

United States Department of Agriculture



Helping People Help the Land

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April 2, 2013

MICHIGAN BULLETIN NO. MI-300-13-18

SUBJECT: LTP - ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM FISCAL
YEAR 2013 NATIONAL INITIATIVE SECOND SIGN-UP

Purpose: To provide information regarding the fiscal year (FY) 2013 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) National Initiative second sign-up deadlines in Michigan.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2013.

ACTION REQUIRED BY:

May 17, May 30, and June 3, 2013 (District Conservationists)

June 14 and June 28, 2013 (Area Conservationists)

NRCS-Michigan will be holding a second sign-up for the following National Initiatives: **Air Quality, Seasonal High Tunnel for Crops, Drought, Certified Organic, and Organic Transition**. This sign-up will adhere to the following dates for entering **complete** applications in ProTracts and for submitting **complete** application information materials to the Area Office (AO) for quality assurance review.

Friday, May 17, 2013	Applicant FY2013 2nd Sign-up Cutoff
Thursday, May 30, 2013	District Conservationists (DCs) have complete, ranked, and eligible applications entered into ProTracts for funding consideration
Friday, May 31, 2013	Applications Preapproved by State Office (SO) (utilizing all funds if possible)
Monday, June 3, 2013	Preapproval letter sent to appropriate applicants by DCs
Friday, June 14, 2013	AO Quality Assurance on Preapproved applications complete
Wednesday, June 19, 2013	Applications Approved by SO
Friday, June 28, 2013	Approved Applications signed by Participants and Obligated into contracts by Area Conservationists (ACs)
Monday, July 1, 2013	Obligation deadline

EQIP applications will be accepted by the field and processed on a **continuous** sign-up basis. A basic application consists of a signed NRCS-CPA-1200 entered in ProTracts. Applications

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received after the sign-up cutoff date will not have contract items uploaded. All applications left unfunded after 100 percent of the FY2013 Michigan allocation has been obligated (including those received after the cutoff date) will be deferred and placed on a backlog list for consideration in FY2014. A bulletin will provide instructions.

Applicants who are not immediately eligible for financial assistance will remain in ProTracts with the “pending” status and issued the “Program Eligibility Certification Request Letter” which is available in ProTracts indicating what they need to do to become eligible. Conservation planning may continue, but no further actions should be completed on program applications until the applicant has provided the necessary eligibility documentation.

Applications for EQIP will be processed based on the priority determined by the appropriate FY2013 EQIP Pre-Ranking Screening Tool based on the fund code selected and the date the participant requested assistance.

High-priority eligible applications and medium-priority applications in the **Air Quality** fund will be ranked and have a complete application package developed for the second selection. **ALL EQIP** applications for FY2013 funding consideration **must** be entered into ProTracts including the priority if appropriate. All high-priority and medium-priority Air Quality EQIP applications must be ranked with the appropriate FY2013 Application Evaluation and Ranking Tool (AERT) including all applications for Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs).

Preapproved applicants will be sent the “Preapproved” letter by the Field Office from ProTracts by Monday, June 3rd, and upon receipt of the required information the DC will notify the Area Office that the application is ready to be approved.

Area-level quality assurance on preapproved applications will be sufficient to ensure accurate applications. Items to be checked include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The application is in the correct fund code.
- All conventional eligibility criteria are met for Farm Tract Eligibility (FTE).
- Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) and payment limits.
- Participant information indicates eligible participant including “other.”
- Leases extend through the entire contract period.
- Vendor code is active. Ranking score and priority (if applicable) are present and correct.
- The correct payment schedule was used (especially for Historically Underserved participants).
- All contract items are “planned” (not draft).
- Energy buttons checked and livestock identified as appropriate.
- Completed plans and plan maps with location, land use, tract numbers, field numbers, acreages, and practice locations.
- Resource concerns and treatment amounts. Applications comply with program policy and additional guidance on the Michigan SharePoint.

In the absence of extenuating circumstances, which are well documented with copies of all forms signed by the applicant, those applications not eligible in all respects (active vendor, FTE, AGI, 1026 flags set to "Y" and DUNS if necessary) **will not be submitted to the State Office for approval**. If they are submitted for approval and cannot be approved due to the lack of complete eligibility, they will not be considered for funding in favor of applicants who meet the requirements for eligibility outlined above.

The documents needed to assist in the application process, ranking, and contracting for EQIP were discussed during the roll-out training. They are also available on Michigan SharePoint at the following address:

Michigan SharePoint>State Office>Programs>Cost Share Programs>Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)>FY 2013 Training and guidance

Customer Service Toolkit and ArcGIS: The use of Customer Service Toolkit and ArcGIS will be **mandatory** for **ALL** EQIP-related planning. Payment schedules have been loaded for use in ProTracts and emailed for use in Toolkit.

The AO will notify the State Office Program Coordinator when the applications marked "Preapproved" are ready to be approved no later than June 19, 2013.

Questions related to this bulletin will be coordinated through your AC to Steve Law (517-324-5282), EQIP Coordinator.

/s/

GARRY LEE
State Conservationist