

## **PART 409 - Conservation Planning Policy**

### **409.11 Minimum Standards for Providers of Conservation Technical Assistance Associated with Conservation Planning that includes Pest Management.**

- (a) NRCS roles in pest management are:
- (1) Evaluating environmental risks associated with probable pest management recommendations.
  - (2) Developing appropriate mitigation alternatives to minimize environmental risks.
  - (3) Assisting clients to adopt Integrated Pest Management (IPM) that helps protect natural resources.
  - (4) Assisting clients to develop and implement an acceptable pest management component of their overall conservation plan.
- (b) The State Conservationist must ensure that all NRCS personnel who provide technical assistance for pest management are properly trained and meet applicable requirements for their positions as well as State or local licensing and/or certification requirements. In addition, the State Conservationist must establish a process to provide continuing education to maintain employee competency.
- (c) Although certification is not required to develop or revise pest management components of conservation plans, all persons who approve pest management components of conservation plans must be certified specialists in pest management. A certified conservation planner as required by [GM-180, Paragraph 409.3\(b\)](#) will approve the overall conservation plan.
- (d) The State Conservationist must establish a program to certify specialists who approve pest management components of conservation plans, including:
- (1) NRCS employees
  - (2) Volunteers
  - (3) Employees of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and State Conservation agencies that have requested to participate.
- (e) The State Conservationist may establish a program to certify third party vendors and other private sector individuals such as certified crop advisors and crop consultants. Existing programs from national certifying organizations, land grant universities, Cooperative State Research Education, and Extension Service, State government

agencies and other appropriately qualified entities may be utilized as components of the NRCS certification program in a State.

(f) In addition, the State Conservationist must establish a process to provide continuing education to maintain certification for all specialists who approve pest management components of conservation plans.

(g) The State Conservationist must address the following in establishing a program for certifying specialists who approve pest management components of conservation plans:

- (1) An understanding of the conservation planning process.
- (2) An understanding of the production systems where pest management will be applied.
- (3) An understanding of local, State, and Federal laws and regulations related to pest management.
- (4) An understanding of natural resource concerns related to pest management activities.
- (5) An awareness of the content of NRCS pest management policy.
- (6) An understanding of the content and use of the NRCS FOTG.
- (7) Proficiency in applying the NRCS pest management standard ([FOTG Practice Code 595](#)).

(h) For items 1 through 7 listed above, the State Conservationist must determine how competency will be demonstrated. The following are minimum requirements:

- (1) Successful completion of “[NRCS Conservation Planning Modules One through Five](#)” or equivalent.
- (2) Successful completion of the “NRCS Introduction to Water Quality Course” or equivalent.
- (3) Successful completion of the pest management track of the NRCS “[Nutrient and Pest Management Considerations in Conservation Planning](#)” course or equivalent.
- (4) Demonstrated skill in using the Windows Pesticide Screening [Tool \(WIN-PST\)](#) and/or other appropriate pest management environmental risk screening tools.
- (5) Demonstrated skill in developing the pest management component of a conservation plan based on the State Pest Management ([FOTG Practice Code 595](#)) conservation practice standard.