

## ROUND 23

### AG NONPOINT SOURCE ABATEMENT & CONTROL GRANT PROGRAM

#### PROPOSAL RATING SHEET

The State Committee shall give additional points to proposals that address waterbodies with an active TMDL or those included in the most recent New York State 303(d) List of Impaired Waters Requiring a TMDL, where the source of the impairment is agriculture, and the project will contribute to restoration of water quality. **OR** To proposals that address sources of public drinking water as identified on the NYS Department of Health Source Water Assessment Program (SWAP).  
**(4 points awarded to aggregated score)**

The State Committee shall also give additional points to projects proposed to exclude livestock (access control) from watercourses and/or implement conservation buffers on all participating farms in the proposal. Points will be awarded on a graduated scale according to the following:

- Access Control, NRCS Standard 472 = 2 Points awarded to the aggregate proposal score
- Access Control + Herbaceous Buffer, NRCS Standard 390 = 3 Points to the aggregated score
- Access Control + Forest Buffer, NRCS Standard 391 = 4 Points to the aggregated score
- To receive conservation buffer points on cropland and/or pasture, where access control of livestock is not applicable, 3 points will be awarded to the final aggregated score for implementing Herbaceous Buffers, NRCS Standard 390 on all participating farms
- To receive conservation buffer points on cropland and/or pasture, where access control of livestock is not applicable, 4 points will be awarded to the final aggregated score for implementing Forest Buffers, NRCS Standard 391 on all participating farms

\* For the purpose of awarding preference points, if all farms commit to implement a range of eligible conservation buffer systems but not all commit to the highest level of conservation buffers, the points will be awarded based on the buffer system with the fewest amount of points available. *For example, if there are four farms on the proposal and two commit to implement Herbaceous Buffers, NRCS Standard 390 and two farms commit to implement Forest Buffers, NRCS Standard 391, then three points will be awarded to the final aggregated score. For another example, if there are four farms on the proposal and three commit to implement Forest Buffers, NRCS Standard 391, and one farm does not commit to install any of the above listed practice systems, then no additional points will be awarded to the final aggregated score.*

**Consideration will also be given to the following factors in rating proposals:**

**1. Project Clearly Addresses Identified Need or Opportunity (Maximum Score = 20 points)**

- Watershed analysis has already been conducted to document the pollutants of concern and likely nonpoint sources of that pollution in the watershed.
  - Watershed analysis has been done to prioritize the farms and is consistent with AEM concepts and approach outlined in the AEM Guide.
  - BMP selection is based on an AEM Strategic Plan, a watershed analysis, an AEM Tier 2 environmental risk assessment and a Tier 3A Conservation Plan for the agricultural pollutant source(s) being addressed on the PWL sheet, management plan or program, or as designated in the aquifer or wellhead protection area source summary sheet.
  - The project addresses objectives outlined in a watershed based management plan with a documented agricultural water quality concerns..
  
- Project addresses a significant identified need or opportunity.
  - Project proposes to implement BMPs on farms that are not Repeat BMP Systems.
  - The project addresses the objectives and goals outlined in the County AEM Strategy.
    - The priority planning unit strategy is summarized and the project will address the water quality and/or aquatic habitat problem(s) described.
  - Agriculture is a verified source of pollution identified by the PWL, SWAP or local watershed analysis.
  - The impacted waterbody is included on the most recent New York State Section 303(d) List of Impaired Waters Requiring a TMDL and agriculture has been identified as a source of pollutants.
  - Selected BMPs are needed to address preventative pollution concerns or compliance issues and the need is well **documented**.
    - If the watershed is not documented by the PWL or other study as having an impairment, the environmental risk and opportunity to prevent water quality degradation is explained and well documented.
  - Project proximity to the water resource being addressed suggests close relationship between impairment of water resource and potential pollutant source.
  - Selected BMPs are needed to implement CNMPs for compliance with the SPDES Permit.
  - Selected BMPs are needed to protect groundwater due to karst topography and vulnerability to contamination.
  - There is good documentation of the problem in the proposal narrative, maps, photos, and other supporting documents and proposed plans or BMPs will address the problem identified.

