

Climate Resilient Farming

Round 2

FINAL Questions and Answers—last updated 12/5/2016 (new questions begin at #14)

- 1. We have funded a study which, using real samples, has identified specific point sources of nutrients going into a watershed. We would like to fund soil tests for those specific areas in order for the farmers to reduce their inputs to the fields directly contributing to the stream points identified. Can these soil tests be funded through the grant?**

Soil health testing is an eligible *component* of a Track 3 (Soil Health) project.

However, all CRF projects must be focused on implementing practice systems that will mitigate GHG emissions and enhance resilience to the impacts of climate change. Projects may not be solely focused on research, and they must be tied to climate change.

The project as described in the question appears to be focused on research rather than implementation, and water quality rather than climate change, and is therefore ineligible.

- 2. Is this grant like the Agricultural Non-Point Source Grant, that the farm is eligible to plant cover crops for three consecutive years or is it just for one year?**

Yes, cover crop grants are for three years. Details on cover crops are found on page 19 of the RFP packet. Here is some of the information, refer to the RFP for more details:

Cover Crop Policy

Cover Crop projects will be cost-shared for a three year term. Farmers must be prepared to implement the practice for three seasons. Farms must have participated in AEM Tier 3 (AEM 3A Cover Crop Tool through Part 1, AEM 3A Cropland Conservation Plan, AEM 3A Nutrient Management Plan, or AEM 3B CNMP) prior to application to the Climate Resilient Farming program.

Once the project is awarded, Parts 2 and 3 of the AEM Tier 3 Cover Crop Tool (or equivalent as part of an existing plan) must be completed each year of the contract. The Annual Cover Crop Plan/Design (Part 2) shall be completed annually with producers in time to provide field-by-field recommendations to properly establish the cover crops. The Annual Cover Crop Evaluation (Part 3) shall be completed with the producer after establishment, but before termination of the cover crop.

- 3. Are there any bonus or penalty points, like there are for AgNPS?**

No. Please refer to the RFP for more information.

- 4. Are farmers eligible to apply directly?**

No. Soil and Water Conservation Districts are the only eligible applicants, and they apply on behalf of the farmers. Please refer to the RFP for more information.

- 5. Are systems that have already been installed eligible for retroactive payments?**

No. Only new projects are eligible.

6. When, roughly, will the contracts be ranked and awarded? Will it precede the 2017 construction season?

The expected timeline for CRF Round 2 is as follows:

- *RFP due*: December 12, 2016
- *RFPs reviewed for eligibility, any missing required components submitted, and sent to reviewers*: end of Dec
- *Pre-review meeting with evaluators*: mid-January
- *Scores due and post-review meeting with evaluators*: end of February
- *Ranked list approved by SWCC*: March SWCC meeting
- *Awards announced*: April
- *Contracts executed*: July/August

The contracts should be ranked and awarded by spring 2017, but contracts may not be executed until late summer. We anticipate the start date of the contract being the award date, however, any work done prior to the contract being executed is at the risk of the District.

7. What “practice system” can we use to install a pond and or spring development for increasing water storage capacity on the farm for watering confined livestock? The farm has used a drilled well and an existing pond to meet its historical water needs but this year those sources were not sufficient.

There are full details and a list of the practice systems and BMP components in the Guidance Documents (Appendices A – C) at the end of the RFP, page 11-19. Details for Track 2 Water Management can be found on pages 14-15.

Eligible systems for pond or spring development include Erosion and Sediment Control Systems and Irrigation Water Management Systems, and Proscribed Rotational Grazing Systems. BMP components include but are not limited to Pond (NRCS 378), Water and Sediment Control Basins (NRCS 350, 638), Dam (NRCS 410), and Diversion (NRCS 362), alternative water supply (spring development NRCS 574).

Track 2 projects may also use practices from [New York State Stormwater Management Design Manual](#) chapter five, Green Infrastructure Practices, where applicable. Applications that include such green infrastructure practices should include additional explanation of the goals of the project as reviewers may not be as familiar with non-NRCS BMP components.

For CRF applications to be competitive they must both score points for adaptation to climate change and mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, and should discuss “downstream”/societal benefits beyond the benefits to the individual farm.

Note: This question was discussed at the Nov. 1 State Committee meeting. From the minutes:

The first round of Questions and Answers are available on SharePoint and the Department website. Question #7, regarding water management to support confined livestock, was particularly interesting. While there are practice systems to support irrigation and pasture management, watering confined livestock does not fit easily into one of the practice systems, though it may fit under Barnyard/Livestock Heavy Use Area Water/Runoff Management Systems.

For a CRF application to be competitive, it must explain the adaptation and mitigation benefits both to the farm and to the broader society. This can include describing GHG reductions, the water supply the farm used during drought conditions previously and how else that water may be used, whether a pond being developed will have freeboard to support flood resiliency as well as livestock watering, etc. The application should address, in multiple ways, what downstream/societal benefits beyond the farm will accrue as a result of building this system.

8. Are wind machines an eligible practice for funding through CRF? The machines are used to protect the vineyard during extreme cold air events and prevent frost damage.

No. Wind machines do not fit under any of the eligible tracks or practice systems, as detailed in the RFP. In addition, while they may be an important element of adapting to climate change, they do not mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.

