

KENTUCKY NRCS

EQIP Guidance Document

2021 Program Year

Version Dated

10/19/2020

State Guidance specific to administering the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in Kentucky.

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Items marked with an * must adhere to payment caps. See guidance for specifics.

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Fiscal Year 2021 EQIP General Guidelines

- No application will be considered for funding if it does not meet all eligibility requirements by the time applications are accepted for funding (530.20).
- The EQIP FY 2021 Payment Schedule will be used when determining the estimated cost for EQIP contracts.
- The RMS level is not required on EQIP acreage, although sound conservation planning is to be provided. Only the practices eligible for an EQIP payment shall be included on the EQIP schedule of operations NRCS-CPA-1155.
- **Practices awarded points shall meet Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) standards and specifications.** Existing practices that meet FOTG standards are not eligible to receive points or payments.
- All practices awarded points shall be included in the contract when the participant's application is accepted. Non-payment practices and/or practices planned under other programs are not eligible to receive points for the EQIP offer.
- All practices installed will be maintained as designed for the life of the practice. If livestock are allowed managed access to any practice it must be done judiciously to prevent degradation of the installed practice.
- Management practices that have previously been applied or adopted on a treatment unit are not eligible for payments on that treatment unit unless an increased level of management above and beyond the current management system will be achieved, and a resource concern is being addressed (such as adopting a soil quality cover crop where a soil protection cover crop was previously implemented). Contracting and program policy establish that payments for management practices are limited to a maximum of three separate payments during the term of a contract (530.406).
 - **Exception:** Payments for conservation practice 340 "Cover Crop" are limited to a maximum of five separate payments during the term of a single contract on the same land unit when conservation practice 340 is planned and applied as a component of a complete conservation system to address resource concerns related to soil health.
- Land or structures under contract or with existing maintenance agreements (PL-566, etc.) are not eligible for EQIP.
- For livestock related practices, **livestock must be present at the time of ranking AND practice installation. An exception may be granted based on whether livestock ownership can be determined AND where the grazing unit is capable of being grazed** (existing fence, water sources, etc.). An exception would be when boundary fence is being installed on land exiting CRP or where cropland is being converted to pastureland. *See specific boundary fence guidance under the Fence (382) guidance.
- All practices in the contract must be the least cost alternative to address the resource concern. Reference 530.41, B for specific guidance concerning selecting payment rates. The least-cost payment scenario must be applied to support payments for practices to achieve the conservation objective. At the request of a participant, NRCS may provide design and technical assistance for implementation of a practice with extents greater than what is needed to address the resource concern, however, expense and costs associated with the extra extent are the responsibility of the producer and may not be reimbursed through

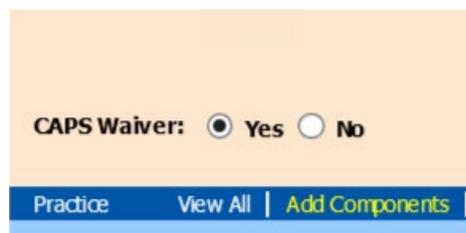
program financial assistance. Example 1: A concrete walled manure storage structure where a less expensive earthen structure would service the resource need. Example 2: If minimum standards and specifications require a three-wire fence and the participant wants to install a woven wire fence that costs twice as much as the minimum acceptable standard, EQIP will pay the minimum payment rate, and any additional costs are borne by the participant.

- For practices planned on cropland where Sheet and Rill or Soil Quality are the resource concerns, RUSLE2 must be ran for both before and after scenarios to verify planned practices are needed to address current resource concerns. These scenarios must be included in the EQIP contract folder.
- **Remember that you are not to design or build conservation practices above your Practice/Engineering Design Authority level.** You must request specialist assistance as needed.
- In order for land to be eligible for irrigation-related practices in EQIP that land must have been irrigated **two out of the last five years**. This means that irrigation must have been part of managing the cropping system to meet the needs of the plant and to maintain the yields of an irrigated crop. In order to document irrigation history, applicants may provide any of the following:
 - Written self-certification of the irrigation history, by year, and crops produced on the land with yields indication irrigation;
 - Aerial Photography coverage showing evidence of irrigation history on the property;
 - Official copies of Farm Service Agency records such as aerial compliance photography, Farm Acreage Report, Production History Report, and Risk Management Insurance;
 - Water rights certificate, water rights maps and/or well or pumping plan permits issued by a federally recognized Tribe, State or Federal Agency;
 - Irrigation company share certificates and assessments that document water rights and water availability;
 - Fuel bills or maintenance records documenting the use of an irrigation system with the presence of an operable irrigation system or reliable water source indicating the ability to irrigate;
 - Irrigation water management plan implementation documentation;
 - Irrigation or water use reports provided by a local or State unit of government.
 - Note: The use of manual systems of irrigation by hose, buckets, or other hand delivery systems may be used as a justification of irrigation history.
- An approved, Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) is required BEFORE providing technical or financial assistance to an Animal Feeding Operation (AFO) to address manure or wastewater handling and storage/treatment and/or when providing technical or financial assistance for nutrient management that involves the application of manure and wastewater. See KY Bulletin 190-15-4 for additional guidance.
- No “new” operations to increase or initiate production will be considered for EQIP; however, expanded operations will be eligible if a resource concern will be addressed. Reference 530.403.
- Changes in Land Use – Producers may be eligible for conservation practices and activities that facilitate an environmentally beneficial change in land use if all the following criteria are met:
 - The change results in a higher level of conservation benefit.

- To ensure the change results in conservation benefit, the applicant may implement a corresponding management practice to ensure the structural or vegetative practices are properly managed.
- The conservation practices or activities will treat resource concerns associated with the new land use, and without which the planning criteria cannot be met.

