United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS
Natural Resources Conservation Service
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Farm Service Agency
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Washington, D.C. 20250

SUBJECT: LTP- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
Key Migration Dates for Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Date: JUL 19 2004

TO: State Conservationists
State Executive Directors

File Code: 300

FROM: Thomas W. Christensen
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Natural Resources Conservation Service

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The Administrator, FSA and Chief, NRCS have signed a Memorandum of Agreement and issued a joint memorandum announcing a commitment to migrate administrative responsibilities for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) from FSA to NRCS by the end of Fiscal (FY) 2004 Year. Preparing for the migration involves significant workload and tight timeframes for both agencies. We are confident that management and staff of both agencies will work closely together at the local, State, and National level to accomplish the migration in a manner that is seamless to the participants and applicants whom we serve.

FSA and NRCS will continue to implement EQIP according to responsibilities outlined in the April 20, 2004, joint memorandum and revised EQIP manual for the remainder of FY 2004. Beginning October 1, 2004, administrative responsibilities for EQIP including recording application and contract data, verifying individual and entity designations, determining EQIP producer eligibility, controlling payment limitation, maintaining allocations, and processing payments will shift to NRCS. EQIP entry capabilities in System 36 will be locked out. FSA will continue to have responsibility for EQIP appeals and for handling Adjusted Gross Income and AD-1026 certification for EQIP applicants.

Key dates and activities affecting State, county, and field operations include:

DATE	AGENCY	ACTION
August 1	NRCS	Complete all status reviews for 1997 - 2003 contracts. Notify participants and FSA of contract terminations or rescheduled practices and extended expiration dates, as appropriate.
August 6	NRCS	Last day to notify National Headquarters (NHQ) of allocation changes
August 12	FSA	Last day CEPD processes CCC-357's for allocation changes
August 13	NRCS	Last day to provide EQIP plan of operations (CPO) to county FSA offices to record in System 36
August 20	NRCS	Last day to submit EOA funding requests to NHQ (national reserves) and to State FSA offices (State reserve or current year funds)
August 25	FSA	Last day CEPD processes CCC-357's for EOA's and State administrative transfers
August 27	FSA	Last day to record CPO and provide System 36-generated CCC-1200 to NRCS for signatures
September 1	NRCS	Last day for NRCS to provide signed EQIP contracts to county FSA offices. Must contain all signatures.
September 1	FSA	All 2004 allocations, EOA funds, and State administrative transfer amounts must be on county ledgers
September 15	FSA	Last day to record contracts, EOA modifications, terminations and related financial transactions, revised practice schedules and expiration dates
September 30	FSA	Last day to issue payments, including EOA payments
September 30	FSA	Last day to take EQIP applications. At COB, run final Applications Received report and CCC-1200 status report and provide both to NRCS.
October 1	FSA	Perform System 36 rollover. Last day to complete transfer of official EQIP files to NRCS.
December 31	FSA	NRCS may consult FSA at county, State, or national level as needed to clarify documentation and/or automated records received from FSA

For questions regarding migration, State NRCS offices should contact Ed Brzostek on 202-720-1834. State FSA offices should contact the following as appropriate:

- Policy questions - Cheryl Butler on 202-720-6304
- Automation questions - Sharon Rafter on 202-690-1612
- Ledger and reconciliation questions - Lynne Winemiller on 202-720-4053