

Climate Resilient Farming Program  
Round 7 Questions and Answers  
June 22, 2023

**Round 7 Questions**

**Q: Would conversion of diesel irrigation pumps to multiphase electric well pumps for irrigation purposes be eligible?**

A: Irrigation pumps are eligible under Track 2 Adaptation and Resiliency. A water management system aiding the farmer in managing drought, flood, and reduction of GHG emissions would be the most ideal fit for a CRF Track 2 project. A project for just the conversion of the pump, may align better with a program specific to Ag energy listed in the *Other Resources* in this document.

**Q: Are wind machines eligible and what practices would you couple with the equipment?**

A: Frost fans or wind machines are eligible equipment under Track 3 Healthy Soils NY. Soil Health practices in combination with frost equipment is eligible for cost-share. Projects should show how they will reduce GHG emissions and increase resiliency using a frost fan from their current practices for managing frost or extreme temperature. Projects should propose conducting companion soil health practices for frost protection.

**Other Resources**

- **Energy** - <https://agenergyny.org/>
- **Energy Efficiency for Agriculture** - <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/All-Programs/Agriculture-Energy-Audit/Energy-Best-Practices-for-Agriculture>
- **Agri Business Program – electric equipment incentives** - <https://www.nationalgridus.com/Upstate-NY-Business/Energy-Saving-Programs/Agri-business-program>
- **3-phase Power Incentive Program** - <http://www.shovelready.com/ProgramDocuments/3phasePowerIncentive.pdf>

**Q: Are planning and implementation eligible expenses for Precision Feed Management?**

**A:** Use of precision feed management tools, digital technology tools, consultant services, equipment, monitors, etc. are all examples of equipment and services eligible for state cost-share within the [Precision] Feed Management System. The farmer's time implementing [Precision] Feed Management can only be proposed as match; Districts may choose to use the latest EQIP rate for NRCS 592 Feed Management instead of the farmer's actual time/labor costs. Practices should be proposed for a three-year basis. The development of a Precision Feed Management plan is not eligible for cost-share.

**Q: What are the requirements for the purchase of equipment?**

**A:** Per section III.1 of the RFP, State assistance payments may only be used to cover the lease or purchase of equipment that is directly related to the function of the BMPs that are being proposed in the application.

**Q: We have a farm that is interested in a manure separation system and a cover & flare system, but to make this system work they will need 3 phase electric installed. Is the cost of installing the required 3-phase electric system eligible for cost share as part of the application?**

**A:** Yes, 3 phase power is an eligible expense when necessary for the implementation of the proposed practices. Other resources to support 3 phase power can be found here –

**3-phase Power Incentive Program**

<http://www.shovelready.com/ProgramDocuments/3phasePowerIncentive.pdf>

**Q: Regarding manure and fertilizer application equipment, can we just apply for the equipment as identified in the CNMP/NMP, or do we need to show implementation of 590 with the equipment expenses? As an example, if we were applying for variable rate fertilizer equipment, what deliverables would be required to show that this equipment was installed and used by the farm?**

**A:** Per section III.1 of the RFP, State assistance payments may only be used to cover the lease or purchase of equipment that is directly related to the function of the BMP Systems that are being proposed in the application. The farmer's implementation of NRCS 590 Nutrient Management can be proposed as match to the equipment.

Per section VII.3 of the RFP, a final report shall include key details of the completed project, including acres of practices implemented during the three-year project timeframe. Districts are encouraged to work closely with landowners and their key advisors (e.g., planners, consultants) on annual implementation and record keeping so that participants can learn and improve from each year's implementation and that the equipment and practices are used as intended and become a part of regular farm management once projects are completed. Districts may also include additional project deliverables in their contracts with landowners at their discretion.

**Q: What should we be using as a cost for nutrient management 590? NRCS has a payment rate per acre of implementation, can we refer to that? How many years of implementation would be required for the project?**

**A:** Manure and fertilizer application equipment, custom application services, adaptive management and digital technology tools, forage and grain yield monitors, etc. are all examples of equipment and services eligible for state cost-share within the Nutrient Management System (Cultural). The farmer's implementation of NRCS 590 Nutrient Management can only be proposed as match. The District may choose to use the latest EQIP rate for the 590 injection or incorporation practice instead of actual costs. Practices should be proposed for a three-year basis.