CONSERVATION APPLICATION RANKING TOOL (CART) AND PROTRACTS APPLICATION MANAGEMENT GUIDANCE

- All EQIP and RCPP-EQIP practices the applicant is applying for will be planned in one Practice Schedule in Conservation Desktop (CD). One CART assessment will be ran on the EQIP practice schedule. Regardless of the number of EQIP or RCPP-EQIP applications entered into ProTracts for the applicant, only one CART assessment will need to be ran.
- Applications for Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs) will be entered into ProTracts and assigned the application type “planning” or “plan-organic” on the ProTracts application screen.
 - Multiple CAPs can be included in one application as long as neither of the CAPs are for a Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition (138) as these have to be assigned the application type of “plan-organic”.
 - If multiple CAPs are preapproved in an application, the planner will need to select ‘yes’ for the CAPs Waiver option on the application screen in order for ProTracts to obligate multiple CAPs in one contract.



- Applications for conventional/non-organic practices will be entered into ProTracts and assigned the application type “conventional”.
 - Conventional applications can include eligible practices from multiple EQIP ranking pools/fund accounts.
 - If preapproved for funding in multiple ranking pools/fund accounts, the funds for preapproved practices will pull from the appropriate fund account when uploaded from CD.
- Applications for organic producers will be entered into ProTracts and assigned the application type “organic”.
 - Practices within these applications can only pull funds from the Organic Certified or Transitioning to Organic ranking pools/fund accounts.
- Applications for RCPP-EQIP must be entered for each project the applicant is applying for. RCPP projects are all funded from their own project account so they cannot be combined into one application.
 - Example: An applicant is eligible for the UK Forestry RCPP and the Grassland Biodiversity RCPP. Enter two RCPP-EQIP 2014 applications; one for each project.

- Practices that are eligible in multiple fund accounts, will be funded with funds from the ranking pool/fund account that is preapproved first in the Select Applications Tool (SAT).
- **To allow for similar farming operations to compete against like operations most local pooling areas have been divided to include Cropland and Pastureland ranking pools/fund accounts. When determining which ranking pool to use for ranking in CART, select the land use with the greatest acreage that the participant's application will address. Example: An Ohio County participant's primary resource concern is sheet and rill erosion on cropland but the application will also address a water quality issue in a pasture field. The treatment units include 100 acres of crop fields with cover crop and no-till planned; and a 20 acre pasture field with fence, pipe and tank planned. Since cropland has the greater acreage the application would be ranked under the Work Unit cropland ranking pool. If pasture practices are being completed in a cropland fund account, select the livestock type on the ProTracts application page. If most of the application includes cropland conversion to pastureland, the application will be ranked in the pastureland ranking pool in order to compete with applications applying similar practices.**
- Practices selected for ranking will be the same as the practices planned in the contract when the participant's application is accepted.
- When answering the questions for national, state and local issues only answer 'Yes' (award points) for the practices that will be installed using EQIP funds.

Fiscal Year 2021
All EQIP and RCPP-EQIP Eligible Practices

Code	Practice Name	Units	Lifespan
472	Access Control	ac	10
560	Access Road	ft	10
136	Agricultural Energy Design Plan - Written	no	1
128	Agricultural Energy Management Plan - Written	no	1
316	Animal Mortality Facility	no	15
396	Aquatic Organism Passage	mi	5
314	Brush Management	ac	10
672	Building Envelope Improvement	no	10
317	Composting Facility	no	15
102	Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan - Written	no	1
327	Conservation Cover	ac	5
138	Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition - Written	no	1
340	Cover Crop	ac	1
342	Critical Area Planting	ac	10
356	Dike	ft	20
362	Diversion	ft	10
130	Drainage Water Management Plan - Written	no	1
647	Early Successional Habitat Development/Management	ac	1
201	Edge-of-Field Water Quality Monitoring-Data Collection and Evaluation	ac	1
202	Edge-of-Field Water Quality Monitoring-System Installation	no	10
368	Emergency Animal Mortality Management	no	1
374	Farmstead Energy Improvement	no	10
108	Feed Management Plan - Written	no	1
382	Fence	ft	20
386	Field Border	ac	10
393	Filter Strip	ac	10
394	Firebreak	ft	5
142	Fish and Wildlife Habitat Plan - Written	no	1
512	Forage and Biomass Planting	ac	5
106	Forest Management Plan - Written	no	1
666	Forest Stand Improvement	ac	10
655	Forest Trails and Landings	ft	5
410	Grade Stabilization Structure	no	15
412	Grassed Waterway	ac	15
110	Grazing Management Plan - Written	no	1
561	Heavy Use Area Protection	sq ft	10
422	Hedgerow Planting	ft	15
315	Herbaceous Weed Treatment	ac	5
325	High Tunnel System	sq ft	5
114	Integrated Pest Management Plan - Written	no	1
154	IPM Herbicide Resistance Weed Conservation Plan - Written	no	1
430	Irrigation Pipeline	ft	20
436	Irrigation Reservoir	ac-ft	15
441	Irrigation System, Microirrigation	ac	15
449	Irrigation Water Management	ac	1
118	Irrigation Water Management Plan - Written	no	1
460	Land Clearing	ac	10
670	Lighting System Improvement	no	10
468	Lined Waterway or Outlet	ft	15
516	Livestock Pipeline	ft	20
484	Mulching	ac	1
590	Nutrient Management	ac	1
104	Nutrient Management Plan - Written	no	1
595	Pest Management Conservation System	ac	1
146	Pollinator Habitat Plan - Written	no	1
378	Pond	no	20
521	Pond Sealing or Lining, Geomembrane or Geosynthetic Clay Liner	no	20
338	Prescribed Burning	ac	1
112	Prescribed Burning Plan - Written	no	1
528	Prescribed Grazing	ac	1
533	Pumping Plant	no	15

*Fund Account Fact Sheets list practices eligible within each Fund Account.

