

Farm Service Agency, USDA

§ 701.61

§ 701.53 Filing requests.

The county committee shall establish a sign up period for filing cost-sharing requests immediately after the county committee's decision has been made (by the Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations, in cases of drought) to implement the Emergency Conservation Program in the county. Such periods should be at least 30 days in length. Late filed requests may be accepted by the county committee in justifiable cases.

§ 701.54 Approving requests.

County committees will issue practice approvals only when the requested practice has been determined eligible for cost-sharing assistance and the eligible person has indicated he/she is ready to start the practice.

§ 701.55 Pooling agreements.

Pooling agreements may be used on the same basis as provided for in the Agricultural Conservation Program in § 701.18.

§ 701.56 Payment approval.

The county committee is authorized to approve payments not to exceed \$10,000 per person, per disaster. Cost-share assistance in excess of \$10,000 must be approved by the Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations, or designee.

§ 701.57 Other program provisions.

Other provisions of this part as provided for in §§ 701.1 and 701.2 and in the subpart, General Provisions, apply to the Emergency Conservation Program.

Subpart—General Provisions

§ 701.58 Restriction on program eligibility.

The regulations in part 796 of this chapter prohibiting the making of payments to program participants who harvest or knowingly permit to be harvested for illegal use, marijuana or other such prohibited drug-producing plants on any part of the land owned or controlled by them are applicable to these programs.

§ 701.59 Delegation of authority.

No delegation of authority contained in these programs to a State or county committee shall preclude the Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations or designee, from determining any question arising under these programs or from reversing or modifying any determination made by a State or county committee.

§ 701.60 Practice specifications.

(a) Minimum specifications that practices must meet to be eligible for cost-sharing shall be set forth in the county program, or incorporated therein by specific reference to a standard publication or other written document containing such specifications.

(b) Practice specifications shall represent those levels of performance which are needed in order for the practice to be effective in meeting the program objective and which are not in excess of levels for which cost-sharing can be justified.

§ 701.61 Responsibility for technical phases of practices.

The Soil Conservation Service and the U.S. Forest Service are responsible for technical phases of the practice as assigned and such assignment will be specified in State and county programs.

(a) The State conservationist of the Soil Conservation Service may utilize assistance from private, State or Federal agencies in carrying out the assigned responsibilities. No responsibilities will be assigned for counties when the Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations and the Administrator, SCS, determines that it would not be administratively practicable for the Soil Conservation Service to discharge such responsibilities. In such counties, these responsibilities shall be assumed by the county committees. The Soil Conservation Service may utilize to the fullest extent available resources of the State forestry agencies in carrying out assigned responsibilities for practices involving the establishment of wind-breaks or shelterbelts on farmland to prevent wind erosion.

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(b) The U.S. Forest Service is responsible for the technical phases of practices or components of practices involving the planting of trees for forestry purposes and those involving the improving or protecting of a stand of forest trees, as specified in State and county programs. The U.S. Forest Service may utilize the assistance of private, State or Federal agencies in carrying out these assigned responsibilities, but services of State forestry agencies will be utilized to the extent that such services are available.

(c) The technical assistance to be furnished in servicing assigned practices will include, where appropriate, the following technical phases:

(1) Determining whether the practice is needed and practicable;

(2) Selecting the site (if necessary), complying with environmental and cultural regulations, determining the specific measures needed, and performing any required layout work for the practice;

(3) Supervising the installation of the practice if needed to assure conformity with specifications; and

(4) Certifying the extent performed and whether the specifications for the practice have been met. The technical agency shall perform all four phases for all assigned practices in State and county programs, except as may be provided in instructions issued by the Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations.

§ 701.62 Items of cost on which rates of cost-sharing may be based.

Except as otherwise provided by the specific FSA procedural handbooks, notices, and regulations, the cost of any direct and significant factor in the performance of a practice may be considered in establishing the rate of cost-sharing for the practice.

§ 701.63 Handbook, bulletins, instructions, and forms.

The Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations is authorized to prepare and issue handbooks, bulletins, instructions, and forms, required in administering these programs. Copies of handbooks, bulletins, instructions and forms, containing detailed information on these programs as they apply to spe-

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cific States, counties, areas, farms, ranches and other eligible ownerships, will be available in the office of the State committee and the office of the county committee.

§ 701.64 Opportunity for requesting cost-shares.

Farmers, ranchers, eligible landowners, or eligible persons, regardless of race, sex, religion, color, or national origin, shall be given an opportunity to request that the Federal Government share in the cost of those practices they consider to be needed on their farm, ranch, or other eligible land. The county committee shall direct the available funds for cost-sharing to those practices where cost-sharing is considered most essential to the accomplishment of the program objective.

§ 701.65 Repair, upkeep and maintenance of practices.

Cost-sharing is not authorized for repairs or for normal upkeep or maintenance of any practice.

§ 701.66 Public benefits when installing practices.

Persons responsible for any aspect of performing practices are to be encouraged to install the practices in such a way to promote public benefits by improving or preserving environmental quality and ecological balance by preventing or abating pollution and other environmental degradation; benefiting the community by such means as preserving open space, or enhancing the appearance of the area; benefiting wildlife and other desirable life forms; preserving historic, archeological, or scenic sites, wetlands, ecologically critical areas and prime farmlands; avoiding the creation of hazards to persons or animals and avoiding actions that may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species and flood plains.

§ 701.67 Payments for uncompleted practices.

Cost-shares approved under these programs will not be considered as earned until all components of the approved practice are completed in accordance with applicable specifications and program provisions. Cost-shares