9. Is tile drainage an eligible practice for funding through CRF Track 2?

No. Tile drainage may improve soils locally, but the overall drainage system including the outlet points do not enhance resiliency or reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

10. Must CAFO farms be in compliance to be eligible applicants?

Yes. Consistent with AgNPS, all farms must be in compliance with CAFO when they apply. A CAFO farm with a signed DEC consent order agreeing to a compliance schedule qualifies as being in compliance.

If a CAFO is found to be out of compliance after the application was submitted, the contract process will be halted and the District will be advised not to undertake further work on the farm until the issue is resolved. If this occurs within the context of a multi-farm contract, only the farm that is out of compliance will be impacted.

11. Regarding track 2: irrigation water management systems: Irrigation reservoir (NRCS 436) is listed as an acceptable practice, along with other "associated practices." Do those associated practices also include the other elements that are listed in the Ag BMP guide under Irrigation Water Management systems; like irrigation pipeline, sprinkler system, pumping plant and irrigation water management?

Consistent with AgNPS, all projects must complete a full system, not just discrete component practices. However, it is up to the District and farmer which practices are most appropriate to comprise that system. The GHG mitigation and climate resiliency goals must be set, and a complete system must address them, but which components are used to achieve those results depends on the particular farm's situation.

12. What are the requirements for the board resolution? Must there be a separate board resolution for each application? Can you provide a sample resolution?

The CRF Program requires the board to approve, by way of resolution, the submittal of each application. A signed board resolution or copy of the minutes *must be submitted with each application* in order for the whole application to be considered complete. Note: if the resolution covers more than one application, please submit it with each application.

It is also important that if any board member or staff have conflicts of interest, they recuse themselves appropriately (and that there is a quorum remaining, following the recusal). Please attach the minutes of the board meeting that reflect these conflicts and recusals.

Sample resolution: *Be it resolved that [County] Soil and Water Conservation District supports the application of [farm(s)] to the Round 2 Climate Resilient Farming Program, as funded through the Environmental Protection fund, for the purpose of promoting greenhouse gas mitigation and climate resiliency through [BMP systems]. Further, the [County] Soil and Water Conservation District supports District staff in all their efforts related to the application process, and should the project be awarded, to complete the contracting process and fulfil the contract. Let it be resolved that one certified copy of this Resolution be prepared and submitted as part of the application, and let this resolution take effect immediately.*

13. On the application form, questions #15 and #16 are the same. Should one be different?

Yes. This is an error. Question 16 should read “State Contribution.” A corrected version is now available on SharePoint.

If you are using the initial version, please correct it by writing in “state contribution: \$XXXXXX” and answering that question. It should look like this (with your numbers):

15. Total Project Costs: \$ 100,000	16. Total Project Costs: \$ State Contribution: 50,000
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However, any application that handles this error differently will not be penalized in any way.

14. Can we use a different cover crop rate or cost share percentage than what is published in the RFP?

Yes.

To use a different cost share percentage but maintain the same per acre rate, take the rate published in the RFP (set at a 75% cost share rate), multiply it by 1.33 to achieve the full cost, and then use your lower cost share rate. For example, if the rate in the RFP were \$75/acre, the total rate is \$100/acre. To use a 50% cost share rate, the state will contribute \$50/acre and the landowner will contribute \$50/acre. Just note in the narrative that that is why it differs from the typical.

To use a completely different cover crop rate (either above or below the published NRCS rate), you must justify your expenses. You can either explain in the narrative why you need to use a different flat rate, or you can itemize and use receipts and time logs, etc.

15. Would expanding an existing pond to meet the farm’s water needs be eligible for cost-share in Track 2?

Yes.

See question 7 for some more guidance on Track 2 for watering livestock and the need to explain broader societal benefits of such systems.

16. What is the correct “Project ID #” as required in question 9 on the application?

Question #9 contains a blank for filling in the Project ID #. Below is a list, consistent with AgNPS, of Districts in the State in alphabetical order with the first part of the Project ID # (1-58). You can complete the remainder of the ID # on the application form by placing the priority number of each project you submit after the Project ID # which appears on the enclosed sheet. For example, the Project ID # for the #1 priority project in Niagara County would be 30-1.

County	ID #	County	ID #	County	ID #	County	ID #
Albany	1	Franklin	16	Oneida	31	Seneca	46
Allegany	2	Fulton	17	Onondaga	32	Steuben	47
Broome	3	Genesee	18	Ontario	33	Suffolk	48
Cattaraugus	4	Greene	19	Orange	34	Sullivan	49
Cayuga	5	Hamilton	20	Orleans	35	Tioga	50
Chautauqua	6	Herkimer	21	Oswego	36	Tompkins	51
Chemung	7	Jefferson	22	Otsego	37	Ulster	52
Chenango	8	Lewis	23	Putnam	38	Warren	53
Clinton	9	Livingston	24	Rensselaer	39	Washington	54
Columbia	10	Madison	25	Rockland	40	Wayne	55
Cortland	11	Monroe	26	St Lawrence	41	Westchester	56
Delaware	12	Montgomery	27	Saratoga	42	Wyoming	57
Dutchess	13	Nassau	28	Schenectady	43	Yates	58
Erie	14	New York City	29	Schoharie	44	Seneca	46
Essex	15	Niagara	30	Schuyler	45	Steuben	47