



Natural Resources Conservation Service
375 Jackson Street, Suite 600
St. Paul, MN 55101-1854

Phone: 651-602-7900 Fax: 651-602-7914

To Be Sent Via Electronic Mail

April 19, 2004

MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 300-04-25

SUBJECT: LTP – EQIP – 2004 NRCS/FSA Coordination

Purpose. To authorize signing of EQIP contracts and inform offices of forthcoming FSA/NRCS joint memorandum for FY 2004.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2004

The 2004 FSA/NRCS joint memorandum of National, Regional, State and local responsibilities for EQIP is in the process of being finalized and will be issued to all FSA and NRCS offices shortly. This bulletin summarizes significant changes in the agencies roles, addresses the FSA administrative county issue, and authorizes the Designated Conservationist to begin signing the FSA CCC-1200 as described below.

Significant FSA/NRCS items to note:

- **Bankruptcy** provisions; in general FSA should be aware of producers in bankruptcy and follow the procedures described. In cases where the producer's only involvement with USDA is through EQIP and NRCS becomes aware of a bankruptcy, the DC should immediately notify the local FSA office and state NRCS office.
- **Applications** should go to the FSA administrative county to determine person eligibility within 5 days of accepting the application. FSA should process the application and return it within 10 days.
- CED's and DC's should meet regularly to review and reconcile the obligated dollars in Protracts versus FSA's system 36.
- Spells out the processing options for **CCC-1245's** where the extent performed is either more or less than extent approved.
- The completed **Protracts CCC-1245** must always be stapled to the corresponding FSA CCC-1245 when submitted to FSA for payment.
- The participant's signature and the designated conservationist's signature must be on a **FSA system-generated CCC-1200** for the contract to be complete. FSA will accept only FSA generated CCC-1200's with all appropriate approval signatures to record obligations and make the contract official.
 - ❖ **With this bulletin, Designated Conservationists may now proceed to sign contracts in Block 11 of the FSA generated CCC-1200, and change the application from approved to signed contract in Protracts.**
- NRCS will spot check **limited resource and beginning farmers** according to program policy to be supplied.
- Changes in **county allocations** need to be communicated through FSA as well as being recorded in Protracts.
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In Minnesota, the state office has provided FSA state office with a listing of county EQIP allocations effective 4/14/04. FSA state office will only change the FSA county allocation based on instructions from the NRCS state office. The NRCS state office will monitor allocation changes in Protracts and update the state FSA office every 2 weeks. Additional dollars will not be available on the FSA office ledger until a reallocation has been made by the FSA state office.

FSA administrative county: It is necessary that the correct FSA administering county for each contract is used in order to correctly match participants and obligations in the FSA system 36. When adding a new applicant, the Protracts Applicant Info pop-up screen has been modified to automatically enter the FSA administrative county. When a person operates in more than one county the correct FSA administering county will need to be selected. For applications already entered, where there is only one choice, the FSA administering county has already defaulted in. Where the person operates in multiple counties, the administering county will be blank. By selecting the Applicant Info tab you can modify this information. Your local FSA office should be able to tell you the administering county for the participant. For applications with multiple participants, the person marked as Decision Maker will display as the administering county.

When the FSA administering county is different than the physical location of the land:

1. The DC shall mail or fax the application to the FSA administering office.
2. The FSA office shall enter the application into system 36 and determine person eligibility.
3. For eligible persons, the FSA would generate a CCC-1200 and provide to the NRCS servicing office.
4. When this FSA CCC-1200 is signed by all parties, the NRCS shall provide a copy to the FSA administering county for their processing into system 36 and finalizing obligation of contract dollars.
5. At the same time, the DC should send an email with the person's name, EQIP dollar amount, and the FSA administering county to Sid Cornelius in the state office. This is necessary to insure the correct dollars are transferred within FSA.

Questions should be directed to your Assistant State Conservationist (FO) or through the SO to Tim Koehler, Assistant State Conservationist.

WILLIAM HUNT
State Conservationist

DIST: AC
DC
ARC
EQIP State Office Team