



# 10-Minute Supervisor Trainings

Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission

MARCH 2017

## **COST SHARE PROGRAMS**

The Kentucky Division of Conservation and their many partners work together to develop programs that are beneficial in addressing soil erosion, water quality and nutrient management. The partners are successful by obtaining and utilizing federal, state and grant funds when available. The education of landowners on best management practices continues to be an integral part of implementing new and innovative practices. These not only address resource concerns but protect the waters of the commonwealth. This month we will review two programs that continue to be successful in our state.

### State Cost Share

**Background:** The Kentucky Soil Erosion & Water Quality Cost Share Program was established in 1994 by the Ky. General Assembly to help producers better address non-point source pollution problems on their property. The approved practices address the loss of topsoil as well as sediment, animal waste and other pollutants. Since the inception of this program in 1994, \$138,813,448 has been awarded to landowners across the state.

**How it works:** As funds become available, they are then made available to the Soil and Water Conservation Commission. The commission then determines when applications will be ranked. Landowners have 1 year to complete their practices with the opportunity for 2, 6 month extensions. All applications expire 2 years from their approval date. Several agencies are essential in making this program successful. We will address the responsibilities of each agency below.

### **Conservation Districts:**

- Personnel must be knowledgeable of the program and components.
- Advertise the program to the public.
- Assist landowners in determining eligibility and completing applications.
- Work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to schedule farm visits, develop plans and assist with needed paperwork.
- Input all applicant information into the computer system.
- District board shall vote on the eligibility of all applications
- Assemble and maintain case files for all approved.
- Notify landowners of approval.
- Administer cost share funds.
- Report monthly on the status of all approved applications.
- Ensure completion and maintenance of all installed practices.

## **NRCS**

- Assist landowners in addressing resource concerns and determining the best solutions to those concerns.
- Work with the conservation district to collect needed information.
- Follow all NRCS standards and specifications on requirements of each practice.
- Work with landowners in implementing practices. All technical aspects of state cost share (planning, design, inspection and final certification).

## **Soil and Water Commission**

- Approve and evaluate applications based on established criteria.
- Establish deadlines for practices.
- Approve all modifications requested by conservation districts
- Ensure that all finances and payments are made in a responsible and timely manner.
- Resolve any disputes within the program that arise.

## **Division of Conservation**

- Work with both NRCS and the Soil and Water Conservation Commission to establish a manual for the program.
- Ensure that all information is presented to conservation districts
- Compile all information from monthly reports submitted by conservation districts.
- Take all payment requests and ensure that they are made in a timely manner.

Eligible practices: filter strips, heavy use areas, rotational grazing systems, waste utilization and storage, sinkhole protection, cropland erosion, closure of waste facilities, pesticide containment, water well protection, streambank stabilization, riparian area protection, animal composting, water ways, forest land protection and pasture and hay land re-seeding and erosion control. See more detailed practice components in the program manual.

## **Environmental Grants**

An important part of state cost share has been the availability of environmental grants that districts can apply for many different projects in their county such as: dead animal removal and composting, soil testing programs, outdoor classrooms, whitegoods pick up, recycling projects, sink hole and illegal dump clean up just to name a few. Each year, approximately \$500,000 are available for these grants. It continues to be a very successful program.

## **Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP – Managing Poo)**

**Background:** In 2014 the Kentucky Division of Conservation had the opportunity to submit a grant application for the RCPP program in Kentucky. Part of these grants require the collaboration of other agencies to work together to successfully implement this grant. The partners include: University of Kentucky, Kentucky Beef Network and Kentucky Cattleman's Association, Kentucky Dairy Council, NRCS and the Division of Water. Since 2014, 58 applications have been serviced across the state.

**How it Works:** The goal of this program is to improve water quality in Kentucky by assisting landowners that have nutrient management issues on their property by working with them on the local level. It was designed to assist livestock producers who are nearing enforcement action and assist them in staying in compliance with state and federal laws. This utilizes all partners to address needs and resource concerns. One of the projects is the adoption of Kentucky Nutrient Management Plans and Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans to better educate the landowner of better management and utilization of animal waste. Once these plans are developed they will work with all agencies to develop plans and implement best management practices. This program is designed to reduce runoff from private lands in Kentucky.

### **Steps:**

- Contact UK, Kentucky Beef Network or the Kentucky Dairy Association to arrange a farm visit.
- These agencies will issue a referral if needed. The applicant will then be directed to visit the local conservation district to complete either a state cost share or EQIP application for any identified practices identified by the referral ticket.
- The assigned field rep will then work with the local conservation district and NRCS to process the application.
- All applications will go through the necessary ranking criteria to be submitted for approval.

**Practices:** Conservation practices may include but are not limited to: heavy use areas, grazing establishment, waste storage facilities, waste utilization, comprehensive nutrient management plans, composting, stream crossing, travel lanes, filter strips etc.

This program is new and hopes to be very unique in bringing several partners together to better assist landowners in a more personable way to get practices on the ground.

There are more opportunities within RCPP, as Kentucky receives funding for new grants. There are 4 other active RCPP projects in the state right now. NRCS can provide more information and assistance with these projects.