

2023 Dairy Plus Program Questions and Answers (Q&A)

July 20, 2023

1. Are Financial documents required to be submitted for previous AMMP recipients who are only applying for the Dairy Plus Program?

No, previous AMMP or DDRDP recipients with a completed and closed-out project applying only for the Dairy Plus Program are not required to submit financial documents again.

2. For those only applying for the Dairy Plus Program who have received AMMP grants in the past, they are required to do a 50/50 match up to \$750,000 dollars – can these matching funds come from other State or Federal grants/programs, and not just solely from the applicant?

Yes, that is correct. Other sources of funding such as from State and Federal programs can be used as matching funds. However, the old AMMP funding/award won't count towards the Dairy Plus Program matching funds, as those funds were already spent and are not active anymore.

3. If a dairy is applying for a vermifilter that has not applied before (not a previous AMMP recipient), can they choose to apply under AMMP or Dairy Plus Program if they are only proposing one practice? For example, can a dairy that has not applied before skip AMMP and apply directly for Dairy Plus Program because it has a higher funding limit?

No, at this time the only eligible applicants for the Dairy Plus Program are those applying for a new AMMP or DDRDP project along with Dairy Plus Program, or past AMMP or DDRDP recipients seeking to enhance manure and nutrient management of their past completed and closed-out project. We have committed under the USDA Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities (PCSC) grant, where the Dairy Plus Program incentive funds are from, to contribute a certain amount of State (i.e., AMMP or DDRDP funding) and private matching funds towards the Dairy Plus Program projects. Additionally, the AMMP and DDRDP review processes are robust, which are expected to lend strength to the fundability of projects selected for the Dairy Plus Program award.

4. Can an applicant get \$750K from AMMP and additional funding from Dairy Plus Program for the same vermifilter?

No, there cannot be contributions from two funding sources (in this case, AMMP as well as the Dairy Plus Program) for the same system (or piece of equipment or activity), such as a vermifilter. The Dairy Plus Program practice and project components should be different and separate from those being funded by the AMMP project to avoid any potential for "double dipping" (i.e., obtaining income from two different sources illicitly). However, this does not imply that an overall comprehensive project on a dairy cannot be funded by more than one program: for example, a mechanical separator (required to remove coarse solids prior to

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effluent entering a vermifilter) being funded by AMMP and vermifilter being funded by Dairy Plus Program.

5. Can a weeping wall be the primary separator required for vermifiltration, or does it require an additional mechanical separator?

As currently written in the RGA under eligible practices, and the way the AMMP Benefits Calculator is set up, a primary mechanical separator is required to be implemented in front of a vermifiltration system. A weeping wall is considered a non-mechanical separator. If a weeping wall is a feasible method of primary separation to remove coarse fibers before the effluent is applied to a vermifilter and there are examples or data to support it, it could be submitted through a New Practices Request for Proposals and may be considered for future updates.

6. What would be considered documented evidence of matching funds with the Dairy Plus Program for those who have received AMMP in the past? Especially if an applicant doesn't know if they have secured other federal funds yet - how would document this?

Dairy Plus Program applicants may be applying for multiple grants at the same time, such as to obtain matching funds for their Dairy Plus Program project. If a matching fund source is not fully secure at the time of application, it is recommended for the applicant to identify more than one matching fund source in case the primary matching fund source falls through. Examples of documentation might include bank loan agreements or financial institution support for a project, or letters from other companies or organizations that might want to help fund the project, and how much they will contribute. It is important to note that if a project is awarded, matching funds will be tracked and will need to be spent at the same time and rate as the grant funds are reimbursed.

7. If a dairy receives a grant from a private organization (non-government), are they ineligible?

For matching funds, this is fine. As long as the main recipient of the Dairy Plus Program funds is the dairy producer, the sources for other matching funds towards the project are not restricted.

8. Can matching funds be spent before the start of the project to increase project readiness?

No, matching funds spent prior to the grant term and project implementation would not be able to be counted as matching funds. For programs and funding scenarios where matching funds are required, it would be strongly encouraged to wait until the grant term begins and an agreement is executed to being spending matching funds so that they could be accounted for. This differs from costs that may be incurred to contribute to a project's readiness, such as fees for permit

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submission or design development. Costs that are incurred outside of the grant agreement term cannot be reimbursed.

9. Can we show proof of matching funds from the bank during application, and then if other funds are secured can they be substituted once a project is awarded?

Yes, as long as in the application a source of matching funds is clearly demonstrated to the reviewers, these can be solidified at a later time. We may need the awardee to provide updated documentation or evidence of the matching funds if they are different from what was shown in the application.

10. Can USDA EQIP funds be used as Dairy Plus Program match?

Yes, EQIP can be matching funds for Dairy Plus Program. However, it is not possible for applicants to receive EQIP funds for the same practice and at the same time as the practice funded by the Dairy Plus Program. This is because both programs are funded by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).