



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

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**Transmitted via Email**

January 31, 2007

MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 300-7-11

SUBJECT: LTP – EQIP SIGN-UP STATUS AND TIMELINE

Purpose. To provide information and timelines for 2007 EQIP.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2007.

January 31, 2007 is the initial cut-off for accepting EQIP applications to be scored and ranked for potential funding. As of January 30, there were over 860 applications entered statewide into Protracts. In 2006, Minnesota funded 1500 contracts. A second scoring period will be held with a cut-off date of February 23, 2007. As per EQIP policy (440-CPM-515.80), applications should always be accepted on a continuing basis throughout the year.

**For applications using the funds of Ground & Surface Water Conservation (GSWC), American Indian statewide tribal, Drought Assistance, or New Immigrant Farmer initiative:**

1. Select the appropriate Fund Code in the ProTracts application screen.
2. Complete the Protracts entry, upload the plan, and complete the ranking of these special funds by close of business, **February 6, 2007**.
3. On February 7, the state office will check the rankings and select for approval the priority applications for each of these funds. Field offices will be notified of status of the applications. Those applications not selected due to lack of funds will be switched to the county's general fund code by the state office and then can be re-ranked by the field office to compete with all other applications.

**GSWC funds** are available to ALL offices. As in past years, the top priority will be to fund applications for conversion of existing center pivots to low pressure systems. If funds remain, applications seeking ONLY 449, Irrigation Water Management incentive may also be approved with GSWC funds.

**Drought Assistance funds** are available only to the drought counties as designated by the state and only to applicants also receiving state of Minnesota drought funds.

**American Indian statewide tribal funds** are available to all offices. Follow your ASTC's policy regarding these applications.

**New Immigrant Farmer initiative funds** are available to all offices. See the attachment for definition of New Immigrant Farmer.



**All first cut-off applications must be entered in Protracts by February 9, 2007.**

Once all applications are in Protracts, continue with scoring and ranking of first round applications. Select applications for potential contracts and change their status in Protracts to 'Approved' to commit 100% of available funds. Do not hold back funds for potential applications in the second scoring period. Applications scoring 0 points in the national issues of the ranking tool are low priority applications and not eligible for funding.

The national goal is to have all 'Approved' applications selected and recorded in Protracts by March 15, 2007. Based on the level of approved applications, NHQ may then reallocate surplus EQIP dollars between states.

**All second cut-off applications must be entered in Protracts by March 8, 2007.**

**Select and record as 'PreApproved' or 'Approved' applications for your county by March 8, 2007, to commit available funds.** Any un-funded applications from the first scoring period should compete equally against applications taken in the second scoring period.

**Complete plan development and record 'Signed Contracts' in Protracts by May 15, 2007 for all Approved applications. Funds not obligated to a signed contract by this date will be reallocated either to the next ranked application in that county or to another county as reallocated by the ASTC (FO).** The national goal is to have all EQIP contracts signed and obligated in Protracts by June 1, 2007.

The state office will continue to monitor the entered applications, Approved applications, and Signed Contracts in Protracts to ensure adequate progress toward the national goals. ASTC(FO)'s should continue to administer EQIP funds in their areas, reallocate funds as needed, ensure PRS goals are being considered, and keep the state office informed of their status.

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

WILLIAM HUNT  
State Conservationist

Attachment (1)

DIST: AC  
DC  
ARC  
MN.EQIP  
Program Specialists

## New Immigrant Agricultural Producer

1. A New Immigrant Agricultural Producer is defined as:
  - A person actively engaged in farming in the United States and producing agricultural products for 10 years or less;
  - A legal immigrant from a country other than the United States. Foreign individuals and members of foreign entities are eligible for EQIP but must obtain and provide to NRCS a Federal Identification Number; and,
  - Must produce an agricultural commodity on an eligible land use (per EQIP Manual).
  
2. All EQIP rules and policies must still be followed. This includes control of the land for the period covered by the contract and if eligible, up to 90 percent cost-share if the applicant is a Limited Resource Producer. The applicant must also be in SCIMS.