

Action Required By: November 9, 2012, and July 1, 2013

Purpose. To provide State Conservationists (STCs) and the Directors, Caribbean and Pacific Islands Areas, with guidance for administering FY 2013 national programmatic and landscape conservation initiatives funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) program, and Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP).

Expiration Date. September 30, 2013

Background. To support efficient delivery of these focused opportunities to eligible producers, this bulletin consolidates guidance for certain national programmatic and landscape initiatives to be offered through EQIP, AMA, and WHIP during FY 2013. Although legislative authorities may be unresolved and funding allocations may not be finalized, State Conservationists are to use the attached guidance to prepare to offer these opportunities in a timely manner when clarity is achieved.

Explanation. This guidance establishes action items to be completed by State Conservationists to support initiatives. Delivery and management of these initiatives are subject to all agency program rules and policies including requirements in Title 440, Conservation Programs Manual (CPM), Part 512, "Conservation Program Contracting."

<u>National Initiative</u>	AMA	EQIP	WHIP
National Air Quality Initiative (NAQI)		X	
National On-Farm Energy Initiative (NOFEI)		X	
National Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative (NSHTI)	X	X	
National Organic Initiative (NOI)		X	
<u>Landscape Conservation Initiatives:</u>			
Working Lands for Wildlife (WLFW)			X
-Black-Footed Ferret (BF Ferret WLFW)			X
-Bog Turtle (Bog Turtle WLFW)			X
-Lesser Prairie Chicken (LP Chicken WLFW)		X	X
-New England Cottontail (NE Cottontail WLFW)			X
-Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (SWN Flycatcher WLFW)			X
-Greater Sage Grouse (Greater Sage Grouse WLFW)		X	X
-Gopher Tortoise (G Tortoise WLFW)			X
-Golden-Winged Warbler (G Winged Warbler WLFW)			X
Bay Delta Initiative (BDI)		X	
Gulf of Mexico Initiative (GoMI)		X	
Illinois River Subbasin and Eucha - Spavinaw Lake Watershed Initiative (IRWI)		X	
Mississippi River Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI)		X	X
Northern Plains Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative (NP-MBHI)		X	
Ogallala Aquifer Initiative (OAI)		X	
Long Leaf Pine Initiative (LLPI)		X	
New England-New York Forestry Initiative (NE/NYFI)		X	
Everglades Initiative (EI)		X	
West Maui Coral Reef Initiative (WMCRI)		X	
Driftless Area Initiative (DAI)		X	

In order to support approved national programmatic and landscape conservation initiatives during FY 2013, STCs, are to complete the following:

1) ProTracts Subaccounts and Application, Evaluation, and Ranking Tool (AERT).—States are to establish subaccounts and populate the ranking evaluation criteria in the ProTracts AERT and other actions as follows **no later than COB Friday, November 9, 2012.**

a. ProTracts Subaccounts.—Unless already populated in ProTracts by the national office, States are to establish an iteratively named and separate subaccount in ProTracts for each initiative offered and assign the appropriate "account type" as noted in the attached guidance documents. States may not establish "locally led" or "State" type subaccounts to support national initiatives.

b. Subaccount Resource Concerns.—States must assign the natural resource concerns in AERT for each subaccount established in ProTracts, as noted in the attached guidance documents. For planning purposes, States should emphasize the primary resource concerns targeted by the initiative.

c. National Approved Land Uses.—States must designate the approved land uses as eligible for each initiative as indicated in the attached guidance documents.

d. Approved Conservation Practices - Core and Supporting Practices.—The attached guidance will provide practices that are approved to support each national or landscape initiative. For purposes of this guidance, if core and supporting practices are used for an approved initiatives, the following definitions apply:

- **Core Practice.**—A conservation practice listed in the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) that is essential to address the natural resource concerns identified by an initiative.
- **Supporting Practice.**—A conservation practice listed in the FOTG that may be needed to facilitate the implementation of a core practice or, along with other approved practice, needed to address the natural resource concerns identified by the initiative.

National Programmatic Initiatives.—Carefully review the guidance provided for each initiative to determine which practices may be required to be offered. If a State does not need to offer one or more of the core practices (e.g., the practice is not needed to address a resource concern), the STC must notify the appropriate Financial Assistance Program Division (FAPD) team leader of which core practices are not needed. States are encouraged, but not required, to offer all supporting practices listed in the attached guidance documents. States may approve the use of additional supporting practices not listed in the attached guidance documents if the State Conservationist certifies that **all** the following conditions are met:

1. The proposed supporting conservation practice is needed to directly support a required or core practice.
2. The purpose of the proposed supporting conservation practice standard addresses one or more of the initiative's natural resource concerns.
3. The national Conservation Practice Physical Effects (CPPE) database indicates the proposed practice is assigned a "positive" value for the associated resource concern.