**Q: What are the lifespans for installed equipment? If the farm sells this equipment within 5-10 years to upgrade to a new/different system, would they be expected to return money to NYS?**

**A:** Equipment that is funded by the NYS Climate Resilient Farming Program must be maintained and properly operated for the conservation purposes for which the practice/equipment was approved. BMPs and equipment must, at a minimum, be maintained by the Landowner and/or Operator for the lifespan of the applicable NRCS conservation practice. Please refer to the Agricultural Best Management Practice Systems Catalogue for associated NRCS conservation practice life spans.

**Q: I have a farm that already has a tank spreader to surface apply manure. They want to move to injection, but they cannot put the injection toolbar on their current tank spreader. Is the new tank spreader eligible, or only the injection equipment?**

**A:** Yes, equipment is eligible for cost share if the equipment is designed and utilized to implement and further improve the management of rates, source, placement, and timing of plant nutrients and soil amendments while reducing environmental impacts.

**Q: Who can certify that installed or purchased equipment for fertilizer/manure application, yield monitors, or digital technology tools are installed and operating correctly?**

**A:** An equipment dealer or Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) can certify proper equipment calibration and usage.

**Q: If a project includes BMPs Tree/shrub Establishment and Preparation (NRCS 612 and NRCS 660) as part of a silvopasture system, a significant amount of watering and maintenance will be required during the span of the contract (e.g., managing vegetation in between trees and watering trees) to make implementation successful - does that critical maintenance count as part of the BMP implementation? In other words, can the farmer's time doing that work count toward their portion of the cost share, and if so, what are the parameters?**

**A:** Yes, ensuring tree survival is important to the success of the project. Time and supplies for trees is an eligible expense.

**Q: Track 1 eligible practices includes solid separation equipment. Would the building that houses the equipment also be covered?**

**A:** Yes, the necessary structure for the proper operation of the equipment would be eligible for cost-share. Per section III.2 of the RFP, the State will fund up to 80% of the total eligible costs for BMP implementation. Practices found in the Ag BMP Catalogue are eligible practice that could be implemented as a CRF project. There are no limits on project costs however the BMPs to be implemented should be cost effective relative to the expected mitigation/adaptation benefit.

**Q: Would a school with a FFA program be considered urban ag? Our County has a few schools with FFA programs that have talked about urban ag. and community gardens, rooftop farms, hydroponics etc.**

**A:** Per section II.1 of the RFP, an FFA program could be considered urban agriculture if the program includes the cultivation, processing, and distribution of agricultural products in urban and suburban areas.

**Q: Are the rates for no-till \$22/ac. and cover crops \$70/ac. the actual funding rate or is it a percentage of these rates? Is there a limit on the number of acres for cover crops? Is there a limit on the number of years that funds will be provided (3yrs)? Could a farmer try out no-till for 3 yrs with custom planting and then go for cost share on a no-till corn planter after that time?**

**A:** The rates provided in the State Committee's Soil Health Policy are actual rates per acre. There is not a limit to the number of acres a farm may implement. Projects should be planned on a three-year basis. Landowners must complete a contract through the awarded program in its entirety before reapplying for the same component practice.

**Q: For the definition of beginner farmer for the preference points, what does "operated a farm" mean?**

**A:** For the purposes of preference points, the definition of a beginning farmer includes an individual or entity that owned or managed (in control of) the farm, not just worked on a farm.

**Q: Farms are interested in manure injection systems. Is manure injection equipment eligible for funding providing NMP demonstrates benefits (reduced fertilizer, soil health)?**

**A:** Within the Nutrient Management System (Cultural), manure and fertilizer application equipment are eligible for state cost-share and the farmer's implementation of NRCS 590 Nutrient Management can only be proposed as match. The District may choose to use the latest EQIP rate for the 590 injection or incorporation practice instead of actual costs. Practices should be proposed for a three-year basis.

**Q: Are anaerobic digesters and de-packaging equipment for food waste eligible? Could the cover and flare components of an AD fit? The SLS?**

**A:** No, anaerobic digesters and de-packaging equipment are not eligible for cost-share in CRF Round 7. The flare component of an AD and solid/liquid separation equipment are eligible expenses.

