2004 Farm Bill Conservation Programs and TSP Update

2004 Wisconsin Fertilizer, Aglime and Pest Management Conference
Technical Service Providers

• FY-03 an estimated $125,000 of TSP services was contracted in EQIP contracts (primarily nutrient management planning).
  – FY-03 EQIP contracts will be revised to include TSP funds as soon as FY-04 federal budget is finalized and funds are allocated to the NRCS state offices.
  – TSP rates will be based on revised FY-04 costs.
  – Prior to payment of cost-sharing to the program participant the cost-share contract must include TSP as an item number and the TSP must be certified in TechReg (www.techreg.gov).
Technical Service Provider

• To register as a TSP
  – Designate an Official Representative for Your Business (this should be the person who will maintain the TechReg account).
  – Register as a TSP through TechReg (http://www.techreg.usda.gov)

• For Assistance Contact Ken Rismeyer at 608-662-4422 ext. 212 or ken.rismeyer@wi.usda.gov
Technical Service Providers

• DRAFT FY-04 TSP Not to Exceed rates will be release to the NRCS state offices in February.

• TSP NTE rates are to reflect the cost of NRCS providing technical assistance.
  – Should not include “profit” factor. During development of rule private sector indicated that private sector efficiencies would provide incentive.
  – Should include sufficient incentive to cover “risk”.
Technical Service Providers

- FY-04 direct contracting with TSP’s by program participants will continue to be encouraged.
  - Minimizes NRCS administrative workload.
  - Maintains continuity between farmer and TSP.
- WI NRCS will advertise for TSP’s to assist with design and installation of engineering practices. (www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov)
Farm Bill Update

• Environmental Quality Incentives Program
  – Continuous sign up presently underway.
  – 2004 practices and cost-share rates presently being updated by local work groups. Contact your NRCS District Conservationist for status.
  – DRAFT 2004 calls for an increase in EQIP $ (not yet finalized by congress).
  – Estimated $14 Million EQIP budget for Wisconsin.
Anticipate call for EQIP application rankings in April.

Anticipate EQIP contract development in late April/May.

Construction/implementation of cost-share practices cannot occur prior to approval of EQIP cost-sharing contract.
Farm Bill Update

• Conservation Security Program
  – Provides payments and technical assistance to agricultural producers to maintain and enhance the condition of the natural resources on the land that they own or operate.
  – Limited sign-ups with rigorous eligibility criteria to ensure that most pressing resource concerns are addressed.
  – Limit each sign-up to selected priority watersheds.
  – Fund the contracts that demonstrate the highest commitment to conservation first.
Farm Bill Update
(CSP Cont.)

• Payments per acre will be based on 2001 national rental rates.

• General rental rates will be scaled down and additional payments added for “additional environmental performance”.

• Participants will conduct a “self assessment” on-line to determine eligibility and to develop a CSP application.
Farm Bill Update
(CSP Cont.)

• CSP participants must operate the land and maintain the conservation systems for the life of the CSP contract (2007).
• Contracts are transferable with the land.
• CSP payments must be divided among tenants and sharecroppers.
Farm Bill Update

• Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
  – FSA anticipates a spring sign-up for the annual CRP program (federal budget may delay).
  – FSA will continue to have primary responsibility for accepting sign-ups and developing preliminary contract and practice cost estimates.
  – NRCS likely will assist accepted participants with development of final CRP plan.
  – New option for CP-29 no longer requires planting trees for Riparian Filter Strips in pastured areas.
Farm Bill Update

- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
  - Continuous sign-up in eligible parts of WI.
  - Cooperatively implemented by FSA, County Land Conservation Departments and NRCS.
  - Offers additional Practice Incentive Payments.
  - Offers the option of 15 year contracts or permanent easements for certain practices.
  - No longer require planting trees on CP-29 Riparian Filter Strips in pastured areas.
Farm Bill Update

• Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program
  – Provides cost-sharing to implement individual wildlife habitat improvement practices.
  – Continuous sign-up.

• Wetland Reserve Program
  – Provides cost-sharing to restore wetland complexes and surrounding habitat.
  – Continuous sign-up.
  – Offers 30 year or permanent easements.
Farm Bill Update

• Farmland and Ranchland Protection Program
  – Allows purchase of development rights in cooperation with local entities for farmland with a high potential for conversion.

• Grassland Reserve Program
  – Offers 10-30 year agreements or permanent easements to protect grasslands threatened by conversion to cropland or development.
Contact Information

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