Department of Agriculture and Markets
Soil and Water Conservation Committee

RFP0389
Climate Resilient Farming Program
Round 9

Questions and Answers

October 30, 2025
Posting #3

1. **Q: For the methane calculation scenarios in Appendix A: Track 1 Guidance Document, is "Scenario 1: long-term anaerobic storage of liquid/slurry manure" assuming that the manure solids are being separated with an existing separation system? Scenario 2 specifies that the manure solids are separated, and the separation is factored into the emissions, but I am not aware of an application for this system where the manure solids are not separated.**

   A: In the Appendix A: Track 1 Guidance Document under Cover and Flare GHG Reduction Estimation there are three scenarios to choose from for calculating a GHG reduction estimate for a cover and flare project. The scenarios represent the current storage situation on-farm. Scenario 1 assumes long-term, uncovered storage without solid/liquid separation. This scenario should be used for farms that do not implement separation. Scenario 2 assumes the farm is already implementing solid/liquid separation. Scenario 2 should be used when the farm is already implementing solid/liquid separation, and the uncovered manure storage currently holds separated liquid manure. Scenario 3 assumes that the current system includes an anaerobic digester, solid/liquid separation, and the uncovered manure storage holds separated liquid digestate.

2. **Q: Can we use different cost share rates for practices in the Soil Health Policy? Specifically for cover crop, could we propose either 75% cost share on the rate identified in the Soil Health Policy or use actual itemized costs for these practices?**

   A: The District can propose up to 80% cost share using the SWCC Soil Health per unit rates. Itemized expenses may be allowed for practices that have an approved state per unit rate and follow proper procurement and closeout. The following information can be found in the SWCC Soil Health Policy (approved 2025):
   "Districts should use the State rates when applying for State Committee cost-share programs. Districts may not request state funds to propose per unit rates above

the State rates. Matching funds may be used to propose a rate higher than the approved state rate."

3. **Q: Regarding the application question on the project's watershed location (Part B, Q. 7) what scale should be used? If a producer has multiple farmsteads located in two different counties and in different watersheds which watershed should be listed? Is a joint application from two Districts acceptable? If so, how would we answer the watershed question?**

   A: The District should use the HUC 12 to answer Part B, Q. 7. For a farm that spans two watersheds use the location where the project will be implemented to determine which watershed to list in the application. A joint application is allowable (see Section II.1 of the RFP).

4. **Q: How would the AEMID work for the producer with farmsteads in two different counties?**

   A: If the producer has two AEMIDs, use the AEMID associated with where the project will be located on the farm. If not, use their sole AEMID.

5. **Q: Are floor-mounted, low-power manure aeration/bubbler systems eligible for retrofitting to existing manure storage systems within CRF Round 9?**

   A: Floor-mounted, low-power manure aeration/bubbler systems are eligible practices within Track 1 of CRF Round 9 per the NRCS-NY Waste Treatment CPS (629). Such systems shall be proposed for improved methane and odor mitigation, solids management, and manure nutrient uniformity compared to anaerobic manure storages. Floor-mounted, low-power manure aeration/bubbler installations per NRCS-NY CPS 629 are eligible as a part of a Manure and Agricultural Waste Treatment System when retrofitting an existing manure storage within the grant. Such systems may be a part of open, outdoor manure storages and under barn storages for CRF Round 9.

*****Beginning of Posting #2 Questions*****

6. **Q: Can a District apply for a cover and flare system for a manure storage that has not been built yet but is being constructed with EQIP funds?**

A: CRF can be used in conjunction with EQIP funds. If the cover and flare system is being installed on a new storage being built with EQIP funds, the project proposal should describe the timeline for the project to ensure the cover and flare will be implemented within the contract period.

7. **Q: How do you calculate a GHG reduction for practices not listed in the COMET-Planner, specifically for manure injection practices?**

   A: In the Comet-Planner within Cropland Management for Nutrient Management (CPS 590) choose "Replace Synthetic N Fertilizer with Dairy Manure on Non-Irrigated Croplands" for manure injection.

8. **Q: Would it be possible under CRF R9 to cost share a manure storage without a cover and flare?**
   Can we cost share reclaimed manure solid separation for animal bedding? This would eliminate the need for current sand bedding, increasing current storage capacity.
   Can we cost share drag line equipment for liquid manure to reduce GHG emissions?

   A: The goal of Track 1 is to reduce methane emissions from current manure management. Projects must demonstrate a reduction or avoidance in methane emissions. Construction of a new manure storage without mitigating the methane will not meet the goals of CRF Track 1.