**Q: Are permit fees that may be required for BMP system implementation considered eligible costs?**

**A:** These costs could be eligible for state cost-share assistance or eligible for match contribution by the sponsor or landowner.

**Q: In relation to soil compaction, what can be cost shared if farmers convert to a draghose system? Are the items below eligible for cost-share? What is the cost share percentage and are there cost limits?**

- **Frac tank(s)**
- **Manure pump(s)**
- **Drag hose**
- **Injection system**

**A:** Manure and fertilizer application equipment is eligible for up to 80% cost share with state funds if the equipment is designed and utilized to implement and further improve the management of rates, source, placement, and timing of plant nutrients and soil amendments while reducing environmental impacts. An example of an eligible expense would be the suite of equipment necessary to incorporate or inject manure through a draghose system, thereby enabling the farm to advance their Nutrient Management Plan and realize improvements in on-farm nutrient use, a reduction of synthetic fertilizer inputs, improved soil health, etc.

Per section III.2 of the RFP, the State will fund up to 80 % of the total eligible costs for BMP implementation. There are no limits on project costs however the BMPs to be implemented should be cost effective relative to the expected mitigation/adaptation benefit.

**Q: A central air pressure system with the ability to lower tire pressures while performing field work could significantly reduce compaction, maintain infiltration, reduce erosion in wheel tracks, potentially reduce pathogens, improve soil microbial activity and soil health. Would equipment like the central air pressure system be cost shared at 75% state funds, 25% farmers funds? Are there upper limits to the expense? Is ranking going to be judged by acres covered, erosion avoidance potential, or other metrics?**

**A:** Per section III.1 of the RFP, state assistance payments for equipment directly related to the function of the BMP is an eligible expense. Per section III.2 of the RFP, the State will fund up to 80 % of the total eligible costs for BMP implementation. There are no limits on project costs however the BMPs to be implemented should be cost effective relative to the expected mitigation/adaptation benefit.

Please review the evaluation criteria in section V of the RFP and the Proposal Rating Sheet for more information about scoring criteria. The main criteria for scoring are GHG emission reduction

and resiliency 30 points, adequate scope of work 10 points, and budgeting and cost effectiveness 10 points. Answering all applicable questions on the application will assist in effectively communicating what is to be done, capacity to decrease GHG emissions or increase resiliency, and project co-benefits. (CRF R7)

**Q: Are BMPs for cost share in CRF R7 reimbursed per acre? What is the cost share percentage? Are there funding limits?**

**A:** Per section III.1 of the RFP, certain BMPs and/or BMP components are eligible for per unit/acre reimbursement rates. Please see the Soil Health Policy and Guidance Document for Healthy Soils NY for more information. All other BMPs should be based on actual costs.

Per section III.2 of the RFP, the State will fund up to 80 % of the total eligible costs for BMP implementation. There are no limits on project costs however the BMPs to be implemented should be cost effective relative to the expected mitigation/adaptation benefit.

**Q: Would custom seed application be an eligible expense?**

**A:** Per section III.1 of the RFP, custom application services related to BMP implementation are and eligible expense. Costs for custom application services should be listed under Other Direct Expenses and should be itemized and explained either within the application or on a separate attachment to the application. The inclusion and itemization of custom applicator expenses is for Nutrient Management BMPs only (reduction in fertilizer application, and/or drag line application, and manure incorporation/injection only). If a custom operator is used for the implementation of a flat rate practice listed in the SWCC's Soil Health Policy (e.g., cover crop planting, reduced tillage), the cost of the custom operator would be covered within the flat rate for the practice and not itemized or budgeted as an additional expense above the flat rate.

