

USDA Seeks Input to Improve Conservation Practice Standards

Comments Should Be Submitted by Aug. 11

Contact: Terry Bish (202) 720-5974

WASHINGTON, JULY 22, 2009—The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is seeking public comment on its conservation practice standards to help improve the Nation's delivery of conservation programs. The public comment period is open until Aug. 11.

"A public review of conservation standards, which is written into the 2008 Farm Bill, is critical to ensuring that conservation programs are available, adequate, and working for the Nation's producers and landowners," said Dave White, NRCS Chief.

The 2008 Farm Bill maintains a strong commitment to locally led, voluntary conservation programs and the successful delivery and participation in these programs hinges on robust local input and involvement in the rule making process. Through the public comment process, stakeholders, including agricultural producers and private landowners and the general public, are able to include their input and priorities in the delivery of conservation programs.

NRCS conservation practices are diverse and very flexible and as such can be applied on many land uses. The public review of conservation delivery standards will ensure that conservation programs of the 2008 Farm Bill are relevant to local agricultural, forestry and natural resource needs including specialty crops like organics, native and managed pollinators, bioenergy crop production and forestry.

This broad public review will also help ensure conservation programs are less bureaucratic and more easily understandable by producers and potential applicants, delivered with sufficient technical assistance to complete conservation plans and implemented in an efficient, timely, and effective manner

All comments will be reviewed and considered for incorporation into final rules directing delivery of conservation programs. Public comments can be submitted online, by mail, via e-mail, in person, or by fax through Aug. 11. Contact information is listed in the notice. The notice can be found at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-13870.pdf>.

For more information about NRCS and conservation programs that may be available, go to www.nrcs.usda.gov or visit the nearest USDA Service Center.

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