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(5) Approve applicants' water quality plans and revisions.

[45 FR 14009, Mar. 4, 1980, as amended at 46 FR 29454, June 2, 1981; 59 FR 60299, Nov. 23, 1994]

§ 700.6 Officials not precluded from exercising authority.

Nothing in these regulations shall preclude the Secretary; Administrator, FSA; NCC; or Deputy Administrator, State and County Operations, FSA; from administering any or all phases of the RCWP programs delegated to the LCC, County ASC Committee, SCC, State ASC Committee or any employee(s) where the committee or employee fails to perform a function required in these regulations. In exercising this authority either the Secretary, Administrator, FSA, or Deputy Administrator, FSA, may delegate a person or persons to be in charge with full authority to carry out the program or other function(s) without regard to the LCC, ASC committee(s), or employee(s) for such period of time as is deemed necessary.

[59 FR 60299, Nov. 23, 1994]

Subpart B—Project Authorization and Funding

§ 700.10 Applicability.

The RCWP is applicable in project areas that meet the criteria for eligibility contained in § 700.12 and are authorized for funding by the Secretary.

§ 700.11 Availability of funds.

(a) The allocation of funds to the County ASC Committee(s) in a project area is to be made on the basis of the total funds needed to carry out the approved project.

(b) The obligation of Federal funds for RCWP contracts with participants is to be made on the basis of the total contract costs.

§ 700.12 Eligible project areas.

(a) Only those project areas which reflect the water quality priority concerns developed through the established water quality management program planning process and have identified agricultural nonpoint source water quality problems are eligible for au-

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thorization under RCWP. Only those critical areas or sources of pollutants significantly contributing to the water quality problems are eligible for financial and technical assistance.

(b) An RCWP project area is a hydrologically related land area. Exceptions may be made for ease of administration, or to focus on concentrated critical areas. To be designated as an RCWP project area eligible for authorization, the area's water quality problems must be related to agricultural nonpoint source pollutants, including but not limited to, sediment, animal waste, irrigation return flows, runoff, or leachate that contain high concentrations of nitrogen, phosphorus, dissolved solids, toxics (pesticides and heavy metals), or high pathogen levels.

§ 700.13 Project applications.

Existing and subsequent project applications submitted for consideration must contain adequate information on each item specified in § 700.14. Instructions on such information requirements will be issued by the Administrator, FSA. Opportunity will be provided prior to final approval of a project for the LCC and the SCC, in consultation with the Governor, through the applicable County and State ASC Committees, for modification necessary to bring them into conformance with the provisions of these regulations.

§ 700.14 Review and approval of project applications.

(a) In reviewing applications and recommending priorities, the NCC will consider the following:

(1) Severity of the water quality problem caused by agricultural and silvicultural related pollutants, including:

(i) State designated uses of the water affected.

(ii) Kinds, sources, and effects of pollutants.

(iii) Miles of stream or acres of water bodies affected, extent of groundwater contamination.

(2) Demonstration of public benefits from the project, including:

(i) Effects on human health.

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(ii) Population benefited by improved water quality.

(iii) Effects on the natural environment.

(iv) Additional beneficial uses of the waters that result from improvement of the water quality.

(3) Economic, and technical feasibility to control water quality problems within the life of the project, including:

(i) Size of the area and extent of BMPs needed.

(ii) Cost per participant and cost per acre or source for solution of problem.

(iii) Cost effectiveness of BMPs.

(iv) Adequacy of planned actions to meet the project's objectives.

(4) Suitability of the project for the experimental RCWP in the testing of programs, policies and procedures for the control of agricultural non-point source pollution, including:

(i) A project representative of a geographic area with significant water quality problems.

(ii) The potential of the project for monitoring and evaluation, including existing base line data.

(5) State, local and other input in the project area, including:

(i) Funds for cost-sharing general monitoring and technical assistance.

(ii) Commitment of local leadership to promote the program.

(iii) Commitment of farmers and ranchers to participate in RCWP.

(6) The project's contribution to meeting the national water quality goals taking into consideration of other major sources of pollutants which affect the water quality in or near the project area.

(b) Based on the project application, the NCC is to recommend an upper limit of the Federal contribution to the total cost of the project. This includes both BMP cost-share and technical assistance costs.

(c) All project applications will be reviewed by EPA. BMPs approval for funding require EPA concurrence, except that the Secretary may assume EPA's concurrence, if EPA does not act within 15 days following receipt of the request for concurrence.

(d) The Secretary will approve projects for funding taking into consideration the recommendations of the NCC

and consultation with EPA. The Chairperson, State ASC Committee, through the SCC, will assure that involved Federal, State, and local agencies are informed of the project approval.

§ 700.15 Transfer of funds.

(a) Upon approval of a project, the Administrator, FSA, will transfer funds to the State(s) ASC Committee for funding the project. The State committee will transfer funds to the County ASC Committee(s) for the county or counties in an approved project.

(b) FSA will transfer funds to the applicable agency or organization providing specific technical assistance and/or expanded information and education. The transfer will be made on a project by project basis.

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§ 700.16 Termination of project funding.

(a) Based on evidence of failure to accomplish the approved project objectives, including inadequate level of participation, the Administrator, FSA, may issue a termination notice after conferring with the Administrator, EPA, and the NCC.

(b) The State ASC Committee shall give 10-day written notice to the applicable County ASC Committee of intent to terminate project funding. The termination shall establish the effective date of termination and the date for return of funds.

(c) After receipt of a project termination, the County ASC Committee shall not make any new commitments or enter into any new RCWP contracts. Those contracts in force at the time of project termination will remain in force until completed.

Subpart C—Participant's RCWP Contracts

§ 700.20 Eligible land.

RCWP is only applicable to privately owned agricultural lands in approved project areas. Indian tribal lands and lands owned by irrigation districts are eligible lands.