Fiscal Year 2021
All EQIP and RCPP-EQIP Eligible Practices

Code	Practice Name	Units	Lifespan
329	Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till	ac	1
391	Riparian Forest Buffer	ac	15
390	Riparian Herbaceous Cover	ac	5
654	Road/Trail/Landing Closure and Treatment	ft	10
558	Roof Runoff Structure	no	15
367	Roofs and Covers	no	10
381	Silvopasture	ac	15
116	Soil Health Management Plan - Written	no	1
132	Soil Resources Planning - Written	no	1
574	Spring Development	no	20
442	Sprinkler System	ac	15
578	Stream Crossing	no	10
580	Streambank and Shoreline Protection	ft	20
585	Stripcropping	ac	5
587	Structure for Water Control	no	20
649	Structures for Wildlife	no	5
606	Subsurface Drain	ft	20
600	Terrace	ft	10
575	Trails and Walkways	ft	10
612	Tree/Shrub Establishment	ac	15
490	Tree/Shrub Site Preparation	ac	1
620	Underground Outlet	ft	20
635	Vegetated Treatment Area	ac	10
313	Waste Storage Facility	no	15
634	Waste Transfer	no	10
359	Waste Treatment Lagoon	no	15
638	Water and Sediment Control Basin	no	10
642	Water Well	no	20
614	Watering Facility	no	10
658	Wetland Creation	ac	20
644	Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management	ac	1
384	Woody Residue Treatment	ac	10

*Fund Account Fact Sheets list practices eligible within each Fund Account.

Access Control (472)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- Access Control (472) can only be contracted in conjunction with a contracted permanent, exclusion-quality fence
- Payment occurs once the facilitating practice is installed (i.e. fence).
- Access Control Payment is not authorized on Grassed Waterways (412), Lined Waterways or Outlets (468), Ponds (378) or any other constructed practice that must be maintained as part of the participant's Operation and Maintenance Agreement.
- Payment will be made on all acres behind the fence. **Livestock must be excluded from these acres for the Access Control (472) practice lifespan of 10 years.**
- **Payments are limited to 1-year.**
- For karst basins, the payment is authorized only for open-throated sinkholes.
- When the "Trail and or Road Closure" payment scenario is used for Access Control, it must be used in conjunction with **Road/Trail/Landing Closure and Treatment (654)** practice code. The site requiring protection from access could have been treated under a prior contract, or planned under the current contract.
 - This payment scenario provides for a permanently mounted 12 ft gate (16 ga; 6 rail minimum) with sufficient fencing on each side to restrict reasonable access. Planners should refer to construction specification details of Fence (382) for post sizing, bracing, etc. Participants may submit gate designs that exceed the minimum for consideration. (i.e. heavy pipe or guardrail gates, etc.

Access Road (560)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- Payment for Access Road can only be authorized when it is the **least cost** solution to solve a resource concern related to winter feeding for livestock. The road must be the most practicable route for feed transport vehicular travel that protects the soil, water, fish, wildlife, and other adjacent natural resources.
- The Technical Area Resource Conservationist will review and concur prior to approval of this practice.

Animal Mortality Facility (316)

Practice Lifespan: 15 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- For small animal composting only. If large animal, State Cost Share will need to be considered for funding.
- Participant must have a certified CNMP that addresses animal mortality to be eligible for an Animal Mortality Facility. For composting systems, the CNMP must address the end product of the composting.
- The *Small Rotary Drum w Composter* payment scenario will be capped at \$20,000 per contract (\$25,000 HU).

Brush Management (314)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- Species selected for control using (314) Brush Management should be selected from the most recent KY Invasive Advisory List in Section II of the FOTG. Other species may be identified for control with the concurrence of the state level specialist.
- Utilize the scenario *Chemical, Individual Plant Treatment* to apply foliar or basal bark spray to kill all re-sprouts. For tree of heaven, the same payment scenarios would be utilized however the *Hack and Squirt* scenario could also be utilized on sites where trees are greater than four-inch DBH.
- If invasive “tree” species such as tree-of-heaven or paulownia occur within existing forest stands (regardless of size) planners may choose to utilize (666) Forest Stand Improvement to address invasive species within the larger context of a forest management plan. For example, small areas of tree of heaven may be marked for removal alongside other undesirable species during normal FSI.
- If invasive “shrub” species such as autumn olive or bush honeysuckle occur within existing forest stands, planners should utilize (314) brush management and (666) Forest Stand Improvement together in the Forest Management Plan to address control issues. When feasible, the initial treatment of these invasive “shrub” species may be treated during the initial FSI planned activity, while additional follow-up treatment (through 314 – brush management) for smaller areas of the stand where invasive “shrub” species exist may be needed for invasive species that cannot be controlled with one treatment. Initial first year treatment can use either cut-stump or foliar application per Forester or Biologist recommendations.
 - Recommended for species w/canopy average > 4.5 ft in height: Use either:
 - *Mechanical, Hand Tools* (intended as an acceptable option for Organic producers; no chemicals applied; plants are pulled or uprooted) or
 - *Mechanical Chemical, Cut Stump* (includes treatment using a brush cutter/saw or bobcat mounted cutter/chipper + chemical herbicide application)
 - *Hack and Squirt*
 - *Chemical, Individual Plant Treatment* (chemical herbicide foliar applications by handheld, backpack, or ATV sprayer) with biologist recommendation.
- 2nd year and 3rd year treatments should be exclusive to foliar applications only, unless declared organic producer.
 - *Mechanical, Hand Tools* (see above) or
 - *Chemical, Individual Plant Treatment* (chemical herbicide foliar applications by handheld, backpack, or ATV sprayer)

Building Envelope Improvement (672)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- For a producer to be eligible to implement Conservation Practice Standard 672, they must have an AgEMP – Headquarters or an on-farm energy audit (no more than five years old) that meets the ASABE S612 standard.
- This practice must be checked out and approved by a Field Engineer.

