
Part 539.2 – Exhibits for Part 539

Exhibit 539-3

Exhibit 539-3 Guidelines for Quality Assurance Review of a plant materials program

The following items may be covered in a Quality Assurance Review of a plant materials program. Specific items to be covered will depend on the type of plant materials program being reviewed, i.e., PMC, PMS or state program, and known issues which need to be reviewed for the program. This is only a guide of items that may be covered in a review.

- 1) Objectives and procedures of review.
- 2) Review report of last PMC/Program Quality Assurance Review.
- 3) Review the organizational structure of the PM program within the service area and how it functions.
- 4) Review report of previous State Conservationist's Advisory Committee (or comparable Advisory Committee) and progress made on decisions and actions.
- 5) Review supplements to NPMM and impact on the PMC or program being reviewed. Have the supplements been forwarded to the NPL?
- 6) History of the PMC, i.e., how old is the PMC, what activities have taken place and how they have changed over the history of the PMC?
- 7) A written summary of studies and activities at the PMC should be provided near the beginning of the review.
- 8) A tour of the PMC to look at items addressed below should be conducted near the beginning of the review. This will provide an overall picture of what the PMC is involved in.
- 9) Operation of the PMC
 - a) Physical Facilities
 - i) Land adequacy and tenure (PMC and field evaluation sites available for PMC use).
 - ii) Water supply - domestic (date and results of last water tests if on well?) and irrigation supplies.
 - iii) Infrastructure - are electric, water, natural gas lines, garbage disposal and security adequate for the PMC?
 - iv) Inventory of Buildings - adequacy, maintenance, and needs - present information in table form as appropriate (see Exhibit 539-4 for sample of a table).
 - b) Equipment Inventory - adequacy and replacement - "Equipment" includes farm and field equipment, office equipment, computer equipment, and audio/visual equipment regardless of cost.
 - i) Are inventory records kept up to date for the PMC?
 - ii) 5-year acquisition and replacement schedule.
 - iii) Is equipment adequately maintained and are maintenance records kept?
 - c) Financial Management of the PMC
 - i) Budget.
 - ii) Who is responsible for maintaining the budget?
 - iii) Who prepares the budget request for the next Fiscal Year?

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- iv) How much is the State Office offset and overhead?
- v) How good is the fund accountability for the PMC?
- vi) A copy of the current year's budget should be available for the review committee.
- d) Purchases and Procurement
 - i) How are suppliers identified or sources for materials decided on?
 - ii) What records are kept at the PMC on expenditures?
 - iii) How are purchases made or handled at the PMC?
- e) Safety and Health Issues of PMC Buildings, Equipment and Operations
 - i) When was the last safety review conducted for your facility? Who conducted the last safety review?
 - ii) Does the PMC comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), other Federal, State, or Local regulations as found in the NPMM (Part 540.21(d) and Exhibit 540-6)? Are current codes of state air, water, and waste quality standards available?
 - iii) Does the PMC have a safety coordinator, hazardous materials coordinator, and plans for emergency hazardous materials clean-up? Are regular safety meetings held?
 - iv) Are fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, first aid kits, etc. in working order and stocked?
 - v) Have health issues been addressed?
 - vi) Is the storage, use, and disposal of pesticides/hazardous materials in compliance with Federal, State, NRCS and NPMM (Part 540.21(d), Exhibit 540-6 and Exhibit 540-7) policy and guidelines?
 - vii) Are water quality issues (domestic water supply, irrigation tailwater, run-off) dealt with at the PMC?
 - viii) Are there fuel tanks at the PMC? Are they in compliance with current Federal and State regulations?
 - ix) The review committee should look for non-compliance of the above items during the tour of the facility.
- 10) Physical appearance and planning for the PMC.
 - a) Does the PMC have an adequate conservation plan and is it being followed?
 - b) Is a history of land use, maintenance, and treatment available for the PMC?
 - c) Has the PMC had a cultural resource assessment completed?
 - d) What is the appearance and quality of the facilities, grounds, and fields?
 - e) Are there any demonstration areas at the PMC and how useful are they?
 - f) Is the U.S. flag flown?
 - g) Is the PMC sign up to date? Are local signs directing visitors to the PMC needed and if so are they in place and maintained?
 - h) Are required Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) statements, labor laws, worker's compensation, and other personnel information posted in the PMC office?

