

**2018 HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM (HSP)
INCENTIVES PROGRAM
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)
FEBRUARY 22, 2019**

1. Q. Is spreading dry manure eligible for the HSP, or would it be eligible for the Alternative Manure Management Program (AMMP)?
A. Land application of dried manure is not incentivized through HSP or AMMP. The HSP incentivizes compost application to croplands and rangelands. Land application of manure is outside the scope of the AMMP, which focuses on change in dairy and livestock manure management practices to reduce methane emissions.
2. Q. Must the compost be purchased from the facilities listed on the CalRecycle website? If not, how can one verify and demonstrate that a compost company is in compliance with all state regulations?
A. The compost must be purchased from a facility that is listed on the CalRecycle website referenced in the RGA: <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/swfacilities/Directory>.
3. Q. How will CDFA choose grant recipients who may be subject to post-project reporting? What is required beyond the 3-year granting period if you're one of the 'chosen' farms?
A. The subset of grant recipients for post-project reporting are selected randomly. Grant recipients are required to maintain, three years after completion of project, documentation related to their HSP funded projects, including records documenting maintenance of the agricultural management practice(s) and any soil testing reports for the project APNs, to keep records of actual benefits achieved from the project.
All funded projects are required to collect soil samples for soil organic matter analysis three times during the grant term (once each project year prior to practice implementation) and once after the grant term (three years after practice implementation).
4. Q. Which documents are needed when completing the conservation plan?
A. A conservation plan, at a minimum, must include:
 - An aerial photo or diagram of project fields.
 - A list of current management decisions.
 - The location of and schedule for applying new conservation practices.
 - A Resource Assessment. This includes an inventory of resources and resource concerns, soils information, topographic maps, plan maps showing location of property, existing practices, structures, planned practices, soils, water features and other environmentally sensitive areas, and environmental assessment.
 - Information explaining how specific management decisions will be implemented.
 - A plan for operation and maintenance of selected management practices.A conservation plan prepared by NRCS personnel is also acceptable.
5. Q. What is the turnaround time for payment on the HSP Incentives funded projects?
A. Healthy Soils Incentives projects invoice on an annual basis. After verification of eligible agricultural management practices is complete, an invoice template will be sent by CDFA to the recipient for signature. Once the signed invoice template is received and approved by CDFA, payments are typically issued within 45 days.

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6. Q. For a cover crop, does the applicant need to specify in the proposal the species that will be seeded?
A. Yes. CDFA encourages applicants to use the NRCS Calflora eVeg Guide to help with cover crop seed selection. The link to the Calflora instruction guide is provided here: [Step by step instructions on how to use Calflora \(NRCS\)](#).
7. Q. How would I weigh on-farm produced compost for application?
A. A container of known volume, such as a tractor bucket or manure spreader, may be weighed and multiplied by the number of times it is used, to estimate total weight of compost applied. The recipient must keep detailed notes of their production of on-farm produced compost to document the correct application rates and chemical composition of compost (including C:N ratio) according to HSP requirements, for each batch of compost produced and applied.
8. Q. For the riparian buffer practice, can an irrigation canal be considered as a water body?
A. [USDA NRCS CPS 391](#) for Riparian Forest Buffers mentions the following eligible water bodies: permanent or intermittent streams, lakes, ponds and wetlands under the section "Conditions where Practice Applies". Canals are not included.
9. Q. Can Herbaceous cover establishment be implemented on the edge of the vineyard/orchard in the tractor turnaround areas or perimeter roads?
A. Yes, however, applicant should not remove orchard trees to implement this practice.
10. Q. How may an applicant account for application of 2-4 tons compost with C:N > 11 in the budget worksheet?
A. No, application rates for compost must be consistent with program requirements to ensure accurate calculation of GHG reductions. For compost with C:N > 11, application rate must be between 6 to 8 tons per acre.
11. Q. For Range Planting, is there a minimum height for "high" forb?
A. There is no requirement on height of mature forb. Applicant must follow implementation requirements in [USDA NRCS CPS 550](#).
12. Q. For Range Planting and Forage and Biomass Planting, if a forage species was previously planted, can one apply to plant a more beneficial different type of forage?
A. No, HSP funds cannot be used for continuing an on-going and/or existing practice implementation.
13. Q. For the mulching practice, must mulch be applied every year for 3 years?
A. Yes.
14. Q. On the HSP Work Plan, the first category is already filled in with soil samples? Is that box an example or do we keep the soil samples in and show that testing will be done each year?
A. Soil samples is purposely put in the first category of the work plan to let every applicant know that soil sampling is a required activity and must be included in both workplan and budget.