**Q: Is RUSLE 2 data for erosion a significant factor in ranking?**

**A:** Quantification of erosion reduction is an important co-benefit to include.

**Q: Would an application rank better with an individual landowner per application or should we consolidate into one proposal?**

**A:** Applications can include one or multiple landowners per project. Scoring criteria does not include number of farms per application. The long-term adoption of soil health practices is an important factor to demonstrate in addition to the number of acres implemented. (CRF R7)

## **Previously Asked Questions**

**Q: How are we able to reflect the 100% cost share (for soil health testing, outreach, and technical assistance) on the SW-2? When the cost is input, it affects the total percentage of the state rate, thus impacting the cost percentage of other costs.**

A: Outreach can be listed as Other Direct Expense on the SW-2 and not included in the SW3. The 80/20 cost share percentage for BMP implementation will be reflected on the SW-3. (Round 6)

**Q: If a farm is rotating their crops and will be putting fields into hay for 3-5 years as part of their soil health planning, can they utilize the pasture and hay planting practice (512) as part of their soil health system?**

A: Yes, Pasture and Hay planting (512) is an eligible practice as part of a soil healthy system under CRF Track 3 Healthy Soils NY. (Round 6)

**Q: Can you explain exactly what you mean by “Commitment by producer and District to record results in event of adverse weather.” What should these records look like?**

A: The statement, “Commitment by producer and District to record results in event of adverse weather” is listed in the proposal rating sheet in relation to Track 1 scoring for the category GHG Emissions Reduction and Resiliency. The statement refers to how the farm or District will track and record the impacts of a storm on the farm in relation to the manure storage overtopping and how the cover will increase the resiliency of the farm through preventing this issue. (Round 6)

**Q: Are weather stations as part of an IPM system eligible?**

A: Yes, IPM is in the Ag BMP Catalogue making it an eligible practice that could be implemented as a CRF Round 6 Track 3 Soil Health project. An IPM System could be proposed implementing Pest Management Conservation System (595) and include weather monitoring equipment, which directly relates to the practice system. The IPM plan itself would not be eligible at this time and any necessary subscriptions for service should be proposed as match. A District that is working with a farm on a project like this would want to include in their application information about how the weather monitoring equipment relates to the IPM implementation to provide the connection between the equipment and BMPs proposed. (Round 6)

**Q: Conflict of Interest - I am planning soil health projects on the farms of three of our five directors. Can I do separate resolutions for each project, where the participating directors recuse themselves from the conversation and resolution for just their application? Or do the participating directors need to recuse themselves from all conversations regarding our CRF Round 6 applications?**

A: SWCD Board Members/Directors involved in applications for CRF would need to recuse themselves from discussions regarding their specific application and contract. Separate resolutions for each application would be an appropriate approach that would allow the Board Members to recuse themselves from the resolution pertaining to their application. The minutes should note the name and

times that each Board Member left and returned the meeting to recuse from the agenda item. (Round 6)

**Q: Recently Tioga County Cornell Cooperative Extension purchased a farm, while they are a 501c3, they now own land and buildings and are in the AEM program working with the local SWCD to plan a stream corridor plan that involves buffers, wetland restoration, and flood mitigation practices that would benefit not only this farmstead but also farms downstream. Is this an eligible entity for CRF funding?**

A: A CCE could be an eligible participant if the farm owned by the CCE is being operated as a commercial enterprise. (Round 6)

**Q: We have been contacted by a municipality regarding a stream problem site. Stream erosion is causing problems for the Town road as well as eroding adjacent farm property and a stream crossing used by the farm to access their fields. If the farmer is not interested in applying, can the Town apply and do the work, which would benefit both the town and the farm, as long as they get written agreement from the farm? Or does application need to be in the farm name?**

A: Specific farms that will benefit from water management systems funded under this program must be identified on the Track 2 application and SW3, whether contributing match or not. The municipality would be included as a partner and listed on the SW3 if providing match. The agreement between the farm owner/operator must be for a term at least as long as the life span of the BMPs proposed to be implemented. The agreement must also specify which party will be responsible for maintaining the BMPs. (Round 6)

**Q: If a farm has a digester or a digester is under construction, can they apply for a waste storage cover without a flare? If the farm has a plan for a digester, but no construction has commenced, can they apply for a waste storage cover without a flare?**

A: The project must demonstrate the destruction or utilization of the methane captured from the covered manure storage. The cover system must capture biogas emission and transfer biogas to a point of discharge with a flare or biogas utilization equipment as appropriate. A flare should be considered as a failsafe control should the digester encounter malfunctions. In the case that a flare is not installed, the collection, control, and utilization of biogas must meet the appropriate criteria in NRCS CPS 366 Anaerobic Digester. Digesters are not eligible for cost-share under CRF Round 6. (Round 6)

