

2014 Environmental Quality Incentive Program Proposal

For the Santa Rosa Field Office

Introduction:

The Santa Rosa Field Office is located in Guadalupe County in Northeastern New Mexico in the East Area of New Mexico NRCS. The majority of land in Guadalupe County is currently in agriculture production with nearly 90 percent of the land used for production of beef cattle on private operations of various sizes. Irrigated crop farming takes place on nearly all of the arable land in the Pecos River valley. The predominant crops are alfalfa and grass hay.

Local Work Group:

The Local Work Group Meeting was held at the Comfort Inn conference room in Santa Rosa at 1:00 pm on September 18, 2013. This year's Local Work Group was comprised of landowners, four members of the Guadalupe SWCD, Santa Rosa Field Office Acting District Conservationist, NMACD Farm Bill Specialist, and FSA Guadalupe County Executive Director. Guests included East Area Resource Conservationist, De Baca County NRCS District Conservationist, Stewardship Ecologist from the Nature Conservancy and an employee from the New Mexico State Forestry Division.

Priority Resource Concerns:

Grazing Lands:

- Plants: Noxious and Invasive Species
- Water Quantity: Insufficient Water for Livestock
- Plants-Condition: Health, Productivity, Vigor
- Soil Erosion: Equal priority for Sheet and Rill, Ephemeral Gully, and Classic Gully.
- Plants: Forage Quality
- Plants: Forage Quality and Palatability

Irrigated Cropland:

- Water Quantity: Inefficient Use-Irrigation
- Soil Erosion: Soil Loss
- Water Quantity: Inadequate Outlets

Funding Considerations:

Allocation of funds was discussed. Participants were in agreement that 2013 funds had been allocated appropriately. It was recommended that the 2014 EQIP funds be allocated in the same way: 70 percent to Grazing Land and 30 percent to Irrigated Cropland

In the event that any funds remain in one category, they shall be moved to another. Please refer to the Practices listed in the New Mexico Field Office Technical Guide Section IV for a list of eligible conservation practices.

The Local Work Group did not recommend incentive payments for any practice or any practice caps.

Cost Share Rate Factor:

The cost-share rate factor for the most commonly used practices in the payment schedule is expected to be 75 percent/90 percent HU.

Ranking Criteria:

The LWG conducted an extensive, item by item review of the existing ranking criteria for all categories of funds. Changes were recommended or requested for the Irrigated Crop, Grazing Land and Pintada Watershed Initiative and the ranking criteria for each category of funding were re-written. Only a minor change was requested for the Cuervo Creek Watershed Initiative.

Tie Breaker Criteria:

Grazing Lands: The tie breaker will be awarded to the application that has the higher point total in the Local Issues section of the ranking questions.

Irrigated Croplands: The tie breaker will be awarded to the application with the higher efficiency percentage total based on the Farm Irrigation Rating System (FIRS) worksheet.

Watershed Initiative: See attachment #3.

Small Acreage Initiative: See attachment #3.

Timeline: The LWG agreed to the proposed schedule of Activities/Deadlines for EQIP FY 2014.

Irrigated Cropland, BFR Irrigated Cropland and Small Acreage Irrigated Cropland

Select one of Santa Rosa questions #1, 2 or 3:

Santa Rosa #1: Will installed practices result in an increase in irrigation water use efficiency of 30 percent or greater? - 100 Points

Santa Rosa #2: Will installed practices result in an increase in irrigation water use efficiency of 10 to 29 percent? - 75 Points

Santa Rosa # 3: Will installed practices result in an increase in irrigation water use efficiency of 1 to 9 percent? - 50 points

Select One of Santa Rosa Questions #4 or 5:

Santa Rosa #4: Does the conservation plan include irrigation ditch lining, irrigation pipeline or irrigation water sediment control? – 107.5 Points

Santa Rosa #5: Does the conservation plan include a LEPA, sprinkler, or micro irrigation system? - 40 Points

Select one of Santa Rosa questions #6 or 7:

Santa Rosa #6: Does the conservation plan include No Till? – 45 Points

Santa Rosa #7: Does the conservation plan include Minimum Till? – 25 Points

Santa Rosa #8: Does the conservation plan include land smoothing or land leveling? – 107.5 Points

Santa Rosa #9: Does the conservation plan include practices which will result in a reduction of sheet and rill soil erosion? - 40 Points

Grazing Land, BFR Grazing Land and Small Acreage Grazing Land

Santa Rosa #1: Does the conservation plan include brush management of species listed in NMSU Circular 597? – Yes=100 Points No=0 Points

Select one of Santa Rosa #2, 3 or 4:

Santa Rosa #2: Is measured brush density in the planned brush management area in the heavy category based on New Mexico NRCS guidelines? - 100 Points

Santa Rosa #3: Is measured brush density in the planned brush management area in the medium category based on New Mexico NRCS guidelines? - 75 Points

Santa Rosa #4: Is measured brush density in the planned brush management area in the light category based on New Mexico NRCS guidelines? - 50 Points

Select one of Santa Rosa questions #5 or 6:

Santa Rosa #5: Are watering facilities planned for installation in new locations to improve grazing distribution? - 125 Points

Santa Rosa #6: Are watering facilities planned to replace existing facilities that have exceeded their lifespan according to New Mexico NRCS guidelines? - 100 Points

Santa Rosa #7: Is new interior fencing or replacement of interior fencing that has exceeded its practice lifespan according to New Mexico NRCS guidelines planned for the purpose of facilitating grazing management? - 50 Points

Santa Rosa #8: Does the conservation plan include practices intended to improve wildlife habitat as determined by the NRCS DC? - 25 Points