



Iowa Bulletin: 440-23-3

Date: December 16, 2022

Subject: PGM – Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and 2014 Farm Bill Regional Conservation Partnership Program-Environmental Quality Incentives Program (RCPP-EQIP) Timeline and Program Updates

Action Required By: January 27, 2023

Purpose. To provide the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and 2014 Farm Bill Regional Conservation Partnership Program-Environmental Quality Incentives Program (RCPP-EQIP) timelines and program updates.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2023.

Explanation. This bulletin provides EQIP and 2014 Farm Bill RCPP-EQIP timelines and program updates for FY 2023.

1. EQIP Timeline – The FY 2023 timeline for EQIP and 2014 Farm Bill RCPP-EQIP is as-follows:

October 7, 2022 – Application batching cutoff for EQIP general and initiatives first sign-up period.

October 7, 2022 – Application batching cutoff for 2014 Farm Bill RCPP-EQIP first sign-up for Driftless Area Habitat for the Wild & Rare Phase 2 Project ID 1792 only.

January 27, 2023 – Deadline to rank all EQIP and 2014 Farm Bill RCPP-EQIP first sign-up period applications in Conservation Assessment and Ranking Tool (CART) with an accurate cost estimate. The use of the cost estimator is required. Application selection will occur within one week after the ranking deadline.

March 10, 2023 – 100% obligation deadline for all first sign-up period EQIP applications. The State office is holding **firm** to this date to allow staff more time towards planning vs. contracting.

March 17, 2023 – Application batching cutoff for EQIP general and initiatives and 2014 Farm Bill RCPP-EQIP second sign-up period. This is **conditional** and will only be used if additional funds are received or if certain targets are not met.

May 5, 2023 – Deadline to rank all EQIP and 2014 Farm Bill RCPP-EQIP conditional second sign-up period applications in CART with an accurate cost estimate. The use of the cost estimator is required. Application selection will occur within one week after the ranking deadline.

June 30, 2023 – 100% obligation deadline for all second period EQIP applications and any remaining applications. The State office is holding **firm** to this date.

Additional batching periods will be announced as needed.

2. News for FY 2023

- A. The tentative release date of the Iowa Financial Assistance Programs Scenario Booklet is December 19, 2022, formerly known as the Iowa EQIP Payment Scenarios Booklet.
- B. The tentative EQIP ACT Now application continuous sign-up will begin January 23, 2023. Finalized information is expected to be released before December 25, 2022. EQIP ACT Now is a “process” to enable our participants a pathway to achieving conservation on their operations quicker than general EQIP timelines allow.


DIST: E

- C. National Headquarters (NHQ) released the annual updates to Title 440 Conservation Programs Manual, Part 530 "Working Lands Conservation Program Manual" and they are posted to <https://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov>. There are two highlights of importance for Iowa:
- (1) For contracts obligated in FY 2023 and forward, there is an allowance for an increased number of separate payments for land management practices from 3 years to 5 years. Iowa will allow consecutive payments up to a maximum of 5 years for all land management practices on the same land unit, within the maximum contract length of 10 years.
 - (2) Multiple payments for implementing the same structural and vegetative practices on the same land within the practice lifespan are generally not allowed. 440 CPM § 530. 406.B.(4)(i) outlines an exception for Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Brush Management (314) and/or CPS Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315), which allows up to 3 payments for either practice on the same land. Iowa received a variance on September 29, 2022, that allows up to 3 consecutive years of payments for CPS Brush Management (314) and/or CPS Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315) for specific pervasive species. Refer to the variance located on the Iowa SharePoint Programs' folder [FY2023 EQIP](#) for more information.
- D. FY 2023 Environmental Quality Incentives Program-Conservation Incentives Contract (EQIP-CIC) will be the same as it was in FY 2022 and there will be no changes in guidance this year. As a reminder, following are the 3 priority resource concerns and the 11 priority practices for EQIP-CIC planning:
- (1) There is statewide eligibility on cropland and pastureland.
 - (2) The 3 priority resource concerns are:
 - a. Soil Quality Limitations
 - b. Field Sediment, Nutrient and Pathogen Loss
 - c. Livestock Production
 - (3) The 11 eligible annual payment practices are:
 - a. CPS Conservation Crop Rotation (328)
 - b. CPS Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till (329)
 - c. CPS Cover Crops (340)
 - d. CPS Forage Harvest Management (511)
 - e. CPS Prescribed Grazing (528)
 - f. CPS Drainage Water Management (554)
 - g. CPS Nutrient Management (590)
 - h. CPS Annual Forages for Grazing Systems (810)
 - i. CPS Soil Health Testing (216)
 - j. CPS Soil and Source Testing for Nutrient Management (217)
 - k. CPS Carbon Sequestration and Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Assessment (218)
- E. Iowa will continue to have 10 high priority practices identified to receive an increased payment rate equivalent to 90% for the following practices: brush management (314), conservation cover (327), constructed wetlands (656), denitrifying bioreactor (605), saturated buffers (604), silvopasture (381), tree & shrub establishment (612), wetland creation (658), wetland enhancement (659), and wetland restoration (657). This has not changed from FY22.
- F. Iowa FY 2023 EQIP ranking pool templates have been released from NHQ. These will be released to the field offices once they are completed and tested in the CART training environment. Staff will be notified in a timely manner via email when the ranking pools are ready.
- G. Reminders:
- The use of an organic modifier is required for all organic applications.
 - The use of a grazing modifier is required for all pastureland applications and if grazing on cropland.
 - A separate application number with an appropriate cost estimate must be used if the ranking pools use different cost lists.

- No payment caps for conservation practices except for 374-Farmstead Energy Improvement Grain Dryer payment scenario in which the payment cap is \$50,000.
- The Driftless Area Habitats for the Wild & Rare Phase 2 is the only 2014 Farm Bill RCPP-EQIP practice offered in FY 2023.
- Additional EQIP information will be on the Programs' SharePoint page as it comes available.

Contact. If you have questions, please contact Jessica Downey, EQIP Coordinator, at (515) 323-2702 or by email at jessica.downey@usda.gov.

I look forward to a wonderful year of serving all our customers in implementing conservation on the landscape through EQIP assistance with the nation's best conservation customer service team.



JON HUBBERT
State Conservationist