

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
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To Be Sent Via Email

September 10, 2007

MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 300-7-27

SUBJECT: LTP – EQIP – 2008 PROGRAM

Purpose. To initiate the 2008 EQIP and Local Work Group process.

Expiration Date. December 1, 2007

NRCS District Conservationists will again use Local Work Groups (LWG) as part of the locally-led process to formulate and implement a local Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 EQIP program. As in 2007 the national ranking tool will be used by all states. The draft Minnesota statewide template for this ranking tool is attached and is based on the 2007 ranking tool. The ranking tool will be adjusted to reflect local priority issues as documented on the attached LWG worksheet. Starting the locally-led process now will prepare offices to implement the ranking tool and facilitate an EQIP signup this fall.

Across the state, many organizations and individuals continue to express interest in participating in LWGs. To facilitate participation, Minnesota will again post the schedule for all local listening sessions and LWG meetings on the Minnesota NRCS web site. Remember that while the LWG membership is restricted to government representatives, public input is still allowed and desired.

For 2008 we have not established a cut-off date for scoring and ranking applications. Neither do we have the 2008 EQIP Practice Payment Docket finalized. Nevertheless, offices can and should proceed to establish the foundation of their 2008 EQIP. Offices should expect the 2008 EQIP to be very similar to the 2007 EQIP.

**2008 EQIP Groundwork Action Items:**

**1. Gather comments from field and areas for 2008 policies and cost-share docket.**

Comments have already been provided and work begun.

**2. Establish dates for, and inform your Area office of, your listening session and LWG meeting**

**dates.** As soon as you and your SWCD have set dates for your listening session and LWG meeting, email the time, location, and date of those meetings to Susan Ploetz, [susan.ploetz@mn.usda.gov](mailto:susan.ploetz@mn.usda.gov) to be posted to the web site. Each county's LWG meeting date should be posted a minimum of two weeks in advance.

**3. Conduct local listening sessions in September 2007.**

Field offices coordinate with SWCD to gather local input on resource concerns and priorities. Also, attached is an optional resources concerns survey developed in Swift County that can be used for mailings to land users and other interested parties in your county.

**4. Hold LWG meetings.**

The goal is to have LWG meetings completed by October 14, 2007. Again, coordinate with your SWCD. Have local input or listening sessions prior to, or in conjunction with

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the LWG meetings. Determine, prioritize, and record the local resource concerns that EQIP will address.

- 5. Complete the attached LWG worksheet and send to your ASTC (FO).** Review the attached sample worksheet for example local questions and instructions. Review the draft state template to see how the total tool looks. The locally developed questions will be incorporated into the county ranking tool. Each county will have its own ranking tool.
- 6. Receive training on the 2008 EQIP ranking tool and the 2008 EQIP.** This training is tentatively scheduled for mid October.
- 7. November 1, 2007** is the state goal to have the all county ranking tools in place and ready for use in the 2008 sign-up process. Depending on the availability of funds, a late fall or early winter EQIP scoring period will be scheduled for Minnesota.

Questions should be directed to your ASTC(FO) or from the area level to Tim Koehler, Assistant State Conservationist or Sid Cornelius, Resource Conservationist.

/s/

WILLIAM HUNT  
State Conservationist

Enclosures (4)

DIST: ASTC (FO)  
DC  
ARC  
Program Specialists  
EQIP State Office Team