

make eligible cost-share payments upon presentation of an assignment of rights or other evidence that title had passed.

(2) With respect to any and all payments owed to participants who wish to transfer ownership or control of land subject to a cost-share agreement, the division of payment shall be determined by the original party and that party's successor. In the event of a dispute or claim on the distribution of cost-share payments, NRCS may withhold payments without the accrual of interest pending a settlement or adjudication on the rights to the funds.

(b) (1) If such new owners or operators are not willing to assume the responsibilities posed in an existing WHIP cost-share agreement, NRCS shall terminate the cost-share agreement and may require that all cost-share payments may be forfeited, refunded, or both.

(2) The signatories to the cost-share agreement shall be jointly and severally responsible for refunding the cost-share payments pursuant to paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

**§ 636.11 Termination of cost-share agreements.**

(a) The State Conservationist may, by mutual agreement with the parties to the cost-share agreement, consent to the termination of the contract where:

(1) The parties to the cost-share agreement are unable to comply with the terms of the cost-share agreement as the result of conditions beyond their control;

(2) Compliance with the terms of the cost-share agreement would work a severe hardship on the parties to the contract; or,

(3) Termination of the cost-share agreement would, as determined by the State Conservationist, be in the public interest.

(b) If a cost-share agreement is terminated in accordance with the provisions of this section, the State Conservationist may allow the participants to retain any cost-share payments received under the cost-share agreement in a proportion appropriate to the effort the participant has made to comply with the cost-share agree-

ment, or, in cases of hardship, where forces beyond the participant's control prevented compliance with the cost-share agreement.

**§ 636.12 Violations and remedies.**

(a) (1) If NRCS determines that a participant is in violation of a cost-share agreement or documents incorporated by reference into the cost-share agreement, NRCS may give the parties to the cost-share agreement reasonable notice and an opportunity to voluntarily correct the violation within 30 days of the date of the notice, or such additional time as NRCS may allow.

(2) If the participant fails to cure the violation of a cost-share agreement within the period provided under paragraph (a)(1) of this section, NRCS may terminate the agreement and require the participant to refund all or part of any assistance earned under that cost-share agreement, plus interest, as well as require the participant to forfeit all rights for future payment under the agreement.

(b) [Reserved]

**§ 636.13 Misrepresentation and scheme or device.**

(a) A person who is determined by NRCS to have erroneously represented any fact affecting a program determination made in accordance with this part shall not be entitled to cost-share agreement payments and must refund all payments, plus interest as determined by NRCS.

(b) A person who is determined to have knowingly:

(1) Adopted any scheme or device that tends to defeat the purpose of the program;

(2) Made any fraudulent representation; or,

(3) Misrepresented any fact affecting a program determination shall refund to NRCS all payments, plus interest as determined by NRCS, with respect to all NRCS cost-share agreements. The person's interest in all NRCS cost-share agreements may be terminated.

**§ 636.14 Offsets and assignments.**

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, any payment or portion thereof to any person shall be made without regard to questions of

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title under State law and without regard to any claim or lien against the land, or proceeds thereof, in favor of the owner or any other creditor except agencies of the U.S. Government. The regulations governing offsets and withholdings found in part 3 of this title shall be applicable to cost-share agreement payments.

(b) Any person entitled to any cash payment under this program, may assign the right to receive such payments in whole or in part.

**§ 636.15 Appeals.**

(a) Any person may obtain reconsideration and review of determinations affecting participation in this program in accordance with part 614 Part C of this title, except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) In accordance with the provisions of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, Pub. L. 103-354 (7 U.S.C. 6901), the following decisions are not appealable:

(1) Payment rates, payment limits, and cost-share percentages;

(2) The designation of approved wild-life priority areas, habitats or practices;

(3) NRCS program funding decisions;

(4) Eligible conservation practices; and

(5) Other matters of general applicability.

(c) Before a person may seek judicial review of any action taken under this part, the person must exhaust all administrative appeal procedures set forth in paragraph (a) of this section.

**SUBCHAPTER E [RESERVED]**