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15. Q. If the landowner has soil test results from prior to the grant award date, will this suffice for the "prior to implementation" SOM test that is required?
A. If awarded, grant recipient must conduct soil sampling and SOM testing prior to implementing the practice(s) for the first time, after execution of grant agreement.
16. Q. Does a liquid compost certified by CDFA qualify as a "compost" for the HSP?
A. Compost that is eligible for HSP is defined as:
- The product resulting from the controlled biological decomposition of organic wastes that are source separated from the municipal solid waste stream, or which are separated a centralized facility. Feedstocks may include green materials, food materials, wood waste, yard trimmings, agricultural materials or biosolids as defined in 14 CCR Section 17852 (www.calrecycle.ca.gov/laws/regulations/title14/ch31.htm)
 - Must be produced by a facility permitted or otherwise authorized by state and local authorities that can demonstrate compliance with all state regulations regarding inspection of incoming feedstocks, finished-product testing requirements including the Process to Further Reduce Pathogens (PFRP) as described in 14 CCR Section 17868.3, maximum metal concentrations for heavy metals per 14 CCR Section 17868.2, and physical contamination limits per 14 CCR Section 17868.3.1. (14 CCR Section 17868: www.calrecycle.ca.gov/laws/regulations/title14/ch31a5.htm#article7)
 - Note: STA certified or CDFA-OIM compost is recommended. STA certified compost means the compost has been tested for numerous product parameters by a STA certified lab which uses standardized testing methodologies (TMECC, developed by the United States Composting Council), and the results (in a technical data sheet) are reported to the compost producer.
- This definition can be found on page 4-5 of the white paper, [Compost Application Rates for California Croplands and Rangelands for CDFA Healthy Soil Program](#). Liquid compost is not included.
17. Q. Can the grant support the purchase of a seed drill?
A. The budget for HSP Incentives program is not itemized. A flat payment rate based reimbursement will be provided to the grant recipient.
18. Q. If the compost company or farmer are applying the compost, can those be counted as in-kind contributions?
A. Yes.
19. Q. If the project does not provide benefits to a SDAC, how do I indicate this in the application?
A. Applicant must not check any boxes to questions that are not applicable. If the question is a yes or no question, applicant should choose the appropriate option.
20. Q. Is it acceptable to plant Conservation Cover practice in Year 2 of the project? the planting would not be until year 2. How would this impact the payment for soil organic matter analysis?
A. Since Conservation Cover practice involves one-time planting and maintenance of a permanent herbaceous cover, the plantings may be conducted in Year 2. SOM analysis must be conducted at four instances, on samples collected before the implementation of practice, and, 1, 2 and 3 years after the practice is first implemented. In the scenario of planting in

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Year 2, the SOM costs for 2 and 3 year after practice implementation will not be reimbursable due to the tasks being conducted outside the project duration.

21. Q. If planting several hedgerows at a ranch, must they all be planted by December 2019, and then replacement plants and maintenance be done in 2020-21, or can I plant a portion of the hedgerows each year through 2021?
- A. Applicant may choose to spread out the hedgerow plantings through the three years. This may increase the number of SOM analyses required for the project, since analysis must be conducted at four instances, on samples collected before the implementation of practice, and, 1, 2 and 3 years after the practice is first implemented, for each portion of the hedgerows planted. This may cause several of the analyses to be conducted outside of the project duration. Those costs are not reimbursable and must be borne by the recipient.
22. Q. Is a high school starting a farm on fallow land eligible for funding?
- A. Eligible entities for the HSP are California farmers, ranchers and Federal and California Recognized Native American Indian Tribes. Projects must be located on a California agricultural operation. For the purpose of this program, an agricultural operation is defined as row, vineyard, field and tree crops, commercial nurseries, nursery stock production, and livestock and livestock product operations. Natural fallow lands are not eligible for funding. Applicant must determine if their project fits this definition.
23. Q. I would like to plant new hedgerows on different parts of the ranch (same APN where they have planted hedgerows before but new areas on the APN), is this practice eligible if they have never received HSP money before?
- A. CDFA tracks projects by APN. If an APN already has the practice implemented, HSP funds cannot be used to continue the implementation of ongoing and/or existing practices.
24. Q. How does a grant applicant get a 7-digit application ID number?
- A. A 7-digit ID number is created once the applicant starts the electronic application process in the application submission portal.
25. Q. What level of greenhouse gas emissions is considered a minimum for eligibility?
- A. There is no minimum level of greenhouse gas emissions reductions to qualify for funding.
26. Q. Do the miles traveled from a composting facility factor into the application?
- A. No. The GHG reductions achieved from compost application only take into account the carbon sequestered in soil as a result of the practice.
27. Q. If we receive a grant for one property can we apply for a grant on a different property after the first grant is completed?
- A. The same applicant may be eligible to receive future funding if the new project is located on an APN different from the previously funded project. Alternatively, if the project is located on the same APN, it must include practice(s) not previously implemented on that APN.
28. Q. Can hedgerows be planted along a property border or must they be across the property or fields?