Composting Facility (317)

Practice Lifespan: 15 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- For composting of by-products only, not authorized for animal mortality composting.

Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (102)

Practice Lifespan: 1 Year

Practice Program Guidance:

- All CAP 102s must be developed using Manure Management Planner (MMP) Software, or similar nutrient management software that produces a document that meets all components of the CAP-102 and CNMP checklist.
- CNMP Revisions are allowed for payment due to an increase in animal numbers or related resource concerns. See guidance under CAP-104 if only nutrient application acres have changed.
- The CAP 102 Plan Review Checklist is located on eFOTG, Section III.

Conservation Cover (327)

Practice Lifespan: 5 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- When planning in General EQIP or Initiatives other than Wildlife or SEKESH, must be planned in conjunction with other pasture or crop practices.
- Payments are authorized for conversion of agricultural lands (cropland, hay or pastureland) to native or cool season species (non-fescue).
- **The *Monarch Species Mix* payment scenario will not be used for General EQIP applications. This species mix is only applicable to the Monarch Initiative which KY may offer in the future.**

Cover Crop (340)

Practice Lifespan: 1 Year

Practice Program Guidance:

- The cover crop cannot be harvested for hay or grain. Light grazing is allowed. No more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the cover crop growth can be removed by grazing livestock.
- When planning the *Multi Species Organic/Non-Organic* option, consider contracting for the maximum 5 years to achieve maximum soil health benefits. Where field soil compaction is not a problem, brassica is no longer a requirement for the Soil Health cover. This payment scenario is applicable to the Nitrogen Fixing Cover and Soil Health Cover Crop options.
- **When planning in the Organic Initiative:**
 - Additional leguminous, high-biomass cover crop/green manure seeding mixes are available for Organic producers. No maximum payment, but still limited to a maximum of 5 years for contracting.
 - Organic contract payment limitations still apply.
 - 2018 Farm Bill Organic Production Limitation: During the period of FY2019 through FY2023, payments to a person or legal entity, directly or indirectly, may not exceed in the aggregate \$140,000.

Critical Area Planting (342)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- Stand-alone Critical Area Plantings considered large (0.25 ac.) may be subject to spot check before the contract is approved.
- When planning as a companion practice with another ground disturbing practice (ex: pond, wetland creation, etc.) ALWAYS use the *Vegetation-Normal Tillage* payment scenario.
- Mulch is not included in the Critical Area Planting (342) payment scenarios.

Diversion (362)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- Must plan (342) Critical Area for seeding of Diversion
 - Can only use Critical Area Scenario *Vegetation-Normal Tillage*

Farmstead Energy Improvement (374)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- For a producer to be eligible to implement Conservation Practice Standard 374, they must have an AgEMP – Headquarters or an on-farm energy audit (no more than five years old) that meets the ASABE S612 standard.
- **Heating scenarios offered under practice 374 which are paid by the each may need to be adjusted at time of payment depending on the size of heater installed by the participant.** When developing the cost estimate, the engineer will use a certain size heater such as a 125,000 Btu heater. This size is based off the payment scenario description used to develop the payment rate. The number of heaters will be determined based on the max Btu recommendation in the Ag Energy Management Plan. If the max Btu recommendation is by poultry house, then the number of heater to install should be calculated by house. The number of heaters should be rounded up to the nearest whole number. Be sure to explain to the participant when you give them the practice Jobsheet that our cost estimate in the contract is based on a certain size heater and the max amount of Btus allowed in the Ag Energy Management Plan. If they install a different size heater that results in less Btus, we will recalculate their final payment based on the amount of Btus installed using the original heater size.
- This practice must be checked out and approved by a Field Engineer.

Fence (382)

Practice Lifespan: 20 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- **The Exclusion payment rates for fence have been limited to two rates for all exclusion fence. Those rates are *Exclusion, barbed wire* and *Exclusion, electric, mountain site*. All exclusion fence types will use one of these two scenarios for contracting purposes.**
- When interior fence is contracted, Prescribed grazing (528) must be EQIP contracted and implemented in conjunction with this practice, based on Kentucky Graze (graze.xls) worksheet. Only *Interior* payment rate is authorized.
- Boundary fence (property line fence) or perimeter fence is eligible:
 - On expired or expiring Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land to establish a grazing operation. Refer to section 530.402E for additional information.
 - On land to protect, restore, or enhance an environmentally sensitive area, such as a riparian area or wetland.
 - On land to facilitate a change in production system.
 - Boundary fence is eligible on cropland/hayland being converted to pasture as long as the applicant can prove that the ground is currently in a long term crop rotation (permanent hay is not considered to be in a long-term crop rotation with annual crops), and the change in production system meets all of the following criteria (530.403C):
 - The change results in a higher level of conservation benefit.
 - The producer will implement a management practice that supports the change in production system.
 - The practices are necessary to address a resource concern that is associated with the new production system.
 - Boundary fence must be installed prior to receiving payment for any other grazing practices being installed within the grazing unit.

Firebreak (394)

Practice Lifespan: 5 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- This practice shall not be contracted in forestland or forested settings.
- This practice shall only be contracted in conjunction with Prescribed Burning (338).