   Waste Separation Facility (NRCS 632) for solid/liquid separation for the reclamation of animal bedding is eligible for cost-share.

   Track 3 Healthy Soils NY outlays three options for Nutrient Management 590 for manure incorporation, manure injection, or precision nutrient application. Option 2 is for the purchase of manure application equipment for up to 80% cost share. The estimated costs of the equipment should be budgeted and detailed under Other Direct Expenses on the SW-6. The SW-3 should be used to document the Nutrient Management System – Cultural and the acres proposed without cost to avoid double counting on the SW2. In option 2 the equipment would be cost-shared and the practice implementation would be match. Review the Track 3 section of the CRF R9 RFP for more details.

9. **Q: I have a farm that has questioned if farms with wet soils can justify the use of Subsurface drains (606). Would this practice be covered in CRF R9 due to excessive water during a wet year?**

   A: This may be eligible under Track 2 as a water management project. The wet soils are not a factor in eligibility for a practice, but the project should meet the intent of the CRF program to help a farm prepare or adapt to climate change (e.g., drought, flooding) and provide an environmental benefit to reduce GHG emissions and increasing carbon sequestration. A project with the intent to alter the condition of the soils due to soil type versus climate change would not meet the intent of the program. Additionally, Subsurface Drain (NRCS-NY CPS 606) is not eligible as a standalone practice within a BMP System.

10. **Q: The preference points: how do those get applied if an application has multiple farm operators on a project? In the scenario that two farm operators are included, but one meets the criteria for a new applicant, and one does not?**

    A: The application qualifies for preference points when at least one farm operator meets the definition. The RFP states in Section II. 2. New Participant and Beginning Farmer Benefit that preference points will be added to multi-farm operation applications where a new participant or beginning farmer qualifies.

11. **Q: For the Nutrient Management Plans: can CRF funds be used to pay for planning, as well as equipment such as a manure spreader, for a relevant BMP? We also have plans that have only recently expired and confirmed that the operation has not significantly changed. If funding an entire new plan isn't permitted, could recertifying a plan be funded along with that equipment and BMP?**

    A: Equipment is eligible for cost-share up to 80%. The plan update and/or recertification would be eligible as match. Track 3 Healthy Soils NY outlays three options for Nutrient Management 590 for manure incorporation, manure injection, or precision nutrient application. Option 2 is for the purchase of manure application equipment for up to 80% cost share. The estimated costs of the equipment should be budgeted and detailed under Other Direct Expenses on the SW-6. The SW-3 should be used to document the Nutrient Management System – Cultural and the acres proposed without cost to avoid double counting on the

SW2. In option 2 the equipment would be cost-shared, and the practice implementation would be match along with any NMP. Review the Track 3 section of the CRF R9 RFP for more details.

12. **Q: If the District paid for a NMP or recertification, when do plans have to be valid by? Can we apply if a plan is in progress but will be completed by the time a contract is executed?**

    A: If the NMP will be completed by time of the estimate contract start date this would meet the requirements for nutrient management implementation. The timeline for this should be discussed in the application narrative.

*****Beginning of Posting #3 Questions*****

13. **Q: CRF Round 9 application for Track 3 asks how many acres of cover crops and no-tillage will be implemented. These practices are not what we are applying for but are practices that the farm already participates in through different funding sources through our district. Should I include the acres of cover crops and no-tillage in those answers, or should they be answered "N/A"?**

    A: The questions in the application pertain to the project you are applying for cost-share funding for. If the BMP is not going to be listed on the SW3 than do not list acres in the application form.

14. **Q: I have a farm interested in pursuing injection equipment through Round 9 of CRF. They had asked us if they can inject the same field in the spring and fall to count towards their overall acreage for a year. Essentially they would get paid twice at the per acre rate for the same field. However, I understand how that would make sense to them because it would follow their typical annual spreading regimen.**

    A: The reimbursement rates for new manure injection, manure incorporation, or precision nutrient application practices are on a per acre basis and not a per year basis. When implemented according to their NRCS-NY 590 plan, the practices provide environmental benefit relative to current management every time they're implemented, whether annually or multiple times per year. As such, they may be reimbursed based on satisfactory review and certification of their records by an AEM Certified Planner after each application.