**Q: A dairy farm in our county already has an anaerobic digester system to extract methane from their manure. They would like to cover their waste storage both to capture additional methane and increase their climate resiliency by excluding rainwater. Can the cover be designed so that the additional methane can be captured and utilized in the existing system? Or is a flare a required component in every case?**



A: The project must demonstrate the destruction or utilization of the methane captured from the covered manure storage. The cover system must capture biogas emission and transfer biogas to a point of discharge with a flare or biogas utilization equipment as appropriate. A flare should be considered as a failsafe control should the digester encounter malfunctions. In the case that a flare is not installed, the collection, control, and utilization of biogas must meet the appropriate criteria in NRCS CPS 366 Anaerobic Digester. (Round 6)

**Q: Is a digester an eligible practice as a standalone project in CRF T1 or does it need to be in combination with a Cover and Flare System?**

A: Digesters are not eligible for cost-share under CRF Round 6. (Round 6)

**Q: NY NRCS 590 nutrient management is eligible for Track 3 – Soil Health. Can the latest NY NRCS cost-share rate be used for a flat rate reimbursement? The 590 is set at a rate of \$41.08/ac for injection or incorporation. The \$31.81/ac you see in column F – Unit Payment is the 75% amount that EQIP will reimburse for. This would mean no documentation of actual cost would be required of the farm or do they need to track all expenses and provide that documentation to determine their actual final reimbursement rate?**

A: Yes, the District may propose and justify using the EQIP rate for the 590 injection or incorporation practice. Documentation for actual cost would not be required when proposing to use a per acre rates. (Round 6)

**Q. Is an extension of the farm's buried pipe for their dragline system (NY NRCS 634 waste transfer) to allow them to access additional acres of land to incorporate their manure on an eligible practice under Track 3 – Soil Health?**

A: Yes, the inclusion of 634 waste transfer into the Nutrient Management system under Track 3 would be eligible. There should be emphasis made on a reduction in synthetic fertilizer use and/or increased efficiency of nutrient management *resulting in a decrease of nitrous oxide emissions* on the additional acres the extension will provide. (Round 6)

**Q: The announcement for CRF Round 6 mentions “stabilize or reinforce conveyances” under Track 2. I’ve been working with a local corn producer who has had issues with lateral streambank migration due to increased flooding in our region over the last couple of decades. This has resulted in severe soil loss on valuable farmland. Though Track 2 doesn’t specifically mention streams, would conveyances include streams by definition?**

A: Yes, the following system and practices are eligible under Track 2 relating to stream management.

**Stream Corridor and Shoreline Management Systems** stabilize and reinforce existing waterways to accommodate high flows with minimal damage. This system could be used to address unmet needs from previous events that still pose threats or as proactive steps. (Round 6)

BMPs listed under this system include:

- Channel Bed Stabilization (NRCS 584)
- Stream Bank and Shoreline Protection (NRCS 580)
- Open Channel (NRCS 582)
- Clearing and Snagging (NRCS 326)
- Obstruction Removal (NRCS 500)

**Q: In the definition for farmer, it says produce a crop: are trees, Christmas trees, maple sap, nuts, etc. considered a crop? Is there a minimum dollar value for sales to qualify as a farmer like with Ag Value Exemption?**

A: The farm does not have to meet a minimum dollar value for sales to qualify for CRF. As long as the landowner or operator is raising an agricultural or forestry product as a commercial enterprise, they are eligible to participate in the CRF Program. (Round 6)

**Q: Landowners that rent land to a farmer are eligible, am I applying for the farmer or the landowner?**

A: Non-Farming landowners could be eligible to participate in the CRF program. The land where the best management practice will be located must be actively worked by a farm operation. A rental agreement between the non-farming landowner and the farm operation must be in place for the lifespan of the proposed best management practice system. (Round 6)

**Q: New Landowner but same farm do they qualify for New Participant?**

A: Yes, new ownership would qualify as a new participant. (Round 6)

**Q: The farm in question was awarded the grant but never received any of the funding. They chose to opt out and changed operation for a few years. Would they still be ineligible for the New Participant points - even without taking any funding?**

A: If they were previously awarded but the contract was cancelled, they would qualify for the new participant benefit. (Round 6)