Landscape Conservation Initiatives.—Carefully review the guidance provided for each initiative to determine which practices are required to be offered. If a State does not need to offer one or more of the core practices (e.g., the practice is not needed to address a resource concern), the STC must notify the initiative coordinator, who will seek approval from the Initiative Lead Regional Conservationist. Changes to landscape initiative supporting practices, consistent with the criteria below, must be submitted to the initiative coordinator and approved by the appropriate Initiative Lead Regional Conservationist.

1. The proposed supporting conservation practice is needed to directly support a required or core practice.
2. The purpose of the proposed supporting conservation practice standard addresses one or more of the initiative's natural resource concern.
3. The national Conservation Practice Physical Effects (CPPE) database indicates the proposed practice is assigned a "positive" value for the associated resource concern.

States are responsible for associating core and supporting practices with the approved resource concerns in ProTracts AERT, as indicated in the attached guidance documents.

e. Conservation Activity Plans (CAP).—The ProTracts application type of "planning" must be associated with each EQIP CAP application and ranking of these applications is mandatory during FY 2013. Additional guidance for administration of CAPs will be provided in a separate notice.

f. Screening Criteria.—If included in the attached initiative guidance, States must utilize national screening criteria as provided to manage workload associated with the initiative. All eligible applications must have an assigned priority of "High," "Medium," or "Low" recorded in ProTracts.

g. State Ranking Criteria.—State ranking criteria to support the national programmatic and certain landscape conservation initiatives during FY 2013 have been established as shown in the attached guidance documents. States are responsible for populating the ProTracts AERT with the established State ranking criteria for each initiative offered in their State. States may not modify any FY 2013 initiative State-level ranking criteria provided in this guidance.

h. Local Ranking Criteria.—States must populate local ranking criteria in ProTracts AERT. Refer to attached guidance documents for examples of local ranking criteria to support the initiative. If example local ranking criteria are not provided in this guidance, States must develop criteria that support the goals of the initiative.

i. Payment Schedules.—States must ensure that required core practices and any necessary supporting practices are included in the current program payment schedules uploaded to ProTracts. Each payment schedule uploaded into ProTracts should include both historically underserved (HU) and traditional participant payment rates. Historically underserved items should be prefaced with “HU” to allow for ease of identification during contracting and quality assurance.

(2) Application Periods.—National Headquarters (NHQ) has established ranking periods and application deadlines to allow evaluation of all program applications from the beginning of the fiscal year through May 31, 2013. Unless specified in the attached guidance documents, State Conservationists must select and offer application periods consistent with the nationally established application and ranking periods. Additional guidance to States will be issued under a separate national bulletin.

Public Affairs - Outreach.—No State or local announcements in the media about any initiative may be made until after the national-level announcement, which will be issued either from the Department or the Chief. Announcements must be coordinated and issued through the national Public Affairs Division (PAD).

States must post initiative information to the State's Web site. Information provided must be consistent with policy at 440-CPM, Part 515, Subpart D, Section 515.32B. If core and supporting practices are required for the initiative, this information must also be presented on the State Web site.

Fund Management.—Once States have established their ProTracts subaccount and AERT, States **must** allocate the appropriate financial assistance funds to these subaccounts. At the end of the last ranking period, any unused funds must be returned by allowance change to NHQ. STCs may add additional general program financial assistance to support the national programmatic or landscape conservation initiatives provided an allowance change request has been entered into the Allowance Change Tool (ACT).

For any initiatives that may provide EQIP financial assistance for livestock related projects, State Conservationists must ensure that applications are properly associated with an appropriate “Livestock Type.”

Obligation Deadline.—All program contracts must be obligated by COB Monday, **July 1, 2013**. Program funds not obligated by this date must be returned to NHQ by submitting an allowance change request through ACT **no later than COB July 5, 2013**, so that they can be used to address other initiative opportunities. Return of funds or request for additional funds should be done in accordance with 440-CPM, Part 512, Subpart I, Section 512.84, “Fund Allocation Changes.” States will return the appropriate technical assistance (TA) funds with the return of any financial assistance. The TA return rate for each program will be provided in the State allocation letter.

Contact. If you have any questions regarding this guidance, contact the program manager or initiative coordinator listed in the appropriate attachment to this bulletin. If you have general questions about FAPD program rules or guidance, contact the appropriate FAPD team leader: Mark Rose, EQIP Team Leader, at (202) 690-2621 or mark.rose@wdc.usda.gov, and Maggie Rhodes, AMA and WHIP, at (202) 720-6700 or maggie.rhodes@wdc.usda.gov. If you have any questions regarding the technical aspects of these initiatives, contact the appropriate Science and Technology division director: Noller Herbert, Director, Conservation Engineering Division, at (202) 720-2520 or noller.herbert@wdc.usda.gov, and Terrell Erickson, Director, Ecological Sciences Division, at (202) 720-5992 or terrell.erickson@wdc.usda.gov.