Forage and Biomass Planting (512)

Practice Lifespan: 5 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- **Fescue conversion and cropland conversion plantings will both use the cool season grass and legume forage payment scenario.**
- If Tall fescue is included, only novel endophyte fescue (5% or less) is acceptable for payment.
- When a Forage and Biomass Planting is scheduled on cropland being converted to pastureland, Prescribed Grazing (528) must be contracted to ensure the acres will be managed according to an approved grazing management plan.
- Payments are not authorized for planting or conversion to a stand of pure legumes.
- Payment for frost seeding legumes is limited to pastures where the dominant slope is equal to or greater than a D slope. Endophyte infected Tall fescue seed may be utilized in these instances if needed to add cover and erosion control, but will have to be seeded at the participant's cost.
- If utilizing the *warm season introduced forage* scenario, "Wrangler" Bermuda grass is the only seeded variety authorized for EQIP due to its ability to overwinter in Kentucky.
- **A minimum of 5 contiguous acres or 5% of the forage base is required.**
- This practice is not authorized for land currently in forest.

Forest Management Plan (106)

Practice Lifespan: 1 Year

Practice Program Guidance:

- This practice will result in a Forest Management Plan that meets the criteria as identified by NHQ for the CAP 106. The Forest Management Plan will be developed for the woodland owner by a certified technical service provider (TSP).
- This practice is eligible provided that the woodland has never had a forest stewardship plan OR the current forest stewardship plan, prepared by KDF, or a private consultant forester, is more than 10 years old.
- The CAP 106 Plan Review Checklist is located on eFOTG, Section III.

Forest Stand Improvement (666)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- The cost of marking trees is included in the payment scenarios. Participants who are working with the Kentucky Division of Forestry should contact the local regional office to implement their Forest Stewardship Plan or Practice Plan. Participants may choose to contact a private consultant forester and get a Forest Management Plan developed. In addition, current policy requires for a practice to be “implemented” within the first 12 months. Participants will be responsible for contacting either the Kentucky Division of Forestry or a Consulting Forester to ensure that they are able to implement scheduled activities within the timeframe of this policy. A list of private consultant foresters can be found at: <http://www.kacf.org/index.php/find-a-forester/> and <https://www.eforester.org/> or through local advertising efforts. Participants will be expected to work directly with Kentucky Division of Forestry staff or a consulting forester (depending upon who is helping implement the FSI planned activity) to ensure that trees are marked according to the recommendations in the Forest Stewardship Plan or Forest Management Plan to meet contract schedule requirements.
- If invasive “tree” species such as tree-of-heaven or paulownia occur within existing forest stands (regardless of size), planners may choose to utilize (666) Forest Stand Improvement to address invasive species within the larger context of a forest management plan. For example, small areas of tree of heaven may be marked for removal alongside other undesirable species during normal FSI.
- If invasive “shrub” species such as autumn olive or bush honeysuckle occur within existing forest stands, planners should utilize (314) brush management and (666) Forest Stand Improvement together in the Forest Management Plan to address control issues. When feasible, the initial treatment of these invasive “shrub” species may be treated during the initial FSI planned activity, while additional follow-up treatment (through 314 – brush management) for smaller areas of the stand where invasive “shrub” species exist may be needed for invasive species that cannot be controlled with one treatment.
- **When planning in the Forestland Initiative:**
 - Prescription plans that call for light treatment thinning of 20 BA or less per acre are not eligible for this practice under EQIP.
 - Prescription plans that call for treatment of 21-60 BA per acre removed by the above methods use the *Forest Thinning for Wildlife and Health* Scenario.
- **When planning for the Southeast KY Early Successional Habitat Initiative:**
 - A practice prescription plan that describes planned improvement practices prepared by a Biologist or Forester must be on file in the NRCS office before the contract is approved.

SEKESH participants must remove 40 BA per acre unless a Private Lands Biologist notes on the prescription plan that the wildlife objective was reached with less than a 40 BA per acres removal.

Grassed Waterway (412)

Practice Lifespan: 15 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- When contracting an equipment crossing in a waterway use the Heavy Use Area Protection standard and Rock/Geotextile with site prep payment scenario. **Use the Grassed Waterway Equipment Crossing design.**

Heavy Use Area Protection (561)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- Heavy Use Areas designed for feeding areas on animal feeding operations (AFO) are eligible for EQIP payments when identified as a component of a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP).
- Loafing areas identified as needed in the CNMP are authorized for financial assistance.
- Curbing on existing concrete slabs are eligible for payment under this practice.
- Heavy Use Areas will not be covered unless they are a part of a roofed winter feeding area that will be connected to a Waste Storage Facility (313). Roofed winter feeding areas must be included in a CNMP to be eligible for financial assistance through EQIP. Roofed winter feeding areas constructed in conjunction with a Waste Storage Facility (313) must be covered using the Roofs and Covers (367) practice standard. Roof Runoff Structure (558) must be planned to manage roof runoff.
- Heavy Use Area may also be used as a crossing in a Grassed Waterway (412). Use the Rock/Geotextile with site prep payment scenario.
- Livestock Watering Ramps are now contracted under Watering Facility (614).

Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315)

Practice Lifespan: 5 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- Species selected for control using (315) Herbaceous Weed Treatment should be selected from the most recent KY Invasive Advisory List in Section II of the FOTG. Other species may be identified for control with the concurrence of the state level specialist.
- This practice is not EQIP eligible on pastureland.
- NRCS has approved a national waiver for Herbaceous Weed Treatment (315) practice for multiple applications for up to three consecutive years. As appropriate, the practice payment scenarios *Hand Removal* or *Mechanical and Chemical*, *Hand Removal and Chemical* and *Chemical, Spot* would be utilized in various situations depending upon degree of infestation, species and other factors. *Chemical, Spot* should in most cases be used as a follow up treatment.
- **When planning in the Forestland Initiative:**
 - Always use the *Chemical, Spot* Scenario (handheld, backpack, or ATV sprayer).

High Tunnel System (325)

Practice Lifespan: 5 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- Payment will not be made until the High Tunnel structure is completely installed according to manufacturer's kit instructions with bracing, plastic, end walls, etc. installed. The Seasonal High Tunnel must be capable of meeting the intent of the practice, which is to extend the growing season, before NRCS can approve payment.
- Fans, heating, lighting is **not** prohibited and can be installed at the participant's expense.