**Q: I am putting together an Irrigation Water Management System project application for CRF Round 6. The COMET Planner does not have Irrigation Water Management Systems or NRCS Practices available to quantify or estimate GHG emission reductions for this project. Question # 21 of the CRF R6 application asks "What is the proposed GHG emission reduction? (Utilizing COMET-Planner or methodology outlined in guidance documents)" Page 18 of the guidance document does not outline any additional methodology besides the COMET Planner. Is there other suitable methodology to quantify proposed GHG emission reductions?**

A: No, there are not any alternative methodologies to estimate GHG reduction from water management practices. These practices are adaptation practices to help increase the resiliency of the farm. Please emphasize these characteristics of the project. All the projects under Track 2 will be scored more for the adaptation value they provide over the GHG reduction. (Round 6)

**Q: A grower interested in the Climate Resiliency grant is researching air to water heat pumps to switch over from coal to sustainable heating for his farm buildings. With how much greenhouse gas emissions reductions that would result from that project (especially because he now has solar powering the whole farm!) it seems like it'd be a good fit for climate resiliency. However, it doesn't fit the water quality or soil health tracks at all. Do you see anything that would allow for that?**

A: Projects must fit within one of the existing tracks for funding. Energy upgrades are not currently supported as stand-alone projects under the Climate Resilient Farming Program Round 6. There may be available resources to support energy efficiency measures and clean energy upgrades through NYSERDA - <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/business-and-industry/agriculture> or National Grid - <https://www.nationalgridus.com/Upstate-NY-Business/Energy-Saving-Programs/Agri-business-program>. (Round 6)

**Q: We are proposing that a couple farms will implement the new NRCS standard 808 Soil Carbon Amendment. The COMET Planner does not have that specific standard listed. Does State Committee have any recommendations on which standard available in COMET planner we could use as a substitute for this?**

A: For estimating GHG reduction for compost application using interim standard Soil Carbon Amendment (NRCS 808) use COMET-Planner for California Healthy Soils Program - <http://comet-planner-cdfahsp.com/>. The Soil Carbon Amendment (808) practice is available on this version of COMET. Include the estimate in your total and note in the narrative that COMET Planner California Healthy Soils Program was used for the estimation of this practice. (Round 6)

**Q: Most winter growing in NY state requires supplemental heat to keep the plants alive and growing. The main form of heating is propane, which is very expensive and burns fossil fuels. Some growers are experimenting with geothermal systems to replace propane heating, but the cost of installing these systems can be very burdensome on the growers. Would a geothermal system for a greenhouse or high tunnel be considered in the CRF grant? A geothermal system in the greenhouse or high tunnel would stop greenhouse gas emissions from propane heat while providing a more stable year-round income for farmers and fresh produce for the community.**

A: Energy upgrades are not currently supported as stand-alone projects under the Climate Resilient Farming Program Round 6. There may be available resources to support energy efficiency measures and clean energy upgrades through NYSERDA - <https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/business-and-industry/agriculture> or National Grid - <https://www.nationalgridus.com/Upstate-NY-Business/Energy-Saving-Programs/Agri-business-program>. (Round 6)

**Q: Is a farm eligible to apply that wants to plant chestnut and hazelnut trees in open fields in a savannah style Silvopasture along with some other water management practices including waterways and terracing? Do animals have to be present on the land or is it ok for them to be on another farm while the Silvopasture gets established?**

A: Silvopasture (NRCS 381) is an eligible practice under Track 3 Healthy Soils NY. Including the establishment of a Silvopasture. Water management practices directly related to the Silvopasture system would be eligible within Track 3. The application narrative should include information about the long-term planning and management of the Silvopasture system to ensure project success. (Round 6)

**Q: Are the components of dragline systems and manure injection systems eligible expenses in the CRF Healthy Soils NY Track 3? Would a farm be able to purchase a manure pump, drag hose, tool bar, etc. in order to implement manure injection for better nutrient(nitrogen) management?**

A: Under Track 3 Healthy Soils NY, Nutrient Management (590) is eligible only for manure incorporation or reduction in synthetic fertilizer-use following an existing Nutrient Management Plan. Dragline systems and manure injection systems are manure incorporation practices and are therefore eligible. Equipment is eligible for cost-share if it directly relates to the function of the BMP being implemented. (Round 6)

