

New York Grown and Certified  
Implementation of Agricultural Environmental Management Plans on Specialty Crop Farms

RFP Questions and Answers

**Q:** Is the Department using the USDA definition of Specialty Crops?

**A:** For this RFP, the definition of specialty crop is limited to the following: fruits and vegetables, including mushrooms, and herbs.

**Q:** I am still not clear which farms will qualify as a specialty crop farm for this RFP. I looked at the list of certified GAP farms in NY and saw some farms were audited for corn. This must be sweet corn? My county does not have many GAP certified farms, yet there are many farms that grow “specialty crops” (defined as those listed here [https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/USDA\\_Specialty\\_Crop\\_Definition.pdf](https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/USDA_Specialty_Crop_Definition.pdf) ). If only part of a farm operation involves growing the crops listed in the PDF do they qualify?

**A:** The USDA definition of Specialty Crops is not used for this opportunity because it includes horticulture, nursery and floriculture crops, which are not part of the New York State Grown and Certified Program. If a farm grows a combination of field crops and specialty crops, only BMP systems that address natural resource concerns on the specialty crop acres will be eligible.

**Q:** For employee services such as technician work/assistance, are we billing AEM for this time? Or is this portion coming out of the total 50,000 grant money per farm? Lowering the total 50,000 dollars available for BMPs that the farm wants to implement.

**A:** No, Agricultural Environmental Management Base funding cannot be used for implementing practices funded under this program. Yes, technical assistance would be part of the \$50,000 maximum allowed per farm.

**Q:** Proposal Eligibility: Only farms that produce specialty crops are eligible and the proposed projects must address acreage used for specialty crop production. The Ag BMP Systems Catalogue should be used as guidance for BMP system selection.

Does this mean that if there is a practice/system that isn't listed in the Catalogue it will not be considered for funding? Example: High Tunnel System (NRCS Standard 325) isn't something that would be considered eligible to apply for funding for?

**A:** That is correct.

**Q:** BMP Systems with an annual lifespan such as Soil Conservation – Cultural – Cover Crops that have been previously funded under the AgNPS program or other State funding source are not eligible for consideration under this RFP.

Does this include Irrigation Water Management Systems? I'm unsure if this is something that has

been eligible under other funding sources.
<b>A:</b> Yes, irrigation water management systems are eligible under the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control (AgNPS) grants. If an irrigation water management system was funded with AgNPS funding on a specific field, it would not be eligible for funding through this RFP.
<b>Q:</b> Can the grant be used for Hops?
<b>A:</b> Yes, hops are a specialty crop for this RFP.
<b>Q:</b> The RFP says that proposed projects must be for implementation of an AEM tier 3 plan. What if we have a 5B plan that we want to implement, is that ok?
<b>A:</b> AEM Tier 5B is an evaluation of a plan or a practice. The RFP requires the implementation of a Tier 3 Plan.
<b>Q:</b> Does being part of the Great Lakes Action Agenda count as being in a State Approved Watershed plan?
<b>A:</b> Yes, the Great Lakes Action Agenda is a State Approved Watershed plan.
<b>Q:</b> We have a farmer that has already installed a chemical mixing and storage facility through EQIP funding and now they want to upgrade to a sprayer that is more efficient and more accurately calibrated. Can funds be used to purchase equipment, such as sprayers, to reduce the use of chemicals?
<b>A:</b> Yes, spray equipment, including emitters, is eligible if it is part of an Integrated Pest Management System, identified in a Tier 3 plan. The District must document the reduction of pesticides resulting from this upgrade and that the farmer no longer has use of the original spray equipment.
<b>Q:</b> Is adding smart spray sensor retrofits to existing spray application equipment eligible?
<b>A:</b> Yes, as stated above, spray sensor retrofits are eligible as part of an Integrated Pest Management System.
<b>Q:</b> We are putting together an agrichemical handling facility system. Is a water well an eligible practice? If not, does it count as match since it is a part of the whole system?
<b>A:</b> Yes, a water well is an eligible practice as a component of an agrichemical handling facility system. This practice is also acceptable as a project match.
<b>Q:</b> We have a farmer that is in need of an Agrichemical Storage Facility. I am sending you a link of what we are looking at. Please let me know if this is acceptable for the grant. <a href="http://www.uschemicalstorage.com/agricultural-chemical-storage/">http://www.uschemicalstorage.com/agricultural-chemical-storage/</a>
<b>A:</b> An agrichemical storage unit is eligible as a component of an agrichemical handling facility system. Section 2.3 of the RFP states, "All BMPs proposed for implementation must meet the New York State

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Standards and Specifications; if no NYS NRCS Standards or Specifications exist then the practice must be designed to meet nationally recognized standards. All practices implemented must be approved by an individual with appropriate approval authority". A storage unit does not meet the standard by itself, but may as part of the full system. The Conservation District would need to consult with an engineer to determine if this particular unit is acceptable to use within the system.

**Q:** Can Wildlife Exclusion Fences be applied for through the grant?

**A:** Fencing for natural resource benefits is eligible. Fencing for crop production benefits is not. The Agricultural Best Management Catalog provides guidance on Best Management Systems where fencing would be considered an eligible practice.

**Q:** Can EQIP be used to leverage any of the practices as landowner match?

**A:** Yes, EQIP and other non-State funding sources can be used as match.

**Q:** Can tile drainage be applied for through this grant opportunity?

**A:** Tile drainage, as part of a conservation system, is an acceptable practice.

**Q:** We have a grant applicant interested in putting in Pollinator Conservation and Habitat. Do pollinators qualify for this grant and if so, under what system?

**A:** Habitat improvement for pollinators would be accepted as an eligible natural resource benefit. The practice of conservation cover can be used as part of many systems allowing for multiple benefits, including soil health, which is listed under Soil Conservation System - Cultural. Other systems may also be relevant, depending on the crops produced.

**Q:** We have a farmer who runs a vegetable and grain farm. He would like to purchase and install a Center Pivot Irrigation system in a field. This would be used for vegetables sometimes, but also for grain at other times based on the crop rotation schedule. Would this be eligible for the Grown & Certified grant?

**A:** Implementing conservation systems on acreage that is rotated between specialty crops and field crops is acceptable. Implementing an irrigation system for natural resource benefits is also acceptable as part of an Irrigation Water Management System.

**Q:** I have a vegetable farm that is not expanding his acreage but is expanding his business to include a packing house. Is this considered a farm expansion?

**A:** Yes, adding a packing house is considered an expansion of the farm business.

**Q:** Are we able to use this opportunity to address process water from a small scale vegetable wash line? The producer is looking for a system that will allow him to collect, filter and irrigate the wash

water he will use to wash his produce?

**A:** Yes, Process Wash Water Management System is listed in the Agricultural Best Management Practices Systems Catalog.