Integrated Pest Management (595)

Practice Lifespan: 1 Year

Practice Program Guidance:

- For a producer to be eligible to implement Conservation Practice Standard 595, they must have an Integrated Pest Management Plan at time of application. This plan can either be written by a certified Technical Service Provider (TSP) or an NRCS employee using WINPST.

Irrigation System, Microirrigation (441)

Practice Lifespan: 15 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- This practice requires an Irrigation Water Management Plan that meets the Irrigation Water Management Standard (449).
- Applicants must provide documentation that they meet the Irrigation History requirements as outlined in the General Guidelines section of this manual.

Irrigation Water Management (449)

Practice Lifespan: 1 Year

Practice Program Guidance:

- Applicants must provide documentation that they meet the Irrigation History requirements as outlined in the General Guidelines section of this manual.

Lighting System Improvement (670)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- For a producer to be eligible to implement Conservation Practice Standard 670, they must have an AgEMP – Headquarters or an on-farm energy audit (no more than five years old) that meets the ASABE S612 standard.
- This practice must be checked out and approved by a Field Engineer.

Livestock Pipeline (516)

Practice Lifespan: 20 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- EQIP eligibility for water system developments are limited to operations where poor livestock distribution is resulting in resource degradation, where livestock are being excluded from a stream, wetland or pond currently being used as a watering source, or where livestock are being confined for winter feeding according to the recommendations in a CNMP.
- A resource concern, that can be addressed by improved livestock distribution, must be evident (resource concern cannot be due primarily to over-stocking).
- When grazing distribution is the resource concern being addressed, Prescribed Grazing (528) will be contracted. A prescribed grazing plan is required that includes both the KY Graze worksheet and Prescribed Grazing (528) Job Sheet.
- When water quality is the resource concern being addressed, Prescribed Grazing is not required to be contracted.
- A payment is authorized only for permanently installed tanks or waterers.

- **When planning in the Wildlife Initiative or Southeast KY Early Successional Habitat Initiative:**
 - Only authorized when excluding livestock from an existing water source.

Mulching (484)

Practice Lifespan: 1 Year

Practice Program Guidance:

- Mulching will be a companion practice for most ground disturbing practices and contracted separately (ex: grassed waterway, pond, lined waterway, etc.)

Nutrient Management (590)

Practice Lifespan: 1 Year

Practice Program Guidance:

- For a producer to be eligible to implement Conservation Practice Standard 590, they must have a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (102) or Nutrient Management Plan (104) written at the time of application that meets the requirements of the 590 Practice Standard. This plan does not have to be written by a Technical Service Provider (TSP).
- Nutrient Management (590) can be planned up to 3 years on the same acreage.

Nutrient Management Plan (104)

Practice Lifespan: 1 Year

Practice Program Guidance:

- Only applies to commercial fertilizer application, or the application of animal manure that is brought onto the farm and immediately applied or temporarily stored without a structural manure storage facility.
- NRCS CNMP's (CAP 102) that require a revision due to a change in nutrient application acres can be revised using the CAP 104 payment schedules.
- **The CAP 104 Plan Review Checklist is located on eFOTG, Section III.**

Pond (378)

Practice Lifespan: 20 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- EQIP eligibility for water system developments are limited to operations where poor livestock distribution is resulting in resource degradation, where livestock are being excluded from a stream, wetland or pond currently being used as a watering source, or where livestock are being confined for winter feeding according to the recommendations in the CNMP.
- A resource concern, that addresses better livestock distribution, must be evident (resource concern cannot be due primarily to over-stocking).
- When grazing distribution is the resource being addressed, Prescribed Grazing (528) will be contracted. A prescribed grazing plan is required that includes both the KY Graze worksheet and Prescribed Grazing (528) Job Sheet.
- When water quality is the resource concern being addressed, Prescribed Grazing is not required to be contracted.
- A payment is authorized only for permanently installed tanks or waterers.
- **Work on existing ponds is not authorized.**
- Required companion practices: Critical Area Planting (342), Mulching (484), Fence (382).

Prescribed Burning (338)

Practice Lifespan: 1 Year

Practice Program Guidance:

- Burning for site preparation for a planting is not authorized for payment.
- Prescribed burning should not be planned on contracts unless at least 10 acres is being planned. Prescribed burning is not eligible for field borders.
- Prescribed burning payment may only be received once every three years on the same acreage during the contract period.
- Detailed prescribed burning plans are not required for ranking purposes. However, a copy of the KDFWR, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), or qualified TSP detailed written prescribed burn plan must be in the six part folder before the burning takes place. Payment will not be made for burning without a KDFWR, TNC, or qualified TSP prescribed burning plan. Completed burn plans must also be sent to KDF prior to burn implementation.
- NRCS personnel are not authorized to prepare burn plans or conduct prescribed burns.

Prescribed Grazing (528)

Practice Lifespan: 1 Year

Practice Program Guidance:

- Payment is authorized for one year to assist with planning, applying and maintaining an effective Prescribed Grazing System.
- Prescribed Grazing for livestock distribution is only authorized when producers are implementing a prescribed grazing system employing a **minimum of 3 paddocks for each herd.**
- Prescribed Grazing **must** be contracted through EQIP when livestock water is being contracted based on a resource concern of poor grazing distribution.
- **Prescribed Grazing cannot be planned in the first year of the contract.** All planned, facilitating practices needed to implement prescribed grazing (528) must be in place and operational before payment can be authorized.
- The 528 Prescribed Grazing KY EQIP Practice Certification Checklist is available for use to document grazing plan implementation prior to practice payment. The certification checklist is posted to the [EQIP folder on Kentucky SharePoint](#). This checklist is optional; however, planners must document at time of certification that all requirements of the Prescribed Grazing Standard 528 are currently being met at time of practice certification.

Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till (329)

Practice Lifespan: 1 Year

Practice Program Guidance:

- Note that Strip-Till is no longer included in this standard despite the payment scenario name *No-Till/Strip-Till*.
- A payment is authorized for converting to an ALL NO-TILL crop rotation.
- A payment for no-till will only be made for those crops not previously planted using no-till (e.g. producer is already using no-till for his corn, but not on wheat. A payment is only authorized in the year and on the acres that wheat is no-tilled).
- Payments can be made from 1 up to 3 years depending on the rotation and the planner's recommendation.

Riparian Forest Buffer (391)

Practice Lifespan: 15 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- NRCS staff will provide technical assistance for this practice. Do not send a TAR to KY Division of Forestry staff for assistance for Riparian Forest Buffer (391).
- KDFWR Biologists will provide technical assistance for this practice under the Wildlife and Southeast KY Early Successional Habitat Initiatives.

Road/Trail/Landing Closure and Treatment (654)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- This practice is not eligible on land that has been logged within the past 10 years.
- The Technical Area Resource Conservationist will review and concur prior to approval of this treatment in the practice schedule.
- **When planning in the Wildlife Initiative or Southeast Early Successional Habitat Initiative or WLFW:**
 - Also requires Tree/Shrub Site Prep (490) and Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)

Roofs and Covers (367)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- Roofs and Covers (367) will be capped at \$150,000 per contract. When contracts include multiple structures, the combined total of all 367 line items cannot exceed \$150,000.
- Must be used in conjunction with Animal Mortality Facility (316), Composting Facility (317) or Waste Storage Facility (313).
- Payment does not include cost for roof runoff management. Use Roof Runoff Structure (558) to plan and design for roof runoff management.

Spring Development (574)

Practice Lifespan: 20 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- EQIP eligibility for water system developments are limited to operations where poor livestock distribution is resulting in resource degradation, where livestock are being excluded from a stream, wetland or pond currently being used as a watering source, or where livestock are being confined for winter feeding according to the recommendations in a CNMP.
- A resource concern, that addresses better livestock distribution, must be evident (resource concern cannot be due primarily to over-stocking).
- When grazing distribution is the resource being addressed, Prescribed Grazing (528) will be contracted. A prescribed grazing plan is required that includes both the KY Graze worksheet and Prescribed Grazing (528) Job Sheet.
- When water quality is the resource concern being addressed, Prescribed Grazing is not required to be contracted.
- When ranking and contracting springs and ponds, the pipe, tank, fence (ponds), seeding, and mulching (if needed) will be ranked, contracted, and paid separately.
- Required additional practices: Critical Area Planting (342)
- **When planning in the Wildlife Initiative or Southeast KY Early Successional Habitat Initiative:**
 - Only authorized when excluding livestock from an existing water source.

Sprinkler System (442)

Practice Lifespan: 15 Year

Practice Program Guidance:

- Applicants must provide documentation that they meet the Irrigation History requirements as outlined in the General Guidelines section of this manual.

Stream Crossing (578)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- **Pasture situations:** When planned for livestock, or a combination of livestock/equipment, the stream exclusion fence must be installed prior to approving payment for the stream crossing.
- Culvert or bridge type crossings are not authorized under EQIP. Payments under EQIP are restricted to the ford type crossings using rock.

Streambank and Shoreline Protection (580)

Practice Lifespan: 20 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- **This practice is eligible ONLY on first (1st), second (2nd), and third (3rd) order streams according to the Strahler Stream Orders of the National Hydrography Data (NHD). Additionally, this practice is eligible on fourth (4th) order streams when the KICT report shows that federally listed aquatic threatened and endangered species are present. If the KICT report shows that an aquatic species is potentially present, then proceed with the remainder of the guidance as outlined in the report.**
- All 580 practices shall be completed using bioengineering and natural stream channel concepts where possible.
- A Riparian Forest Buffer (391) is required in conjunction with streambank protection. The Riparian Forest Buffer must be applied to the entire reach of stream or shoreline contained in that field.
- Fencing is required when cattle are present and are impairing water quality or causing stream bank erosion. Fencing must be applied to the entire reach of stream or shoreline contained in that field. Required Companion Practices: Riparian Forest Buffer (391)

Structures for Wildlife (649)

Practice Lifespan: 5 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- This is not a standalone practice and should only be utilized in conjunction with other wildlife component practices to compliment a comprehensive management plan.
- Brush piles for wildlife or pollinators should be established as recommended by an approved wildlife habitat assessment or as specified by farm bill biologist. A maximum of five (5) per acre are allowed.
- In order to utilize the *Living Brush Piles/Hinge Cut Structures* scenario, there must be a minimum of 50 stems per acre to be cut. Examples may be cedars, red maple, etc.
- Utilize the payment schedule entitled *Rock Structure* only in conjunction with (657) Wetland Creation for habitat adjacent or within shallow water areas or ephemeral pools.

Terrace (600)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- Pipe outlet structures that only control water flow from natural drainage ways through fields and do not extend across the field on a gradient or contour shall be considered Water and Sediment Control Basins (638).

Trails and Walkways (575)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- Authorized payment only for trails and walkways to facilitate movement of livestock.
- This practice is not applicable to protecting gate areas. However, the trail and walkway may be designed to include gate openings.