**Q: Clarify guidance that “Projects that incorporate training and outreach including cover crop signs with acreage cover cropped will score higher than just implementation projects.”**

A: This guidance suggests that the SWCC would like to see projects that have both planting of cover crops and an outreach/educational component. (Round 6)

**Q: What NRCS standard should be used for permanent seedings in the vineyards? Also, where and how do I put in the equipment costs? The district will own it not the farms.**

A: The practice standard to use would be Conservation Cover 327. The flat rate for Conservation Cover of Orchard or Vineyard Alleyways is \$87.29/acre based on 2019 NY EQIP rates.

Equipment costs should go under Other Direct Expenses on the SW2. They would not go on the SW3. (Round 5)

**Q: We would like to apply for funding to interseed rye on 160 acres of corn. In our scenario the farm plans to plant approximately 160 acres of corn in 2020 and purchase an interseeder through the grant program to interseed Rye into corn around June. The soy beans that he would then plant the following year he would cover crop when the soy bean is removed, which would be Rye, but it would not be interseeded. So, under this scenario those interseeded acres would be moving around the farm. But the way I understand things, he needs to cover the same acres for 3 consecutive years.**

A: There is not currently a rule against changing fields for cover crops based on rotation, but the total acres proposed to be cover cropped must be implemented. Unless the farm is currently receiving cost

share assistance with state funding to cover crop the soy than it would be eligible for cost share under the proposed scenario. Additionally, as long as the interseeder is utilized for cover crop implementation during the duration of the contract than it would not need to be on the same fields. (Round 5)

**Q: Under the Rd. 5 CRF Highlights page 1. Cost Share Rate, listed items for 100% cost share are (soil health training, cover crop signs, and soil health testing). What and who is the soil health training for (District Folks or Farmers)? Or will the grant cover soil health seminar for farmers?**

A: Training is an eligible expense under Track 3 Healthy Soils NY. Training should be targeted towards landowners to increase likelihood of adoption of soil health practices. Projects that incorporate training and outreach including cover crop signs with acreage cover cropped will score higher than just implementation projects. Highest priority may not be most acres but increasing likelihood of adoption by demonstrating to others. (Round 5)

**Q: Are workshops relating to research on behavior science eligible within CRF?**

A: Soil health testing and soil health training are eligible components of a Track 3 soil health project. However, all CRF projects must be focused on implementing practice systems that will mitigate GHG emissions and enhance resilience to the impacts of climate change. Projects may not be solely focused on research or education, and they must be tied to climate change. Projects that incorporate training and outreach with acreage cover cropped will score higher than just implementation projects. (Round 5)

**Q: Would the purchase of an under-vine vineyard mower be eligible for the Climate Resilient Farming program? The mower would be owned by the District and rented out to farms for their use. This would allow for a significant reduction in runoff and erosion from vineyard lands and build a healthier soil for increased absorption of carbon from the atmosphere.**

A: Equipment that is directly related to the function of the BMP are eligible for state assistance under the CRF Program. Districts can request state assistance payments to cost-share the expense related to the purchase of equipment to be used on farms to implement BMP Systems. Specific farm(s) must be listed on the proposal who will be working with the District to implement the BMP systems. Additionally, the Soil Conservation – Cultural System Implementation Policy for set rates could be utilized to implement the BMPs associated with the equipment being purchased. (Round 5)

**Q: We received a call from a local farmer who is interested in switching his operation over to no till. He discovered our CRF RFP online and was asking if purchasing a roller crimper would be eligible.**

A: Equipment that is directly related to the function of the BMP is eligible for state cost-share. A roller crimper would be directly related to the function of the BMP and therefore is eligible. If being cost-shared for a farm, it should be explained why this specific piece of equipment is needed, and why it cannot be purchased by the District and made available to all applicable farms in the county. Additionally, the Soil Conservation – Cultural System Implementation Policy for set rates could be utilized to implement the BMPs associated with the equipment being purchased. (Round 5)

**Q: Is a tree planting practice allowable to be cost shared in the CRF as climate change mitigation on historic agricultural fields? I have a farm interested in reforesting some fields that were pastured or**

cut for hay years ago but are now periodically brush hogged to keep the weeds down. The fields are relatively steep and somewhat poorly drained. When you calculate the time of concentration, you have to consider the land use and a wooded watershed versus one that is in grass with machinery damage would slow down potential flood waters because of canopy, leaf litter, etc. Of course, this would be on a small scale, but the overall goal is to reduce the runoff curve number to the lowest possible number. I guess the better argument would be that the planting would store carbon over a long period of time and sort of kickstart the process of natural regeneration.