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- A. Hedgerows may be planted on any location that is appropriate for the project, provided the implementation is consistent with [USDA NRCS CPS 422](#).
29. Q. The [USDA NRCS CPS 590](#) lists reduction of nutrients of N, P and K, while the HSP verification requirements are specific to 15% reduction in N. Please clarify which nutrients are applicable for HSP.
- A. For the purpose of HSP, 15% reduction in nitrogen is the primary mechanism of achieving GHG reductions. Applicants are encouraged to follow nutrient management for additional nutrients consistent with USDA NRCS CPS 590 as necessary for their farming operation.
30. Q. Verification for a lot of the practices includes receipts of seeds purchased or receipts of wood chips purchased (for mulching). If applicants already have seeds (through their own growing) or are getting seeds/mulch donated, would documentation of receiving/donation of seeds or mulch suffice for a "receipt of purchase?"
- A. Receipt is one among multiple contents to be checked during verification. If a grant recipient uses on-farm produced or donated seeds, related documentation (farming logs or other written records) may be used to serve as proof that clearly identifies seeds source, species name, germination rate, proof of no contamination of invasive or noxious weeds, and amount of seeds.
31. Q. Can mulch be applied on top of compost?
- A. Yes, they are two distinct practices, and each should be followed according to each practice implementation requirements. Compost application must be verified by CDFA before mulching practice can be implemented.
32. Q. For Multistory Cropping, is there a density of planting required?
- A. There is no requirement on density of plants to be planted for Multistory Cropping; the payment rate is on a per plant basis.
33. Q. In instances where verification requires receipts of purchase (e.g. for mulch or seeds or compost), if the receipts do not add up to the full reimbursement flat rate calculated by the Budget Worksheet, do applicants still receive the full amount?
- A. The purpose of checking receipts at verification is to make sure that the HSP practice is implemented following the program requirements (e.g., consistent with CDFA Compost Application White Paper and/or USDA NRCS CPS requirements). The payment rate for the practice is paid in full upon verification that practices have been implemented consistent with the project design and program requirements.
34. Q. What is a "free tree" listed in Budget Worksheet under Multi Story Cropping practice?
- A. A "free tree" is a tree that applicant may have received without cost, e.g., a tree donated from somebody.
35. Q. Can mulch be applied on non-productive farmland, e.g. a replant area?
- A. Yes.

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36. Q. What does foregone income mean in the context of [HSP payment rates and implementation requirements](#)?
- A. A practice scenario name including “foregone income” means the cropland is removed for the proposed practice(s) and the grower loses income that they would normally get from the crop. If no cropland is removed, applicant must choose a scenario name that does not include “foregone income”.
37. Q. For a grazing management plan development, the requirements state that the plan needs to be created and approved by a certified professional range manager. Can you please clarify what certification this is? Does a UC Cooperative Extension Livestock and Range Adviser fit the bill?
- A. For the purpose of the CDFA Healthy Soils Program, a certified rangeland manager must possess a valid State of California certification provided by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.
38. Q. For Conservation Crop Rotation, if I change the crop in the rotation in the three years, will I get penalized?
- A. Conservation Crop Rotation practice requires a planned sequence of crops to be planted which must be specified at the time of application for the full project term. This information will be included in the grant agreement CDFA will enter into with the recipient, if awarded. If the plan is changed mid-project, it may result in non-payment due to the project not meeting the terms of their agreement with CDFA.
39. Q. If my property has been impacted by recent wildfires, does that count as any priority points?
- A. No. Fire-affected lands are not prioritized in 2018 HSP Incentives Program. Applicants are encouraged to include such information as baseline data in their applications.
40. Q. A grower is rotationally grazing and wants to add a variety of other grasses to their field. Would this be qualified as a Forage and Biomass planting practice ([USDA NRCS CPS 512](#))?
- A. For the HSP, Forage and Biomass Planting ([USDA NRCS CPS 512](#)) involves either full or partial conversion to replace all crops in a conventionally managed continuous grain rotation with continuous unfertilized forage/biomass crops. This practice is not eligible for implementation on rangelands.
41. Q. Why do the NO_x Emission, NH₃ Emission, and PM_{2.5} Emission values change depending on what county is selected in the Budget Worksheet??
- A. PM_{2.5} is a fixed value across the state. NO_x and NH₃ parameters include consideration of several factors, such as soil type, crop type and climate, which results in different regional values.