

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION		NUMBER: 1057-001
SUBJECT: Environmental Services Advisory Committee	DATE: January 14, 2009	
	OPI: US Department of Agriculture	

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This regulation establishes the Environmental Services Advisory Committee (The Advisory Committee) in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App. II). The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to advise the Secretary of Agriculture regarding issues related to establishing technical guidelines that outline science-based methods to measure the environmental services benefits from conservation and land management activities in order to facilitate the participation of farmers, ranchers and forest landowners in emerging environmental services markets.

2. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

- a. This regulation will expire 2 years after the date of filing unless renewed by proper authority and appropriate action.
- b. The function of the Advisory Committee cannot be completed in less than 2 years.

3. OFFICERS AND MEMBERSHIP

- a. The Advisory Committee shall consist of at least 15 and no more than 19 members appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. The Director of the USDA Office of Ecosystem Services and Markets or his or her designee will serve as the Chair of the Advisory Committee. Officers or employees of the Department of Agriculture may not serve as members of the Advisory Committee.
- b. The Advisory Committee shall consist of members with relevant expertise and who represent a diversity of organizations including at a minimum:
 - (1) representatives from state natural resource agencies, environmental quality agencies, agriculture departments;
 - (2) tribal governments;

- (3) farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners representing the various regions of the nation;
 - (4) conservation and environmental organizations;
 - (5) institutions of higher education;
 - (6) financial institutions involved in environmental services trading;
 - (7) others as determined by the Secretary.
- c. Membership to the greatest extent possible, shall be selected from geographically diverse locations.
 - d. The Secretary of Agriculture shall appoint a Designated Federal Officer (DFO) under sections 10(e) and (f) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, (5 U.S.C. App. II).
 - e. Members will be appointed for a term of 2 years and may be appointed to successive terms. A vacancy on the Advisory Committee shall be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made.
 - f. A majority of the Advisory Committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.
 - g. Equal opportunity practices, in line with USDA policies, shall be followed in *all* membership appointments to the Advisory Committee. To ensure that the recommendations of the committee have taken into account the needs of the diverse groups served by the Department, membership shall include, to the extent practicable, individuals with demonstrated ability to represent minorities, women, and persons with disabilities.

4. DUTIES

- a. The Advisory Committee shall advise the Secretary of Agriculture on the content, implementation, and potential effects of proposed guidelines and procedures developed to measure environmental services benefits, and protocols for reporting environmental services benefits.

5. ESTIMATED ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS

- a. Members of the Advisory Committee will serve without pay, but may be reimbursed for travel and per diem expenses for official duties as approved by the Chair of the Board or his designee.
- b. The estimated cost of operating the Advisory Committee is \$150,000 annually. Federal staff support is estimated to be 1 FTE.

- c. At the Advisory Committee's request, the Secretary of Agriculture may make employees available to the Advisory committee for technical and administrative assistance.

6. NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

The Advisory Committee will meet as often and at such intervals as is necessary to complete its work but no less than two times per year. All meetings of the Committee will be open to the public.

7. REPORTS AND SUPPORT

The Advisory Committee shall report to the Secretary of Agriculture following each of its meetings and more frequently if deemed necessary.

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