15. **Q: I was asked by a producer if virtual fencing for cows is something that could be funded using CRF funding?**

    A: At this time virtual fencing is not eligible under CRF Round 9 for cost-share or match. There are concerns and questions about its functionality, cost-effectiveness, lifespan, O&M, and how it might be planned and managed through NRCS 528 (e.g., grazing management, interfaces with hazards and facilities, exclusions, stream crossings, etc.). Therefore, virtual fence is not eligible for projects funded through SWCC programs. The SWCC will continue to track the technology and NRCS-NY's experience with this type of fencing to gauge whether virtual fence could be eligible in certain circumstances in future rounds.

16. **Q: Is N sidedress equipment eligible for cost-share funding in CRF Track 3?**

    A: Nitrogen sidedress application equipment is eligible for cost-share funding per the "Precision Nutrient Application" options and associated requirements detailed in the Nutrient Management System – Cultural section of the RFP for CRF9 Track 3. The project must demonstrate how the equipment will further improve the precision application of nutrients relative to current management (i.e., not intended to support the continuation of management that's been adopted and is standard practice by a farm) and follow the farm's updated NRCS-NY 590 nutrient management plan.

17. **Q: I have a technical question for CRF 9. We are looking at putting in a grant that is mainly erosion and surface runoff control based but would also like to add in cover cropping on the farms for a double faceted approach. The main projects will be erosion control practices in addition to cover cropping. Would this be eligible in Track 2? We would like to pursue Track 2 for this project.**

    A: Track 2 projects should meet the goals outline in the Appendix B: Track 2 Guidance. The eligible practice systems listed are guidelines and not an exclusive list. Cover crops may be included in a project that aligns with the resiliency and water management focus of Track 2.

18. **Q: For some of the afforestation and soil BMPs, there is an established unit rate. What is said rate on a per unit (acres, ft., lbs, etc) basis?**

    A: Projects submitted in Track 4 Agricultural Forestry Management can use the per acre planting rate listed in Appendix D.
    Per Acre Planting Rate – Track 4 projects only

- Per Acre Planting Rate - containerized stock = $6,000/acre
    - based on $4,000/acre estimated tree planting cost plus a $2,000/acre incentive

- Per Acre Planting Rate - bare root stock = $4,500/acre
    - based on $2,500/acre estimated tree planting cost plus a $2,000/acre incentive

Projects submitted in Track 3 Healthy Soils NY can use the soil health per unit rates listed in the SWCC Soil Health Policy (2025). The Soil Health Policy can be found on the SWCC SharePoint site.

19. **Q: For tree planting, how does one follow up on mowing maintenance post grant closure? Is this included in the BMP unit rates and if not do we incorporate them?**

    A: Appendix D: Track 4 Guidance Document states on page 2 that survivability of the trees is important and should be addressed in the proposal. Seedling survival must be 70% at the end of 3-years or additional planting may be necessary. The Post-Planting Tree Stewardship Policy may be used after contract close out through SWCC cost-share programs, including the AEM Base Program's Tier 4 Track, to support long-term maintenance and survivability.

20. **Q: Will it be okay for farms to use their own cover crop seed if they have a verified germination rate or does it have to go through the state certification process to be used?**

    A: Per NRCS-NY 340 CPS and supporting documents for cover cropping, all seed must conform to the current rules and regulations of NYS AGM and meet or exceed the standards for purity and germination (adjust to a minimum of 85% PLS (pure live seed)). Use seed with a test date no more than 9 months old. Use only seed fully tagged or certified by a commercial supplier or seed testing lab. Do not use seed that has become wet, moldy or otherwise damaged in transit or storage. For cover crop seed not already tested and tagged with germination and purity data necessary for NRCS-NY 340, one can use the NYS AGM Seed Lab (https://agriculture.ny.gov/seed-testing-laboratory) to test their seed. Contact Greg Albrecht if you are interested pursing this process (greg.albrecht@agriculture.ny.gov).

21. **Q: I'm in conversation with the Mayor's Office of Agriculture and we have a site for which we want to try for CRF. The site is a school garden belonging**

to the NYC Dept of Education. There is a retired teacher who manages it (I think as a volunteer). The "farmer" (the retired teacher) is interested in creating a food forest. Can I apply with the school garden as the farm?

A: Yes, a school garden could be eligible if it meets the following definition under Section II.1 Applicant Eligibility:

A “farm operation” shall be as defined in section 301(11) of the New York Agriculture and Markets Law, which is “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….” For the purposes of this program, a “farm operation” shall also include urban agriculture, which is the cultivation, processing, and distribution of agricultural products in urban and suburban areas. Community gardens, rooftop farms, hydroponic, aeroponic, and aquaponic facilities, and vertical production are all examples of urban agriculture.