/s/

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Attachment A

Initiative Name and Acronym National Air Quality Initiative (AQI)

Initiative Description / Summary

Under the Food Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, the Secretary shall provide eligible producers with program support to address serious air quality concerns from agricultural operations and help meet regulatory requirements through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). During fiscal year (FY) 2013, the program is designed to help producers meet air quality compliance requirements, as well as, support practices which address impacts associated with greenhouse gases (GHG). To further meet national goals for consistency in delivery of program benefits associated with AQI, the agency will nationalize implementation of the program in FY 2013 with new requirements and business tool controls as outlined in this guidance.

Approved or Participating States and Counties:

National EQIP Air Quality Initiative funds will be allocated to States and Counties which have been identified as having significant air quality resource concerns related to designated non-attainment for Ozone and Particulate Matter. The table identifies the approved States and allocation percentages that will be applied to available funding as well as the air quality resource concerns for each approved county. The final FY 2013 allocation to support the AQI will be announced at a later date in the allocation letter or other bulletin.

STATE	State Percent	Approved County	PM 10	PM 2.5	Excessive Ozone
AZ	5.11%	Cochise	x		
		Gila	x		
		Maricopa	x		x
		Mohave	x		
		Pima	x		
		Pinal	x	x	x
		Santa Cruz	x	x	
		Yuma	x		
CA	41.73%	Alameda		x	x
		Amador			x
		Butte		x	x
		Calaveras			x
		Contra Costa		x	x
		El Dorado		x	x
		Fresno	x	x	x
		Imperial	x	x	x
		Inyo	x		
		Kern	x	x	x
		Kings	x	x	x
		Los Angeles	x	x	x
		Madera	x	x	x
		Marin		x	x
		Mariposa			x
		Merced	x	x	x
		Mono	x		
		Napa		x	x
		Nevada			x
		Orange	x	x	x

Attachment A

		Placer		x	x
		Riverside	x	x	x
		Sacramento	x	x	x
		San Bernardino	x	x	x
		San Diego			x
		San Francisco		x	x
		San Joaquin	x	x	x
		San Luis Obispo			x
		San Mateo		x	x
		Santa Clara		x	x
		Solano		x	x
		Sonoma		x	x
		Stanislaus	x	x	x
		Sutter		x	x
		Tehama			x
		Tulare	x	x	x
		Tuolumne			x
		Ventura			x
		Yolo		x	x
		Yuba		x	
CO	6.00%	Adams	x		x
		Arapahoe	x		x
		Archuleta	x		
		Boulder	x		x
		Broomfield	x		x
		Denver	x		x
		Douglas	x		x
		Fremont	x		
		Jefferson	x		x
		Larimer			x
		Pitkin	x		
		Prowers	x		
		Routt	x		
		San Miguel	x		
		Weld			x
IL	4.94%	Cook	x	x	x
		Du Page		x	x
		Grundy		x	x
		Jersey			x
		Kane		x	x
		Kendall		x	x
		La Salle	x		
		Lake		x	x
		Madison	x	x	
		Mc Henry		x	x
		Monroe		x	x
		Randolph		x	

Attachment A

		St Clair		x	x
		Will		x	x
IN	6.14%	Allen			x
		Boone			x
		Clark		x	x
		Dearborn		x	x
		Delaware			x
		Dubois		x	
		Elkhart			x
		Floyd		x	x
		Gibson		x	
		Greene			x
		Hamilton		x	x
		Hancock			x
		Hendricks		x	x
		Jackson			x
		Jefferson		x	
		Johnson		x	x
		La Porte			x
		Lake	x	x	x
		Madison			x
		Marion		x	x
		Morgan		x	x
		Pike		x	
		Porter		x	x
		Shelby			x
		Spencer		x	
		St Joseph			x
		Vanderburgh		x	x
		Vermillion	x		
		Vigo			x
		Warrick		x	x
MI	6.38%	Allegan			x
		Benzie			x
		Berrien			x
		Calhoun			x
		Cass			x
		Clinton			x
		Eaton			x
		Genesee			x
		Huron			x
		Ingham			x
		Kalamazoo			x
		Kent			x
		Lapeer			x
		Lenawee			x
		Livingston		x	x

Attachment A

		Macomb		x	x
		Mason			x
		Monroe		x	x
		Muskegon			x
		Oakland		x	x
		Ottawa			x
		St Clair		x	x
		Van Buren			x
		Washtenaw		x	x
		Wayne	x	x	x
OH	9.66%	Adams		x	
		Allen			x
		Ashtabula		x	x
		Belmont		x	x
		Butler		x	x
		Clark		x	x
		Clermont		x	x
		Clinton			x
		Columbiana			x
		Coshocton		x	
		Cuyahoga	x	x	x
		Delaware		x	x
		Fairfield		x	x
		Franklin		x	x
		Gallia		x	
		Geauga			x
		Greene		x	x
		Hamilton		x	x
		Jefferson	x	x	x
		Knox			x
		Lake		x	x
		Lawrence		x	
		Licking		x	x
		Lorain		x	x
		Lucas			x
		Madison			x
		Mahoning			x
		Medina		x	x
		Miami			x
		Montgomery		x	x
		Portage		x	x
		Scioto		x	
		Stark			x
		Summit		x	x
		Trumbull			x
		Warren		x	x
		Washington		x	x