A: Tree planting can be included as part of a CRF Round 5 proposal and can be cost shared up to 75 percent. A riparian buffer system could be used which employs the applicable standards 612 tree/shrub establishment and 490 tree/shrub site preparation. An erosion control system – structural could be utilized including 342 critical area planting as you noted the area has steep slopes and has poor drainage. Additionally, the stormwater design manual Ch. 5 Green Infrastructure has tree planting as a stormwater management practice for runoff reduction. Should you utilize the stormwater manual include additional detail as practices may not be as familiar with reviewers as NRCS practices. Also, noting GHG reductions and co-benefits of flood mitigation are encouraged. (Round 5)

**Q: Can I apply for multiple tracks on behalf of the same farm?**

A: Yes, but you must submit separate applications for each track and the systems must each stand alone and not be dependent on the other.

**Farm Eligibility**

**Q: Is an educational, publicly owned farm eligible?**

A: The definition of a farm in the Agriculture and Markets Law (which is the definition that will be used for the Climate Resilient Farming program) is:

*"Farm operation" means the land and on-farm buildings, equipment, manure processing and handling facilities, and practices which contribute to the production, preparation and marketing of crops, livestock and livestock products as a commercial enterprise" (AGM Article 25-AA §301)*

The farm in question here is an educational rather than commercial enterprise and is therefore ineligible as a farm.

**Q: Is a not-for-profit farm eligible?**

A: See question above for the definition of "farm operation." A farm is eligible as long as it meets the criteria of being a commercial farm, regardless of its 501(c)3 status.

**Q: Is rented agricultural land that is owned by a municipality eligible for funding?**

A: Yes, rented agricultural land regardless of who owns the land is eligible for funding. BMPs to be implemented on rented property should not be submitted for funding unless there is a written lease for the use of the property for the life span of the BMP.

**Q: Is a farm that has an easement on it eligible?**

A: Yes, as long as the easement does not preclude any of the proposed practices.

**Q: A local municipality along with a school district would like to partner with two downstream agricultural producers to implement a water management system to improve the stream corridor and make the whole watershed more resilient to increased severe storms. Is the municipality eligible as a partner with the agricultural producers for cost share and in-kind match as part of the project?**

A: Yes, a municipality is eligible as a partner with the agricultural producers for cost-share and/or in-kind match as part of the project. Match resources from the municipality should be reflected as a sub-category under sponsor match.

**Q: Does the program have a preference on whether equipment is brand new or refurbished?**

A: A general rule of thumb consistent with the Agricultural Non-Point Source Program, is that equipment that has been professionally refurbished and/or carries a new warranty is likely to satisfy program requirements, and equipment that is being simply reused may not meet requirements.

**Q: Could you please provide some clarification on the CRF proposal Rating Sheet under Cost Effectiveness regarding farm expansion? Specifically, what is a clear definition of farm expansion as it relates to practice proposals under the Soil Health Track?**

A: Projects addressing needs due to farm expansion shall be defined as any proposed practice system(s) needed to enhance adaptation to climate driven extreme weather from intended or recent farm growth, as opposed to solely due to the new realities of changing climate. Examples could include proposals to extend current or recently cost-shared cover cropping to new crop fields obtained by a farmer or to expand current or recently cost-shared rotational grazing systems on new land acquired by a farmer.

**Q: Under track 3, “*will there be a reduction in nitrogen fertilizer as a result of practices systems implemented, and if so, how much?*” How do I estimate Nitrogen reductions?**

A: Nitrogen fertilizer reductions may be estimated a number of ways, including comparing current nitrogen fertilizer applications by the farm with those predicted to result from project implementation. Cornell University Nutrient Guidelines (<http://nmsp.cals.cornell.edu/guidelines/nutrientguide.html>) and associated tools and methods may be used to perform the estimates.