

2011 Environmental Quality Incentive Program

Local Work Group Summary for the Tucumcari Field Office

Introduction:

Tucumcari Field Office is located at 706 S. 1st, Tucumcari, NM. The office is located within Quay County, along Highway 54 and Interstate 40, in the Eastern part of the state. Tucumcari is 40 miles due west of the Texas State line. Quay County is an agricultural community with Irrigated Cropland, Dry Cropland, and Rangeland. Rangeland makes up 87% of the area, dry farmland 10%, and irrigated cropland the remaining 3%. The surface irrigation water comes through unlined ditches from Conchas Lake by the Arch Hurley Irrigation Project. Historically the Arch Hurley Irrigation Project has allocated a yearly maximum of 18 inches of water, and a minimum of 3 inches of water. For the last 10-12 years there has not been enough irrigation water to allocate full allotments and allocations have been minimal and inconsistent. This water would be considered supplemental at best. In other parts of the county, the ground irrigation water is pumped from the Ogallala Aquifer.

Local Work Group:

The Local Work Group (LWG) represented Quay County with members from Canadian River SWCD, Southwest Quay SWCD, NMSU, El Llano Estacado RC&D, Quay County Farm Service Agency, NMACD, NMSLO, City of Tucumcari, NRCS, TNS/El Llano, F.O. staff members and local producers. The LWG met on September 16, 2010 to discuss the 2011 EQIP/WHIP program. Twenty four participants met for 2 hours in the morning going over the following information and providing valuable input into the locally led conservation efforts in Quay County.

Priority Resource Concerns:

Rangeland:

Plant Condition

Noxious & Invasive plants
Productivity, health, & vigor

Domestic Animals

Inadequate stock water
Inadequate quantities of feed and forage

Fish & Wildlife

T&E Species: Declining species, species of concern
Inadequate cover/shelter
Inadequate food
Inadequate water

Soil Condition

Rangeland Site Stability
Productivity, health and vigor

Soil Erosion

Classic & ephemeral gull
Wind
Sheet and rill

Water Quantity

Rangeland Hydrologic Cycle

Water Quality

Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water

Irrigated Cropland:

Water Quantity

Aquifer Overdraft
Inefficient Water Use on Irrigated Land

Water Quality

Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Groundwater
Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water

Soil Erosion

Wind
Sheet and rill

Fish and Wildlife

Inadequate cover/shelter
Inadequate food
Inadequate water
T&E Species: Declining Species, Species of Concern

Air Quality

Undesirable Air Movement

Dry Cropland

Soil Erosion

Wind
Ephemeral Gully
Sheet & Rill

Soil Condition

Compaction and Organic Matter Depletion

Fish & Wildlife

T&E Species: Declining species, Species of Concern
Inadequate cover/shelter
Inadequate food
Inadequate water

Water Quality

Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water

Air Quality (Grass Conversion)

Particulate Matter
Reduced Visibility

Plant Condition

Productivity, Health, Vigor

Water Quantity

Inefficient Water Use on Non-irrigated cropland

Buffers

Soil Erosion

Wind

Fish & Wildlife

T&E Species: Declining species, Species of Concern
Inadequate cover/shelter
Inadequate food
Inadequate water

Domestic Animals

Inadequate shelter

Air Quality

Undesirable air movement
Adverse Air Temperature

Wildlife Habitat Improvement

Fish & wildlife

T&E Species: Declining species, Species of Concern
Inadequate cover/shelter
Inadequate food
Inadequate water

Water Quantity

Aquifer Overdraft

Rangeland Hydrologic Cycle

Water Quality

Excessive Nutrients and Organics in Surface Water

Soil Erosion

Sheet & Rill

Wind

Funding Considerations:

2011 EQIP funds received at the field office will be allocated as follows:

- Grazing Lands – 55%
- Irrigated Cropland – 18%
- Dry Cropland – 20%
- Headquarters (Windbreaks) – 2%
- Wildlife Habitat Improvement – 2%
- NM Grass Banking Pilot Program – 3%
- Watershed Initiative – (\$25,000 of total allocation)

**The above EQIP funding allocations can be moved between these resources to ensure all funds are expended.

Cost Share Rate Factor:

The LWG recommended keeping the same eligible practices as FY 2010

The LWG recommended that all structural practices be left at a cost share rate of 75%.

The LWG recommended that per practice caps be left at \$75,000.

These payments were discussed and reviewed by the LWG. These are the recommended payments:

Residue Management – Dry Cropland

Same costs as used in 2010 payment schedule - \$22.80/ac/yr-No-Till (3 years); \$27.52/ac/yr Access Control excluding domestic livestock from No-Till planted crops for 3 years, not to exceed 320 ac for each of three years.

*** Total acres eligible – 320 acres

Range Planting – Dry Cropland (Grass Conversion)

Same costs as used in 2010 payment schedule - \$60.75/ac (seed, site preparation, etc) in association with cover crop a @\$29.81/ac and a payment for Upland Wildlife Habitat Mgt

@\$24.09/ac for 3 years No haying or grazing for 3 years. Must remain in grass for 10 years (practice lifespan)

*** Total acres eligible – 320 acres (The 320 acre cap is just for the payment for Upland Wildlife Habitat Mgt @\$24.09/ac for 3 years, with no haying or grazing). There is no acre cap recommended for the range seeding and cover crop acres.

Prescribed Grazing – *Wildlife*

Same costs as used in 2010 payment schedule \$100.38/acre/yr – playa lake bottoms and 150ft buffer for 3 years. \$7.61/acre/yr – uplands around playa lakes for deferred grazing not to exceed 320 ac – 3 years

*** Total acres eligible – 320 acres

A cost share rate of 90% and \$75,000 per practice cap is recommended for all applicants who self-certify they meet Limited Resource Producer criteria.

A cost share rate of 90% and \$75,000 per practice cap is recommended for all applicants who self-certify they meet Beginning Farmer-Rancher criteria

A cost share rate of 90% and \$75,000 per practice cap is recommended for all applicants who self-certify they meet Socially Disadvantaged F/R criteria.

Please refer to the FY 2011 EQIP cost list for final practice payment rates.

Ranking Criteria:

It is recommended that the technical criteria to address tiebreakers for all resource concerns will be soil EI with the contract awarded to the highest EI. No changes are recommended for issues and points assigned in FY2010 ranking summaries for all resource concerns. Please refer to the ranking criteria links for specific information.

Watershed Initiative:

Sandhills Prairie Upland Wildlife Habitat watershed initiative is supported as outlined in 2010. It was recommended that FO should concentrate on keeping the Sandhills Prairie Upland Wildlife Habitat project viable because this initiative was successful in the past year resulting in two EQIP contracts which are being applied. It is recommended that ranking criteria developed for this land use and resource for 2010 be used for the 2011 program year, as well. There was also interest in addressing Ute Creek watershed restoration, in partnership with Harding County and other entities providing matching funds, for fencing the riparian areas along Ute Creek. It was recommended that SWC Districts get involved in this restoration effort for consideration in 2012. It was recommended that \$25,000 be set up for this initiative and if the money is not used for this, it will be distributed to the other funding considerations.

Small Acreage Initiative:

It is recommended that a \$20,000 amount be set aside from the initial County allocation for small acreage units with matching funds from State Conservationist. \$10,000 will be used for irrigated cropland and \$10,000 for rangeland.

The cropland will have a cap of 50 acres and rangeland will have a cap of 640 acres per unit.

The total household annual income should not exceed \$60,000.

**The above EQIP funding allocations can be moved between these resources to ensure all funds are expended.