Attachment A

		Wood			x
PA	12.46%	Adams			x
		Allegheny	x	x	x
		Armstrong		x	x
		Beaver		x	x
		Berks		x	x
		Blair			x
		Bucks		x	x
		Butler		x	x
		Cambria		x	x
		Carbon			x
		Centre			x
		Chester		x	x
		Clearfield			x
		Cumberland		x	x
		Dauphin		x	x
		Delaware		x	x
		Erie			x
		Fayette			x
		Franklin			x
		Greene		x	x
		Indiana		x	x
		Lackawanna			x
		Lancaster		x	x
		Lawrence		x	
		Lebanon		x	x
		Lehigh		x	x
		Luzerne			x
		Mercer			x
		Monroe			x
		Montgomery		x	x
		Northampton		x	x
		Perry			x
		Philadelphia		x	x
		Tioga			x
		Washington		x	x
		Westmoreland		x	x
		Wyoming			x
		York		x	x
TX	7.58%	Brazoria			x
		Chambers			x
		Collin			x
		Dallas			x
		Denton			x
		El Paso	x		
		Ellis			x
		Fort Bend			x

Attachment A

		Galveston			x
		Hardin			x
		Harris			x
		Jefferson			x
		Johnson			x
		Kaufman			x
		Liberty			x
		Montgomery			x
		Orange			x
		Parker			x
		Rockwall			x
		Tarrant			x
		Waller			x
		Wise			x
TOTAL	100%				

Explanation: Approved State and Counties and the allocation formula are based upon the following:

Total number of States and Counties where air pollution levels persistently exceed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) established by the Clean Air Act and documented on the current listed EPA website. States and Counties selected for initiative funding are derived from EPA designations of non-attainment for any of the three priority air quality concerns of: Particulate Matter 10, Particulate Matter 2.5, or Ozone. The percent allocation is based upon the averaging of two factors for each County designated by EPA:

- Agricultural Land in each County (Farm Acres)
- Number of Agricultural Operations in each County (Number of Farms)

The number of farm operations and farm acres are totaled together for each designated County and a weighted percentage is calculated for each State. The State percentages are “weighted” based upon the number of designated non-attainment pollutants in each County (Equal to the number of NAAQS standards exceeded in the County). The resulting formula creates a weighted percentage for each State.

Source of Data for FY 2013:

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

[Greenbook Non-Attainment Areas](#) - August 29, 2012

National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS):

Table 1, County Summary Highlights – 2007 (No. of Farms & Farm Acres)

Program Contact Information:

EQIP AQI Program Manager: Aaron Lauster at (202) 720-8644; aaron.lauster@wdc.usda.gov

ProTracts Requirements:

1. Subaccount Guidance:

The following sub account will be created in ProTracts to support AQI in each State approved for the initiative:

- “Air Quality National” with an account type of “Air Quality National”

States shall evaluate and fund applications for air quality related projects and the required air quality related Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) using the “Air Quality National” sub account. Applications for the CAP must be assigned the application type of “planning”. States may establish additional air quality related sub accounts using other program funds, but must attach an account type of “Air Quality State”.

Attachment A

2. Application, Evaluation, and Ranking Tool (AERT) Guidance – Choice Lists and Matrix Data:

- **Approved Land Types to be populated in ProTracts AERT:**

States must assign the following land uses as eligible for this initiative. (Other land uses are not authorized for AQI)

Required Land Use
Crop
Forest
Grazed Forest
Headquarters
Grazed Range
Pasture
Hay

- **Approved Natural Resource Concerns to be populated in ProTracts AERT:**

States must assign the following natural resource concerns for this initiative (Other resource concerns are not authorized for AQI).

Air Quality Natural Resource Concerns
Particulate matter less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter (PM 2.5)
Particulate matter less than 10 micrometers in diameter (PM10)
Excessive Ozone
Excessive Greenhouse Gas -N ₂ O (nitrous oxide)
Excessive Greenhouse Gas -CO ₂ (carbon dioxide)
Excessive Greenhouse Gas -CH ₄ (methane)
Ammonia (NH ₃)

- **Approved Conservation Practices to be populated in ProTracts AERT:**

The following conservation practices are required to be offered in all FY 2013 approved AQI States to address identified air quality resource concerns. No additional conservation practices may be added or offered through AQI during FY 2013.

