

Delineation of Agricultural Operation (Questions 1-6)

Many participant maps did not include adequate/consistent information on existing or planned enhancements, agricultural lands, incidental parcels (particularly center pivot corners, field borders, linear practices), or other lands (particularly headquarters). This information is a requirement of eligibility and is needed support payments. It would also support a Conservation Stewardship Plan consistent with CPM 518.80.

Evidence of control of the land (Questions 7 & 8)

Documentation of control needs to be consistent with operation acres, or documentation of differences provided. Particular issues include 156ez records which include greater (or smaller) areas than producer delineate on their maps, and lack of documentation of control (the latter being most common on 2004 contracts).

Basic Eligibility Documentation (9-11)

9. Do records show that all cropland used for crop production or considered cropland as part of long-term rotation for 4 out of the last 6 years prior to May 13, 2002?

Documentation universally lacking:

CPM 518.52 (c) requires NRCS make a determination based on available records with regards to land was planted or devoted to crop production for 4 out of 6 years prior to 2002. Include a signed Tech note in each folder assessing this condition, and documenting NRCS determination and how it was made (e.g. NRCS reviewed available producer records, FSA farm records, and previous NRCS records, including HEL plans, and has determined that this condition is met.) If land is determined not to have been farmed, follow listed actions.

10. None of the land in this contract is being custom-farmed by the participant. It appears that the Self-Assessment workbook, if completed and supported by signed benchmark certification statement (2005 only) adequately addresses this requirement.

11. The participant is not a cash-rent landlord or cash-rent owner on any land in this contract.

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Tier Placement Documentation: (Questions 12-14 address Tier 1-3 respectively)

Ideally, this documentation should be supported by a complete Conservation Stewardship Plan as described in detail in 518.80 (CPM). **Such plans were universally absent.** Other documentation of Tier and Category placement could include:

- 2004 & 2005: CPM 518 53 & 54 as well as the sign-up announcements list Tier placement requirements. These could be included in a tech note to document NRCS determination of Tier Placement.
- In 2005, the Tier Eligibility Worksheet, developed by NRCS NM, should have been included with all contracts.

Category and Sub-category Placement Documentation:

As with Tier placement, Category and Sub-category placement should ideally be supported by a detailed Conservation Stewardship Plan. In the absence of such a plan, alternative documentation should be provided.

15. *Was the category placement made based on the table for the dominant land use as shown in ProTracts?*

2004 & 2005: The sign-up announcements included CSP Enrollment Category by Land Use and Category. This table with appropriate explanatory notes is required in all contracts.

16. *Were the correct number of unique practices and activities for Soil Quality, Water Quality, and Wildlife Habitat identified?*

- 2004: The Stewardship Practice Lists by land use (from the sign-up announcement) or the Existing and Planned Practice worksheet (by landuse) developed by NRCS NM, should be included with **BOTH** existing and planned practices/activities needed to support category placement listed. If either of these lists was included, generally only existing practices were marked, particularly on Tier 3 contracts.
- 2005: Only existing practices/activities need to be noted (as planned practices were not an eligibility issue). They should be shown on maps and appropriate list from the sign-up list.

17. *Is the subcategory placement correct?*

Two common errors were noted: 1) Sub-category 3 was selected without documentation of “designated status” as defined in the sign-up announcements; 2) Sub-category 1 was selected without corresponding self-certification on the 1200 and/or with only BFR certification (when LRF is the only category that is allowed). Unless FO can produce appropriate designation of a watershed, all applications should be re-categorized into sub-category 12.

Payment Accuracy (Questions 18-23)

As with Tier, category and sub-category placement, payments should ideally be supported by a detailed Conservation Stewardship Plan. In the absence (or perhaps as the first step in producing one) detailed and correct maps should be included. Maps need to correctly identify acres in contract, acres of enhancements, exclusion of land not under producer control and/or in CRP/GRP/WRP. For NRCS NM purposes, and to improve consistency with regard to map/p[ayment accuracy, any discrepancies should be explained via a tech note, with a reference to the note from the maps page. No discrepancies greater than 2% should remain.