- Project addresses public drinking water quality impairments or protection.
  - Agricultural pollution prevention or remediation activities are being undertaken to protect a public drinking water supply (surface or ground water).
- Project will assist in meeting federal and state water quality laws and program requirements (e.g. CWA, SDWA, CZARA, Farm Bill, CREP, and SWAP).

**2. Adequate Scope of Work and Time Frame** (Maximum Score = 10 points)

- The feasibility of the project is clearly demonstrated.
  - Project proposal is comprehensive, coordinated and integrated and uses an interdisciplinary team of public and/or private sector professionals to maximize the ability to develop Tier 3 plans or engineer and implement Tier IV BMPs.
  - Project proposal includes engineering/technical services commensurate with BMP deliverables.
  - There is demonstrated experience and ability of the sponsor and project staff to undertake the proposed activity.
  - If the sponsor has multiple open grants from past funding cycles, the application clearly defines the capacity of the District to complete proposed activities.
  - Sponsor has demonstrated the ability to complete past projects in a timely manner.
  - Sponsor has demonstrated the ability to fulfill program report requirements.
  - Project deliverables are clearly defined and consistent with program objectives. Proposal clearly defines what is to be done, how it will be done, who will do it and when it will be done.
- The project is consistent with other activities in the project area
  - Project is consistent with, or in cooperation with, other watershed planning and/or implementation activities in the project area (e.g., CREP) or is part of a phased effort to address agricultural nonpoint sources in the watershed.
- Project implements best management practices.
  - A higher level of planning than what is required has been completed. (e.g. a complete farmstead plan, field level Resource Management System, Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan, Whole Farm Plan.)
  - Preliminary design work has been completed.
  - The project will encourage the adoption of additional BMPs in the watershed beyond what the grant will be funding. For example, a BMP that demonstrates a practice not widely used in an area that could encourage replication on nearby farms.

- BMPs to be installed are listed in the Agricultural Best Management Practice Systems Catalogue.

**3. Evidence of local support is documented. Examples of evidence may include:**

(Maximum Score = 2 points)

- The SWCD has rated this proposal as one of their highest priorities.
- A multi-county approach is utilized if the watershed encompasses more than one county, and all counties have agreed to participate
- A Watershed Agricultural Advisory Committee has been established and the project meets the goals of the committee.
- Implementation projects proposed for funding are located on agricultural lands that have been permanently protected from conversion to non-farm development by perpetual conservation easements.
- Local AEM Stakeholders have a role in developing and carrying out this project.

**4. Project is Cost Effective**

(Maximum Score = 8 points)

- Evidence of Landowner/Operator Support is documented
  - Landowner provides a sufficient match in cash or in-kind services, especially if requesting a substantial amount of State grant funds.
  - Landowner provides, for implementation projects at Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), a contribution from the owner or operator significantly greater than that required by law.
  - Landowner provides, for BMP implementation projects intended to prevent pollution from farm expansion, a contribution from the owner or operator significantly greater than that required by the program.
- The cost effectiveness of the project is demonstrated.
  - Plans to be prepared or BMPs to be implemented are cost effective relative to the expected water quality benefit.
  - Project proposes to implement agronomic, and/or vegetative BMPs that are cost effective relative to the expected water quality benefit.
  - Estimated time to complete and hourly rates being charged for equipment, administrative or technical/engineering services are reasonable. (E.g. reflect average costs documented in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide; administrative, technical, and engineering services reflect an appropriate percentage of the total project cost).

- Equipment purchases, if needed, are kept to a minimum.
- Capital equipment, if needed, is leased whenever possible.
- The project contains additional matching funds above the minimum required or leverages additional funding (e.g. local, EQIP, CREP, CRP, EPA 319, etc.), especially if requesting a substantial amount of State grant funds.