Approved AQI Practices	Practice Code
Comprehensive Air Quality Management Plan	126
Access Control	472
Agrichemical Handling Facility	309
Air Filtration and Scrubbing	371
Alley Cropping	311
Amendments for Treatment of Agricultural Waste	591
Anaerobic Digester, Controlled Temperature	366
Anionic Polyacrylamide (PAM) Erosion Control	450
Combustion System Improvement	372
Composting Facility	317
Conservation Cover	327
Conservation Crop Rotation	328
Cover Crop	340
Critical Area Planting	342
Cross Wind Ridges	588
Cross Wind Trap Strips	589c

Attachment A

Drainage Water Management	554
Dust Control from Animal Activity on Open Lot Surfaces	375
Dust Control on Unpaved Roads and Surfaces	373
Feed Management	592
Field Border	386
Forage and Biomass Planting	512
Forest Stand Improvement	666
Heavy Use Area Protection	561
Hedgerow Planting	422
Herbaceous Wind Barriers	603
Integrated Pest Management	595
Irrigation System, Sprinkler	442
Irrigation Water Management	449
Mulching	484
Multi-Story Cropping	379
Nutrient Management	590
Prescribed Burning	338
Prescribed Grazing	528
Pumping Plant	533
Range Planting	550
Residue and Tillage Management, Mulch Till	345
Residue and Tillage Management, No Till/Strip Till/Direct Seed	329
Residue and Tillage Management, Ridge Till	346
Residue Management, Seasonal	344
Riparian Forest Buffer	391
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	390
Roofs and Covers	367
Silvopasture Establishment	381
Solid/Liquid Waste Separation Facility	632
Stripcropping	585
Surface Roughening	609
Tree/Shrub Establishment	612
Waste Treatment	629
Waste Treatment Lagoon	359
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	380
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation	650
Woody Residue Treatment	384

Attachment A

• AERT Practice-Resource Concern Matrix

States shall populate the approved conservation practices in the ProTracts AERT and associate all approved resource concerns designated High, Medium, or Low in the following table.

Fiscal Year 2013 Air Quality Initiative Required practices:		Approved ProTracts Air Quality Natural Resource Concerns				
Approved Conservation Practices	Code	PM 10	PM 2.5	Excessive Ozone	Ammonia	Excessive Greenhouse Gas CO ₂ , N ₂ O, CH ₄
Comprehensive Air Quality Management Plan	126	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Access Control	472	Medium	Medium	None	None	None
Agrichemical Handling Facility	309	Low	Low	Low	Low	None
Air Filtration and Scrubbing	371	High	High	Medium	High	Medium
Alley Cropping	311	Medium	Medium	None	None	Medium
Amendments for Treatment of Agricultural Waste	591	Medium	Medium	Low	High	None
Anaerobic Digester, Controlled Temperature	366	None	None	Low	None	High
Anionic Polyacrylamide (PAM) Erosion Control	450	Medium	Medium	None	None	None
Combustion System Improvement	372	High	High	High	None	High
Composting Facility	317	None	None	Low	Low	Low
Conservation Cover	327	Medium	Medium	None	None	High
Conservation Crop Rotation	328	Medium	Medium	None	None	Low
Cover Crop	340	Medium	Medium	None	Low	Medium
Critical Area Planting	342	Medium	Medium	None	None	Low
Cross Wind Ridges	588	Medium	Medium	None	None	None
Cross Wind Trap Strips	589c	Medium	Medium	None	None	None
Drainage Water Management	554	Medium	Medium	None	None	Low
Dust Control from Animal Activity on Open Lot Surfaces	375	High	High	None	None	None
Dust Control on Unpaved Roads and Surfaces	373	High	High	None	None	None
Feed Management	592	Medium	Medium	Low	High	High
Field Border	386	Low	Low	None	None	Low
Forage and Biomass Planting	512	Low	Low	None	None	High
Forest Stand Improvement	666	None	None	None	None	High
Heavy Use Area Protection	561	Medium	Medium	None	None	None
Hedgerow Planting	422	Medium	Medium	None	None	Low
Herbaceous Wind Barriers	603	Medium	Medium	None	None	Medium
Integrated Pest Management	595	Medium	Medium	Medium	None	None
Irrigation System, Sprinkler	442	Medium	Medium	None	None	None
Irrigation Water Management	449	Medium	Medium	None	None	None
Mulching	484	Medium	Medium	None	None	Low
Multi-Story Cropping	379	None	None	None	None	High

