

2014 Environmental Quality Incentive Program Proposal

for the Deming Field Office

Introduction

The Deming Field Office is located in Luna County in Southwest New Mexico in the SD-2 Major Land Resource Area. It is bordered on the east by the Las Cruces and the Truth or Consequences Field Offices, on the north by the Truth or Consequences and Silver City Field Offices and on the west by the Silver City and Lordsburg Field Offices. The US – Mexico border is the southern boundary of the Field Office.

Agriculture in the District consists primarily of ranching and irrigated crop production. The ranches are primarily cow-calf operations while chile, alfalfa, cotton, sorghum, wheat, pecans, onions, grapes, silage, and other vegetables are the predominant crops. The only source of water is groundwater from the Mimbres and Nutt-Hockett underground water basins. Both are closed basins. The static water level in the basins has declined significantly since widespread irrigation began in the early 1900's.

Local Work Group (LWG)

A meeting of the LWG was held on the morning of Wednesday, September 11, 2013. It was explained to the group the purpose of the EQIP/WHIP programs, what their responsibilities were and how their input was important to the overall success of the conservation effort in Luna County. We discussed what they perceived as the resource concerns of Luna County, proposed cost share rates and the practices that they deemed important to landowners. Those in attendance included representatives of the Deming Soil and Water Conservation District and NMSU Cooperative Extension Service.

Priority Resource Concerns

Rangeland

On grazing land the major resource concerns are:

- Plant – Excessive plant pressure
- Plant – Undesirable plant productivity and health
- Animal - Inadequate livestock water
- Energy – Equipment and facilities

Irrigated Cropland

The following are priority resource concerns on irrigated cropland:

- Water – Inefficient use of irrigation water
- Energy – Equipment and facilities
- Soil – Sheet, rill and/or wind erosion
- Plant – Excessive plant pest pressure

Animal Feeding Operations

The following are priority resource concerns on AFO's:

- Water – Excess nutrients in surface and ground water
- Air – Objectionable odors
- Soil – Concentration of salts or other chemicals

Funding Considerations

The following land uses, and or resource concerns and the percentages of funding allocations that were considered for cost share in Luna County for Fiscal Year 2013 are as follows:

- Rangeland- Brush Management and Rangeland Improvements- 44%
- Animal Feeding Operations- 1%
- Irrigated Cropland- 55%

Eligible Practices, Practice Payments and Payment Caps

The LWG recommended all practice cost share rates to be set at 75% in calculating the 2014 payment scheduler.

The LWG recommended the use of the following payments and caps:

- \$100,000 cost share cap on Micro irrigation Practice 441
- The LWG recommended a practice that is available to California NRCS program participants. (718) Precision Pest Control Application using sonar sensing-type technology.
- The LWG would like to see cost share available to "Boundary" fences, as they feel it helps to keep the neighbors cattle out while they are trying to manage their rangeland.

Please refer to the South Area Payment Schedule for a list of eligible practices and payment rates.

Ranking Criteria

No changes to the ranking criteria development were recommended.

Tie Breakers:

Irrigation: Greatest before and after difference in the FIRS percent efficiency index.

Rangeland: Highest ranking in the "brush" section of the local ranking (Q1-6)

Additional tie breaker for all land uses if needed: The highest average soil erodibility index will be considered a higher priority application.

Watershed Initiatives

Deming service area will receive a CCPI allocation for rangeland, AZ/NM.

The workgroup decided to have the Deming SWCD submit an AWEP proposal, if offered by NRCS, to improve irrigation efficiency and enhance the success of the 2009 AWEP program.

State Small Acreage Initiative

Due to restrictions for the Small Acreage Initiative it was decided to not offer the initiative for the 2014 program year. The \$10,000 limit disqualifies the applicants.

Energy Initiative

There has been a large interest in replacing irrigation motors with Variable Frequency Drives (VFD's) The local work group would like to see a separate pool of funds available for energy saving projects.