



Natural Resources Conservation Service
6013 Lakeside Blvd.
Indianapolis, IN 46278

November 27, 2007

SUBJECT: MGT – NRCS December Field Priorities

TO: All NRCS Employees

File Code: 330-0

As we begin fiscal year 2008, we are again faced with a Continuing Resolution and have the additional burden of being in between Farm Bill legislation. A Continuing Resolution brings some unanswered budgeting questions while also delivering some temporary answers. Changes are to be expected until a new Farm Bill is passed and our agency receives the final budget allocations. Through the efforts of all employees, Indiana NRCS is operating within the budget constraints imposed by this Continuing Resolution.

I want to send guidance to you on our current situation in regards to our conservation delivery priorities. Everyone has done a tremendous job of focusing on our 2008 EQIP signup. You all have worked hard to deliver EQIP in an effective manner and have been very successful. Because the passing of a new Farm Bill will be delayed, we are able to extend our EQIP funding period. We will continue to fund EQIP applications on two week intervals until the middle of January. The top 50% of ranked applications will continue to be funded at the end of each two week interval as long as funds are available. In January, we will evaluate the EQIP funding and decide how best to handle the remaining applications based on available funds.

I am also renewing our emphasis on CRP and WRP. NRCS authority to service these two programs expires on December 31, 2007. We want to provide our customers with all the assistance they need to address their resource concerns while we are authorized to deliver assistance under these programs. I want to remind you that without a new Farm Bill we are not accepting new applications for WHIP. We can however service current contracts for all programs. This reemphasizes the need to stay focused and keep our priorities in perspective.

The Leadership Team developed the following list of field priorities that will align our work demands with available program budgets. These priorities should be implemented in this order. If you do not have a listed activity, work on the next activity until all priority work is completed.

Field Priorities for December 2007.

Conservation Implementation Teams (NRCS Employees)

1. Service Continuous CRP and CREP applications and practices.
2. Complete WRP Easement Engineering Design Plans.
3. Service all active EQIP, WHIP, WRP, and CSP contracts.
 - a) Work to ensure all practices are installed on schedule.
4. Report progress in PRS and charge time in TCAS as worked by program.

District Conservationists

1. Continue to accept and rank EQIP applications.
2. Service Continuous CRP and CREP applications and practices.
3. Service all active EQIP, CRP, WHIP, WRP, and CSP contracts.
 - a) Work to ensure all practices are installed on schedule
 - b) Complete Contract Reviews
 - c) Complete modifications or terminations as appropriate
 - d) Complete WRP Data Migration and Restoration Plans
4. SE Area - Prepare for the potential CSP signup.
5. Report progress in PRS and charge time in TCAS as worked by program.
6. Service funded GRP, LARE, and 319 practices and keep on schedule.
7. Service 1026 (HEL and Wetland) requests.

Soil Conservationists - CIT

1. Continue to accept and rank EQIP applications in high EQIP workload counties.
2. Service Continuous CRP and other program commitments in all counties.
3. Work to ensure all NRI data is gathered and entered on schedule.
4. Service all active EQIP, WHIP, WRP, and CSP contracts.
 - a) Work to ensure all practices are installed on schedule
 - b) Complete Contract Reviews
 - c) Complete modifications or terminations as appropriate
 - d) Complete WRP Data Migration and Restoration Plans
5. SE Area – Prepare for the potential CSP signup.
6. Report progress in PRS and charge time in TCAS as worked by program.
7. Service funded GRP, LARE, and 319 practices and keep on schedule.
8. Service 1026 (HEL and Wetland) requests.

All employees must be engaged in accomplishing these priority activities **in December**. If you are under pressures to complete work other than listed in the above priorities, please consult with your Area Conservationist or other appropriate Leadership Team member. If you need support in completing any of these priority activities, contact your Area Office for assistance. All of the Area Staff are on-call to support field employees to accomplish these priorities. All of the State Office Staff are on-call to support the Area and Field staff to complete these activities. The Area Staff will coordinate with the State Office staff where needed to support completion of these priorities.

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication to helping people help the land in Indiana.

/s/

JANE E. HARDISTY
State Conservationist

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