Attachment A

Fiscal Year 2013 Air Quality Initiative Required practices:		Approved ProTracts Air Quality Natural Resource Concerns				
Approved Conservation Practices	Code	PM 10	PM 2.5	Excessive Ozone	Ammonia	Excessive Greenhouse Gas CO ₂ , N ₂ O, CH ₄
Nutrient Management	590	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	High
Prescribed Burning	338	None	None	None	None	Low
Prescribed Grazing	528	Medium	Medium	None	None	Low
Pumping Plant	533	Medium	Medium	Medium	None	Medium
Range Planting	550	Low	Low	None	None	Medium
Residue and Tillage Management, Mulch Till	345	High	High	None	None	Medium
Residue and Tillage Management, No Till/Strip Till/Direct Seed	329	High	High	None	None	High
Residue and Tillage Management, Ridge Till	346	Medium	Medium	None	None	Medium
Residue Management, Seasonal	344	Low	Low	None	None	None
Riparian Forest Buffer	391	None	None	None	None	Medium
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	390	None	None	None	None	Medium
Roofs and Covers	367	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	High
Silvopasture Establishment	381	None	None	None	None	High
Solid/Liquid Waste Separation Facility	632	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	Low
Stripcropping	585	Medium	Medium	None	None	None
Surface Roughening	609	Medium	Medium	None	None	None
Tree/Shrub Establishment	612	None	None	None	None	High
Waste Treatment	629	None	None	Low	Medium	Low
Waste Treatment Lagoon	359	None	None	Low	None	None
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment	380	High	High	None	Medium	High
Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation	650	Medium	Medium	None	Medium	Low
Woody Residue Treatment	384	None	None	Low	None	Medium

3. Application, Evaluation, and Ranking Tool Guidance – Ranking Criteria Questions:

The total ranking points associated with the Initiative are to be distributed in AERT and approved ranking questions as follows:

AERT Level	Maximum Points	Point Percentage
National Level Ranking Questions	250	25%
State Level Ranking Questions	400	40%
Local Level Ranking Questions	250	25%
Efficiency Score	100	10%
Total Points for this initiative:	1,000	100%

In order to meet the requirements of 440 CPM Part 512, Subpart C, states shall adjust AERT “multipliers” in ProTracts to assure that the above target percentages will properly distribute available ranking points for each category.

The following are detailed instructions for populating ranking questions and points in ProTracts AERT.

Attachment A

National Level Ranking Criteria Requirements:

National ranking questions are established in ProTracts by the national office.

National priorities must account for 250 points or 25% of total points.

Only the following national level ranking questions apply to this initiative. All other national level ranking criteria are not applicable and should be answered "No" by the Designated Conservationist:

1. If the application is for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP), the agency will assign significant ranking priority and conservation benefit by answering "Yes" to the following question. Answering "Yes" to question 1a will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the national priority category.
1a. Is the program application for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP)? <u>If answer is "Yes", do not answer any other national level questions.</u> If answer is "No", proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.
4. Clean Air: Treatment of air quality from agricultural sources – Will the proposed project assist the producer to implement practice(s) which:
4a. Meet on-farm regulatory requirements relating to air quality or proactively avoid the need for regulatory measures?
4b. Reduce on-farm generated green house gases such as CO2 (Carbon Dioxide), CH4 (Methane), and N2O (Nitrous Oxide)?
4c. Increase on-farm carbon sequestration?

State Level Ranking Criteria Requirements:

State ranking questions for this initiative are established by the national office and will be entered into ProTracts by the national office. State level ranking questions must account for a total of 400 points. Set AERT to a maximum of 400 points for this category.

2013 EQIP AQI State Level Ranking Questions	FY 2013 Points
1. If the application is for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP), the agency will assign significant ranking priority and conservation benefit by answering "Yes" to the following question. Answering "Yes" to question 1a will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the state priority category.	
1a. Is the program application for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) for a TSP prepared Comprehensive Air Quality Management Plan (126)? <u>If answer is "Yes", do not answer any other state level questions.</u> If answer is "No", proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	400
2. Choose the most appropriate response below regarding the location of the project with regard to EPA National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) designations for the area. Maximum points 45.	
2a EQIP project is located in an area that has an EPA NAAQS nonattainment designation for PM2.5, PM10 and Ozone (all 3).	45
2b EQIP project is located in an area that has an EPA NAAQS nonattainment designation for 2 out of 3 of these pollutants (PM2.5, PM10 and Ozone).	20
2c EQIP project is located in an area that has an EPA NAAQS nonattainment designation for 1 out of 3 of these pollutants (PM2.5, PM10 and Ozone).	10

