pool for acequia water rights?

Ranking pool for grasslands of special significance?

Ranking consideration for rangeland near CHAT1 habitat?



WRE

- 1) **Current the maximum easement payment is \$5,000/acre. Exceptions can be granted.**
 - 2) **Payment is the lower of GARC, \$5,000 cap, or amount the landowner will accept.**
 - 3) **Current GARC is 90% of market value.**
 - 4) **With grazing rights option the payment is 75% of market value- a wildlife species must benefit from grazing.**
- **Does State technical committee want to lower the GARC %?**
 - **Does State technical committee want to create different rates for different parts of the state?**
 - **Does State technical committee support grazing rights option for Pecos sunflower?**



WRE Partnerships



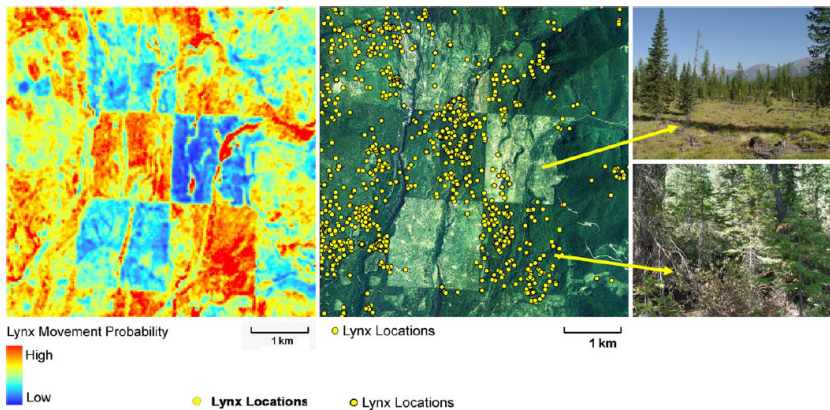
- WREP provides funding to partners to increase WRE outreach and restoration.
- Partners interested in WREP are encouraged to work with their NRCS state office as part of developing the proposal.
- Agreements that result in new enrollments require 25% match. Match can be provided with restoration.
- Agreements for existing enrollments require 50% match. These agreements can include easement acquisition related services, title package review and assembly, contracting services, restoration or management designs or planning, construction stakeout and supervision, or conducting monitoring.

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Healthy Forest Reserve

- Permanent or 30-year easements.
- Restoration with easement purchase or restoration only.
- Private or tribal land.
- Will contribute to the restoration or enhancement of the habitat or otherwise measurably increase the likelihood of recovery for a selected species listed under section 4 of the ESA, or a candidate for such listing, or a selected State-listed species, or is a species identified by the Chief for special consideration for funding.



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Floodplain Easements (EWP-FPE)

This applies on floodplain lands that have been

- **impaired or impacted within the last 12 months,**
- **have flooded at least twice during the past ten years,**
- **would be inundated or adversely impacted as a result of a dam breach,**
- **or have been damaged by a specific natural disaster for which Congress appropriated disaster funding.**

Under FPE, a landowner voluntarily sells a perpetual conservation easement to NRCS that provides the Agency the full authority to restore and enhance the floodplain's natural functions and values.





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Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP)

Funding to expand or establish public access programs for wildlife recreation.

Applications are due November 27.

- Up to 25 percent of the funding for each award can be used to provide incentives to improve habitat on enrolled public access program lands.
- Can pay for gates, kiosks, fences, signs, boardwalks...
- Landowner participants must follow NRCS practice standards for any habitat improvement activities. This requirement can be waived if an awardee provides sufficient justification.
- State governments and tribes can request up to 10 percent of program funds for technical assistance.



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DAVID TURKO

Conservation Innovations Grant

- **2 active agreements.**
- **3 new agreements are in process.**
- **Due to audits now have stricter reporting requirements.**
- **Need to increase reporting of the project accomplishments.**
- **Removed no-till equipment as a priority.**
- **No decision on funding for FY2020.**

- **Input on state priorities?**
- **Input on reporting of accomplishments?**