Tree and Shrub Site Preparation (490)

Practice Lifespan: 1 Year

Practice Program Guidance:

- This practice will be included for all tree and shrub establishment in non-forest settings (use *Mow and Spray-NonForest* or *Mow and Disk –Non Forest* payment scenarios).
- Utilize the *Hand Applied Herbicide - Forest* payment scenario as the initial and only treatment of woody invasives (in forested setting) when average species height is less than 4.5 feet and infestation is sufficient to impede natural regeneration.
- **When Planning in the Wildlife Initiative or the Southeast KY Early Successional Habitat Initiative:**
 - This practice should be utilized in conjunction with (612) Tree/Shrub Establishment for all tree and shrub plantings.
 - A one-time only payment is authorized

Tree/Shrub Establishment (612)

Practice Lifespan: 15 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- If the applicant is not working with a private forester, complete and forward a TAR form to KDF as soon as application is pre-screened as high or medium priority.
- KY Division of Forestry will prepare a prescription plan before the practice is installed. Consult the KDF forester to determine the appropriate payment schedule scenario for obligation. (Refer to and complete “Tree & Shrub Establishment (612) Job Sheet”)
- Participants using the services of a private consultant forester should be provided a copy of the “Tree & Shrub Establishment (612) Job Sheet” for completion, or submit a detailed plan prepared by their forester.
- The *Potted, each*, tube scenario shall only be utilized where enrichment or inter-planting of trees is recommended by the biologist to enhance wildlife habitat and biodiversity. These types of enrichments are capped at a maximum planting rate of 30 trees per acre (approx. 40' X 40') of patch clearcut, and must consist of hard mast species (oak, hickory, etc.). This scenario must be completed in conjunction with Forest Stand Improvement (666), Early Successional Habitat Development and Management (647) for Edge Feathering and/or Patch Clearcuts, or Brush Management (314).

Waste Storage Facility (313)

Practice Lifespan: 15 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- An approved, Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) is required **BEFORE** providing FA or TA assistance on any animal waste management structure that is planned on an Animal Feeding Operation (AFO).
- The Waste Storage Facility (313) storage area will be sized according to the CPS 313 and Agricultural Waste Management Field Handbook.
- For AFOs to be eligible for a dry stack Waste Storage Facility the applicant must have an existing roofed feeding area with a floor that is capable of being scraped or their written CNMP must include the need for a roofed feeding area. The feeding area must be adequately sized for the number of animal units in the participant's Animal Feeding Operation (AFO).
- The sizing guidelines in the Heavy Use Area Protection (561) Standard will be used when assisting participants with feeding area sizing.
- Required companion practice for dry stack facilities: Roofs and Covers (367) and Roof Runoff Structure (558)

Waste Transfer (634)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- Practice is only eligible when identified as necessary in a TSP written Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (102).

Waste Treatment Lagoon (359)

Practice Lifespan: 15 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- Livestock related resource concerns must be present during the evaluation period.
- An approved, Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) is required **BEFORE** providing FA or TA assistance on any animal waste management structure when the operation meets the definition of an Animal Feeding Operation (AFO).
- Modification to existing structures is only acceptable when the existing structure meets NRCS designs and standards.

Water and Sediment Control Basin (638)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- Anytime a WASCOB is planned and contracted, the fields draining into the WASCOB must be planned so that soil loss does not exceed the soil loss tolerance (T). RUSLE2 reports, before and after, must be in the case file for documentation of soil loss.
- Required companion practices: Underground Outlet (620)

Water Well (642)

Practice Lifespan: 20 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- EQIP eligibility for water system developments are limited to operations where poor livestock distribution is resulting in resource degradation, where livestock are being excluded from a stream, wetland or pond currently being used as a watering source, or where livestock are being confined for winter feeding according to the recommendations in a CNMP.
- A resource concern, that addresses better livestock distribution, must be evident (resource concern cannot be due primarily to over-stocking).
- When grazing distribution is the resource being addressed, Prescribed Grazing (528) will be contracted. A prescribed grazing plan is required that includes both the KY Graze worksheet and the Prescribed Grazing (528) Job Sheet.
- When water quality is the resource concern being addressed, Prescribed Grazing is not required to be contracted.
- **When planning in the Wildlife Initiative or Southeast KY Early Successional Habitat Initiative:**
 - Only authorized when excluding livestock from an existing water source.

Watering Facility (614)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- EQIP eligibility for water system developments are limited to operations where poor livestock distribution is resulting in resource degradation, where livestock are being excluded from a stream, wetland or pond currently being used as a watering source, or where livestock are being confined for winter feeding according to the recommendations in a CNMP.
- A resource concern, that addresses better livestock distribution, must be evident (resource concern cannot be due primarily to over-stocking).
- When grazing distribution is the resource being addressed, Prescribed Grazing (528) will be contracted. A prescribed grazing plan is required that includes both the KY Graze worksheet and Prescribed Grazing (528) Job Sheet.
- When water quality is the resource concern being addressed, Prescribed Grazing is not required to be contracted.
- A payment is authorized only for permanently installed tanks or waterers.
- **When planning in the Wildlife Initiative or Southeast KY Early Successional Habitat Initiative:**
 - Only authorized when excluding livestock from an existing water source.

Wetland Creation (658)

Practice Lifespan: 20 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- Shallow water areas and ephemeral pools:
 - KDFWR Biologists shall work with NRCS personnel to identify suitable sites and develop designs for shallow water areas and ephemeral pools. NRCS is responsible for planning, designing, layout, and certification of this practice.
 - Payment should be based on the footprint (i.e. area of disturbance) to create the EP or SWA.
 - Required companion practices: Critical Area Planting (342), Mulching (484)

Woody Residue Treatment (384)

Practice Lifespan: 10 Years

Practice Program Guidance:

- For natural disasters such as ice storms or invasive species destruction, KDF or a private consulting forester must have inspected the site and recommended the practice for consideration to alleviate current and future forest health. In these instances, utilize the *Restoration/Conservation Treatment Following Catastrophic Event* payment scenario.
- Utilize the *Chipper/shredder on-off site* scenario when resulting biomass from other cultural treatments (ex: Brush Mgt (314)) will create a wildfire hazard or impede future follow-up treatments.