Attachment A

3. Choose the most appropriate response below regarding the location of the project with regard to the EPA National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) ozone designation for the area. Maximum points 65.	
3a EQIP project is located in EPA NAAQS Designation "Extreme" nonattainment area.	65
3b EQIP project is located in EPA NAAQS Designation "Severe" or "Serious" nonattainment area.	40
3c EQIP project is located in EPA NAAQS Designation "Moderate" or "Marginal" nonattainment area.	25
4. Choose the most appropriate response below regarding the location of the project with regard to the EPA NAAQS PM10 designation for the area. Maximum points 30.	
4a EQIP project is located in an area that is designated as serious nonattainment by the EPA for PM10 or is a PM10 maintenance area that was previously designated as serious nonattainment.	30
4b EQIP project is located in an area that is designated as moderate nonattainment by the EPA for PM10.	20
5. Choose the most appropriate response below regarding the EQIP contract with regard to local or state air quality regulations that specifically address agricultural emissions. Maximum points 20.	
5a EQIP project practice(s) address one or more local or state agriculturally-related air emissions regulatory requirements.	20
6. Choose the most appropriate response below regarding the potential for the EQIP contract to replace existing diesel engines used on farm – All retired engines must be destroyed according to requirements outlined in the Combustion System Improvement practice standard. Maximum points 65.	
6a The EQIP project results in replacement of one or more existing diesel engine(s) with energy efficient electric motor(s).	65
6b The EQIP project results in replacement of two or more existing pre-1980 diesel engines with the most current Tier-level diesel engines.	40
6c The EQIP project results in replacement of one existing pre-1980 diesel engine with the most current Tier-level diesel engine.	30
6d The EQIP project results in replacement of one existing 1980 or newer diesel engine with the most current Tier-level diesel engine.	20
6e The EQIP project results in retrofit of an existing diesel engine with approved devices.	10
7. If the EQIP application is located in an area where the applicant needs to address a PM10 resource concern select the statement below that best describes the practices included in this application. (Refer to "Practice-Resource Concern Matrix) Maximum points 35.	
7a EQIP application includes at least one or more practices for PM10 that provide a high or significant environmental benefit.	35
7b EQIP application includes no high priority practices but does include one or more medium priority practices to address PM10.	20
7c EQIP application includes no high or medium priority practices, but does include one or more low priority practices to address PM10.	10
8. If the EQIP application is located in an area where the applicant needs to address a PM2.5 resource concern select the statement below that best describes the practices included in this application. (Refer to "Practice-Resource Concern Matrix) Maximum	
8a EQIP application includes at least one or more practices for PM2.5 that provides a high or significant environmental benefit.	35

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8b EQIP application includes no high priority practices but does include one or more medium priority practices to address PM2.5.	20
8c EQIP application includes no high or medium priority practices, but does include one or more low priority practices to address PM2.5.	10
9. If the EQIP application is located in an area where the applicant needs to address an Ozone resource concern select the statement below that best describes the practices included in this application. (Refer to "Practice-Resource Concern Matrix) Maximum	
9a EQIP application includes at least or more practices for Ozone that provides a high or significant environmental benefit.	35
9b EQIP application includes no high priority practices but does include one or more medium priority practices to address Ozone.	20
9c EQIP application includes no high or medium priority practices, but does include one or more low priority practices to address Ozone.	10
10. If the EQIP application is partially or fully focused on ammonia emission reductions select the statement below that best describes practices included in this application. (Refer to "Practice-Resource Concern Matrix) Maximum points 35	
10a EQIP application includes at least one or more practices for ammonia that provides a high or significant environmental benefit.	35
10b EQIP application includes no high priority practices but does include one or more medium priority practices to address ammonia.	20
10c EQIP application includes no high or medium priority practices, but does include one or more low priority practices to address ammonia.	10
11. If the EQIP application is partially or fully focused on greenhouse gases select the statement below that best describes the practices included in this application. (Refer to "Practice-Resource Concern Matrix) Maximum points 35.	
11a EQIP application includes at least one or more practices for GHGs that provide a high or significant environmental benefit.	35
11b EQIP application includes no high priority practices but does include one or more medium priority practices to address GHGs.	20
11c EQIP application includes no high or medium priority practices, but does include one or more low priority practices to address GHGs.	10
Total Points:	400

Local Level Ranking Criteria Requirements:

Most Local ranking questions are approved and entered into ProTracts at the State level. Local level ranking questions must account for a total of 250 points or at least 25% of total points available according to the requirements in 440 CPM, Part 512, Subpart C. Establish a maximum point total of 250 in ProTracts AERT. Each State MUST enter the following question #1 in the ProTracts Local level category in ProTracts:

2013 EQIP AQI Local Level Ranking Questions	FY 2013 Points
1. If the application is for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP), the agency will assign significant ranking priority and conservation benefit by answering "Yes" to the following question. Answering "Yes" to question 1a will result in the application being awarded the maximum amount of points that can be earned for the local priority category.	
1a. Is the program application for development of a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) for a TSP prepared Comprehensive Air Quality Management Plan (126)? <u>If answer is "Yes", do not answer any other local level questions.</u> If answer is "No", proceed with evaluation to address the remaining questions in this section.	250

Attachment A

EXAMPLE LOCAL QUESTIONS

For the AQI, States are encouraged to utilize questions that address State and local priorities that are associated with the approved natural resource concerns and questions that encourage use of a “systems approach”. Following are examples of questions that might be utilized for each of the recommended categories.

Examples of questions that address air quality resource concerns are:

- Application will result in annual NO_x reductions of greater than 3 tons/year?
- Application will result in annual NO_x reductions of 2 to 3 tons/year?
- Application will result in annual NO_x reductions of 1 ton/year or less?
- Application will result in on-farm PM₁₀ reductions greater than 80% from existing conditions?
- Application will result in on-farm PM₁₀ reductions between 50% to 79% from existing conditions?
- Application will result in on-farm PM₁₀ reductions of 49% or less from existing conditions.