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- i) Have provisions been made to accommodate physically challenged persons at the PMC?
- 11) State(s) Long-Range Plan (LRP) for plant materials activities
 - a) Are the LRPs developed on a state, multi-state, PMC service area, or regional level?
 - b) Is the LRP current?
 - c) Are these LRPs and/or plant materials needs and objectives being incorporated into State or Regional Strategic Plans?
 - d) How are these LRPs developed? Do they provide the guidance outlined in Part 540.10 and Exhibit 540-2?
 - e) Are these LRPs of sufficient detail and scope to direct the development of the State plant materials program and PMC LRP to address the priority resource needs for the State?
 - f) Are these LRPs filed as a supplement to the NPMM?
- 12) PMC LRP for plant materials activities
 - a) Does the PMC have a current LRP?
 - b) Are the priorities established and specific needs in the LRP consistent with the objectives and priorities of the NRCS Goals and Objectives (Exhibit 539-1)?
 - c) Does the PMC LRP relate to the priority needs established in the State(s) LRP for plant materials?
 - d) How was the current LRP developed? Refer to Part 540.22(a) for LRP development.
 - e) Is the PMC LRP of sufficient detail and scope to direct the annual operations of the PMC to address the priority resource needs for the PMC service area?
- 13) PMC Business Plan (formerly the Plan of Operations)
 - a) Are the activities conducted at the PMC consistent with the PMC LRP?
 - b) Is the Business Plan detailed enough to adequately direct the activities of the PMC?
 - c) How is the Business Plan developed, and do others participate in the development or review of the Business Plan? Refer to Part 540.22(b) for Business Plan development?
 - d) Is the Business Plan reviewed periodically through the year?
 - e) Are the items in the Business Plan being completed and products being delivered?
- 14) PMC Workload Analysis
 - a) Is there a Workload Analysis for the PMC? (see Part 540.22(c))
 - b) How is staff determined?
 - c) Is staff adequate?
- 15) Is there a copy of the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) maintained at the PMC? Is the FOTG being followed as appropriate for plantings being installed either on the PMC or off center?
- 16) Plant Materials Program Procedures
 - a) Is there a current copy of the NPMM maintained at the PMC and/or by the PMS? Does the plant materials staff use the NPMM?
 - b) Are program activities consistent with policies and procedures contained in the NPMM?

- i) Are plans being prepared for all studies (see Part 540.52)? Is study information inputted into the current PM database?
 - ii) Is plant materials inventory being maintained?
 - iii) Are the procedures for releasing plants being followed (see Part 540.74)?
 - iv) Are the guidelines for database maintenance and Information Technology being implemented?
 - v) Are reports being completed?
 - vi) Are the technology transfer products outlined in the PMC Business Plan, study plans, and Workload Analysis being completed in a timely manner?
 - vii) Are field plantings consistent with the needs and priorities established in the state(s) and PMC long-range programs?
- c) Technology Transfer
- i) Is the Plant Materials Progress Report of Activities current?
 - ii) What is the distribution of the Plant Materials Progress Report of Activities?
 - iii) Is the PMC Annual Technical Report prepared yearly?
 - iv) Are results of studies summarized and published as State technical notes, in technical journals, or other appropriate places?
 - v) Does the PMC have a current brochure?
 - vi) Are oral presentations made on the activities and studies at the PMC?
 - vii) Does the PMC have field days, workshops, or training sessions?
 - viii) What is the target audience for these activities?
- d) What are the contributions of plants released from the center?
- e) How are field personnel, other agencies, cooperators, and other potential users informed of new products from the Plant Materials Program?
- i) Are planting guides and/or Technical Notes prepared?
 - ii) Are new releases and/or new technology included in the FOTG?
 - iii) Are other information leaflets and publications used?
 - iv) Are technical journals used to summarize results of plant materials studies?
- 17) Relationship with other agencies, conservation districts, and others
- a) What agencies and organizations work with the PMC & PMS? Are there any problems concerning the cooperative release of new plants and/or technology?
 - b) Does the State Conservationist enter into formal cooperative agreements and memorandums of understanding?
 - i) With state and other federal agencies and others?
 - ii) With conservation districts?
 - iii) With state experiment stations or crop improvement associations?
- 18) Personnel administration
- a) Lines of authority.
 - b) Job responsibilities, duties, descriptions, and standards of performance established for all staff positions.

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- c) Job responsibilities, duties, descriptions, and standards of performance established for all staff positions.
 - d) PMC relationship with the field PMS and other State specialists:
 - i) In developing plans?
 - ii) In allocating plant materials?
 - iii) In evaluating field plantings and problems?
 - e) Is the EEO program supported? Are Title VI and VII posters displayed showing the name, address, and telephone number of the EEO officers, and other pertinent information?
 - f) Training
 - i) Are training plans current?
 - ii) Are employees provided the training outlined in their training plans?
 - iii) Are employees provided the opportunity to receive training from outside sources?
 - iv) What is done to encourage self-improvement?
 - v) Is the PMC used as a training center?
 - g) Is membership in professional organizations and attendance at meetings encouraged?
 - i) What organizations do staff members belong to?
 - ii) What meetings have been attended in the last 2-3 years?
 - h) Have staff members received any awards and/or commendations in the past 2 -3 years?
- 19) Quality Assurance Review report should include:
- a) Date of review.
 - b) PMC or program being reviewed.
 - c) Review committee.
 - d) Summary of findings.
 - e) Recommendations.
 - f) Agreed-to changes.
 - g) How will agreed-to changes be followed up?
 - h) Recommendations for distribution of final Quality Assurance Review report.