

# **2014 Environmental Quality Incentive Program Proposal**

## **Albuquerque Field Office**

### **Introduction:**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Albuquerque office works closely with the Ciudad and Coronado Soil and Water Conservation Districts. The following Pueblo's and tribal entities are served by the Albuquerque Field Office: Cochiti, Santo Domingo, San Felipe, Santa Ana, Sandia, and the To'hajiilee Chapter of the Navajo Nation.

The Albuquerque Field Office service is located in the west-central part of New Mexico. The Albuquerque Field office is located at 6200 Jefferson NE, Room 125.

The primary crops grown are hay (both alfalfa and grass), corn (silage), sorghum, and chile. Other crops such as grapes, apples, small vegetables, fruit and pecan trees are becoming more common. The remainder of the agricultural community, for the most part, is involved in ranching and dairy production.

Primary concerns with the agricultural producers in the area include: urban encroachment, irrigation and water issues, and soil erosion problems.

### **Local Work Group Meetings:**

One Local Work Group meeting was held on September 13, 2013 to help assist in the creation of this proposal. Representatives from the following groups or entities attended: New Mexico Environment Department, Sandia Pueblo, Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Coronado Soil and Water Conservation District. Persons attended included producers from the South Valley, Placitas and Bernalillo.

The participants discussed and outlined recommendations for EQIP resource priorities for the coming fiscal year. Other topics of discussion were cost-share rates, ranking, eligible practices, and funding allocations.

### **Priority Resource Concerns:**

Priorities as determined by the Local Work Group are (in order of priority):

1. Water Quantity – Inefficient Water Use on Irrigated Land
2. Water Quality – Irrigation-Induced
3. Plant Condition – Noxious and Invasive Plants
4. Wildlife – Habitat Degradation

## Funding Considerations:

The LWG considered that the 2014 EQIP funding allocation should target the resource concerns as follows:

Non-Tribal	Tribal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 85% Irrigated land</li></ul>	85% Irrigated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 15% Rangeland</li></ul>	15% Rangeland
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Animal Feeding Operations, Wildlife, and Forestry were discussed as targeted EQIP funding priorities and recommendation was to consider these categories if and when applications are received.</li></ul>	

All practices currently in the Field Office Technical Guide with cost associated in the cost docket, including management incentives, will be available for all resource concerns, all land uses. It will be the responsibility of the planner to provide accurate resource management system alternatives to the client.

The Local Work Group did not provide suggestions to change the ranking questions for 2014.

## Ranking Criteria

**State Questions: Questions 1- 4 unchanged; recommend deletion of State Question 5**  
Delete Question 5 to remove the bias against individuals who have never held an EQIP contract or who are Beginning Farmers or Ranchers (a penalty for not completing a contract is preferred to a reward for having completing one).

### IRRIGATED CROPLAND RANKING 2013 QUESTIONS:

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Points</u>
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**Field Office questions:** Please adjust the following questions as follows:

**Min. 185 for high priority**

Albuquerque #1. Applicant will be installing a cover crop, windbreak, or **Conservation Tillage**. (<- please add "Conservation Tillage")

### GRAZING LANDS RANKING 2013 QUESTIONS:

**Min. 200 pts for high priority**

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Points</u>
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Area and Field Office Questions Unchanged

### ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATIONS RANKING 2013 QUESTIONS:

**Min. 250 pts for high priority**

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Points</u>
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Area and Field Office Questions Unchanged

**WILDLIFE RANKING 2013 QUESTIONS:**

*Min. 175pts for high priority*

**Questions**

**Points**

Area and Field Office Questions Unchanged

**FORESTRY RANKING 2013 QUESTIONS:**

*Min. 150 pts for high priority*

**Questions**

**Points**

Area and Field Office Questions Unchanged

**Notes:**

**Minimum Points:**

The minimum level of points must be reached with the local questions in order for the applicant to be selected for priority funding. The maximum points an applicant can receive under Local Issue Questions is 400 pts.

**Tie Breaker:**

In the event two or more applications receive the same amount of points, ties will be broken by using efficiency points from Farm Irrigation System (FIRS) or (if still a tie or for range) the applicant that addresses the highest priority resource concern per the Local Work Group recommendations.

**Watershed Initiative:**

Not recommended for fiscal 2013

**Small Acreage Initiative:**

The vast majority of the producers served by the Albuquerque FO are presently small acreage producers. Therefore no separate initiative is recommended.