Examples of questions that address geographic related air quality issues are:

- Application is located within ¼ mile of a public use area such as a school, hospital, senior center, residential area?
- Application is located within ½ mile of a public use area such as a school, hospital, senior center, residential area?

Examples of questions that utilize a systems approach are:

- Application will result in the implementation of 3 planned conservation practices on at least ___ percent of the offered acres resulting in the existence of a conservation system where at least one practice has a positive effect in each of the PM₁₀, PM_{2.5} and Ozone resource concern categories? 60 Points.
- Application will result in the implementation of 2 planned conservation practices on at least ___ percent of the offered acres resulting in the existence of a conservation system where at least one practice has a positive effect in each of the PM₁₀, PM_{2.5} and Ozone resource concern categories? 40 Points.
- Application will result in the implementation of 1 planned conservation practices on at least ___ percent of the offered acres resulting in the existence of a conservation system where at least one practice has a positive effect in each of the PM₁₀, PM_{2.5} and Ozone resource concern categories? 20 Points.

Cost Effectiveness Calculation:

By agency policy, the amount of points associated with the AERT cost efficiency calculation must be 100 points or 10% of total points available. (CPM 440 Part 512.25(A)(2)). States must appropriately adjust the Efficiency Score Multiplier to assure this ranking calculation will account for approximately 10% of the total ranking score.

Screening Criteria Requirements:

The following screening criteria are optional for use to support this initiative. The screening criteria may be adjusted to meet the State needs to prioritize applications for ranking purposes.

Attachment A

**Optional National Air Quality Initiative Screening Criteria Worksheet:
NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

Fiscal Year 2013

A Screening Worksheet must be completed for each eligible EQIP application.

Instructions: This screening worksheet must be completed for each eligible producer applying for EQIP National Air Quality Initiative assistance. Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis; however, application periods are established for purposes of evaluation, ranking, and funding decisions. The goal of this screening tool is to ensure that conservation technical assistance and EQIP program benefits are managed efficiently to address priority conservation needs related to this national initiative. Completion of this worksheet and documentation does not constitute agreement to provide EQIP program benefits nor approval of a program contract. The original screening worksheet should be filed with the applicant case file or EQIP program file and unless the application is determined to be ineligible, the screening priority (high, medium, and low) must be recorded in ProTracts. Upon request, a copy of any completed screening worksheet may be provided to the applicant.			
<u>Detailed Screening Criteria Worksheet – Complete for each eligible EQIP Applicant</u>			
Applicant Name:		County:	
Application No:		Field Office:	
Evaluator Name:		Date:	
Priority Determination for ProTracts – Select One:			
<u>Ineligible Category:</u> The EQIP application is associated with land that is not located within the boundaries of the approved FY 2013 Air Quality Initiative State and County.			Application Status is “Ineligible”
<u>High Priority Category: (If one or more of the following are true)</u> • The application includes practices which will address all three priority natural resource concerns: PM10, PM2.5 and Ozone, and project is located in a County designated by EPA as NAAQS nonattainment for all three pollutants? • The application is for a Comprehensive Air Quality Management Plan Conservation Activity Plan (CAP)?			High Priority Status in ProTracts
<u>Medium Priority Category:</u> The application includes practices which will address two of the three priority natural resource concerns (PM10, PM2.5 and Ozone), and project is located in a County designated by EPA as NAAQS nonattainment for both addressed resource concerns?			Medium Priority Status in ProTracts
<u>Low Priority Category:</u> All other applications			Low Priority Status in ProTracts

The priority determination of high, medium or low must be recorded in ProTracts for this applicant.

D.C. Approval:		Date Approved:	
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Attachment A

4. Additional Initiative Guidance:

a. Fund Management:

When States are notified that AQI funds have been distributed to ProTracts, States shall then reallocate their AQI funds to the nationally established sub account "Air Quality National." Funds may not be distributed to the County level until after evaluation and ranking of applications has been completed for the entire State.

If States are unable to obligate all of the allocated AQI funds in approved non-attainment counties, STCs may request approval from the Deputy Chief for Programs, to use remaining unobligated funds in other counties to address specifically cited state or local air quality regulations. If AQI funds cannot be used to address air quality resource concerns, the STC shall return the excess funds to the national office through an allowance change. STCs may add additional regular EQIP funds to the AQI fund account, but none of the AQI funds may be reallocated to support other accounts or program priorities.

b. Previous FY 2012 AQI Energy Resource Concern:

Last fiscal year, the AQI included opportunities to address energy conservation. Practices and resource concerns associated with energy conservation have been removed from the FY 2013 AQI and should be addressed through the National On-Farm Energy Initiative.