

Changes In USDA NRCS Conservation Programs

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For FY 2012, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has made significant changes to conservation programs to streamline procedures, reduce costs and improve consistency. These changes will impact grower support from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), including for IPM. The following is a summary of current options for the 595 IPM Practice standard and IPM CAPs 114. The EQIP application ranking deadline: February 10, 2012

For the first time, NRCS has regional rather than state-specific practices and cost-share rates for its EQIP, including the 595 IPM Practice Standard. In the past, each state NRCS office has been responsible for eligible practices and payment rates. Under the revised program, states have been divided in to eleven regions.

Each region will offer a maximum of eight practice scenarios and payment schedules for the 595 IPM Practice Standard. This will increase the options available to growers in some states, and decrease them in others.

Cost-share will not be provided for equipment and supplies, or for conservation practices which directly suppress pests. For example, NRCS will not provide cost-share for purchase of weather station, pheromone traps or mating disruption. Where permitted under each scenario, NRCS will continue to cost share labor, management time and expertise to implement

weather monitoring, scouting, record keeping and acquire expert assistance from crop advisors qualified as NRCS Technical Service Providers (TSPs).

IPM Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs) are now an option in all states. NRCS offers up to \$1,260 for a TSP to prepare a CAP designed to identify site-specific resource concerns on the entire farm, such as nutrient or pesticide run-off risk to a nearby water body, high drift potential due to sprayer type or nozzle configuration, inefficient water use and more.

EQIP delivers over \$1 billion dollars in Farm Bill funding annually help farmers and private landowners to implement cutting edge conservation practices. Pest management continues to be one of NRCS' most popular sign-ups in EQIP, with roughly a third of the 31,960 new contracts including IPM in 2009.

Since 2006, the North Central Grower Incentives for IPM Working Group (<http://nrns.ipm.msu.edu/>) has been working to increase access to EQIP for IPM. Working group funding has been provided from the North Central, Northeastern and Southern Region IPM Centers. For more information or questions please contact Peter Werts, IPM Institute of North America at pwerts@ipminstitute.org (Phone: 608- 232-1410) The information was provided by Wade Moder (IPM Institute of North America). △



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