

**2020 HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM  
INCENTIVES PROGRAM  
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)  
MARCH 13, 2020**

1. Q. Do farmers have to uniformly spread compost in orchards and vineyards or can they just apply in tree or vineyard rows?  
A. To be consistent with GHG model scenarios and comply with the rules of the CDFA Healthy Soils Program, compost must be spread uniformly across the whole orchard/vineyard.
2. Q. Does the Healthy Soils Program incentivize application of liquid organic fertilizer?  
A. The healthy soils program does not have a specific practice related to liquid organic fertilizers. However, applicants that use liquid organic fertilizers may be eligible for Nutrient Management (CPS 590).
3. Q. Can an applicant submit 2 applications using one portal account?  
A. Yes, more than one application can be submitted from the same account. However, the tax id, ag operation, fields, etc. need to be different because the CDFA HSP will only fund 1 unique tax-ID per Agricultural Operation per solicitation.
4. Q. Where should cost-share documents be uploaded into the HSP Incentives application?  
A. Cost-share documents are not required because the CDFA HSP pays 100% of the cost of practice implementation based on USDA NRCS EQIP payment scenarios. However, applicants can upload any additional documents describing cost-share in Section VII (Additional uploads) within the online application.
5. Q. If applicants want to apply the low compost application rate, how can they enter that into the budget for COMET-Planner?  
A. If the project is scored favorably, selected for funding, and the applicant is notified of an award, CDFA HSP will work with the applicant to approve the lower compost application rate.
6. Q. Are rice farmers eligible for the HSP Incentives Program?  
A. Yes, there are 23 practices eligible to be implemented on croplands. Please select those that best fit your agricultural system.
7. Q. How do I know what the C:N ratio of the compost is?  
A. When preparing for your application, the applicant will need to decide what C:N ratio of compost to use. For actual implementation, a recipient will need to verify the C:N ratio with the composting facility before purchasing to ensure compliance with the C:N ratio in the HSP grant agreement.
8. Q. Do I need to know what my soil organic matter is before applying to the HSP program?  
A. To prepare for your application, the applicant does not need to know the soil organic matter content. The CDFA HSP RePlan Tool will identify if the fields/APNs selected are eligible for compost application and Whole Orchard Recycling. If the project is selected for funding, the recipient will need to take soil samples prior to practice implementation, one, two, and three years after practice implementation and send the soil samples to a soil analytic laboratory to analyze for soil organic matter content.

**2020 HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM  
INCENTIVES PROGRAM  
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)  
MARCH 13, 2020**

9. Q. How soon will an HSP practice be eligible for funding if it was previously implemented?  
A. An HSP practice may become eligible for funding if one year has passed since implementation of the practice.
10. Q. Do the HSP practice payment rates in COMET-Planner vary based on the counties?  
A. No, the payment rates are the same for all counties in California.
11. Q. Can a farmer have someone else implement the HSP project for him/her?  
A. Yes, however, the farmer must be the primary contact person for CDFA HSP.
12. Q. Can a farmer re-plant their 1-time implemented vegetative practice in years 2 or 3 if it died in year 1?  
A. Yes, the farmer should replant to be consistent with program requirements using cost share dollars. CDFA HSP will not repay the cost of the 1-time vegetative practice because it will exceed the original budget.
13. Q. Can a farmer apply for the WOR practice if they have already cut down the trees?  
A. Yes, the HSP WOR payment scenario is based upon the cost of chipping the trees, uniform spreading of the chips, and chip incorporation to a depth of 6 inches.
14. Q. Can a farmer prepare their own Conservation Plan?  
A. A Conservation Plan must be prepared by an NRCS specialist, an NRCS-trained individual or entity, a certified Crop Advisor, a certified Professional Soil Scientist, or a certified Professional Agronomist.
15. Q. Can lessees of federal land apply for this grant, if they meet all other requirements and provide an approval from the Parks to implement the proposed practices until March 2023?  
A. The lessee may be eligible if they submit an agreement from the landowner - federal agency in this case, stating that they give the applicant permission to implement the proposed practice(s) on the APN(s)/Field(s) throughout the duration of the project. The lessee must comply with all other rules within the HSP Incentives Program.
16. Q. Where can a farmer get their on-farm produced compost tested for the C:N ratio?  
A. On-farm produced compost for the HSP Incentives Program must comply with the requirements on page 10 of the 2020 HSP Incentives Program Request for Grant Applications ([https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthsoils/docs/2020\\_HSP\\_Incentives\\_RGA.pdf](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthsoils/docs/2020_HSP_Incentives_RGA.pdf)). Farmers can send samples of finished compost to test its C:N ratio at any of the analytical laboratories provided in this link ([https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthsoils/docs/HSP\\_SoilSampling.pdf](https://www.cdfa.ca.gov/oefi/healthsoils/docs/HSP_SoilSampling.pdf)).
17. Q. Can the grant be used as part of creating a new farming operation?  
A. No, the grant funds can only be used for implementation of HSP agricultural practices and comply with application questions which require 3 years of crop and management history.
18. Q. Does the term socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers (SDFRs) apply to just the farm business owner, or does it include farm manager?

**2020 HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM  
INCENTIVES PROGRAM  
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)  
MARCH 13, 2020**

- A. It applies to the primary applicant listed on the application and would sign the payee data record.
19. Q. Is the Nutrient Management (CPS 590) practice eligible under the Orchard and Vineyard Agricultural System in the HSP Incentives Program?  
A. Yes, Nutrient management (CPS 590) is eligible and listed under the Orchard and Vineyard Agricultural Systems in the online application.
20. Q. Is a grower forced to plant cover crops the same time of year within the conservation crop rotation practice?  
A. No. All crops, regardless if they are cover crops or not should be planted according to the approved conservation crop rotation plan.
21. Q. Can an applicant plant cover crops or implement crop rotations after implementing the HSP WOR practice?  
A. No. According to the CDFA HSP WOR Report Practice Requirements, *“Following woodchip incorporation, land must be fallowed or replanted with trees within 3 years (consistent with the HSP grant term of 3 years and DNDC modelled conditions).”*
22. Q. Does an alfalfa field count as pastureland and can an NRCS rangeland specialist write a Grazing Management Plan?  
A. The alfalfa field may qualify for prescribed grazing if it is managed according to the “pasture” definition listed on Page 48 of the [2020 HSP Incentives RGA](#). Yes, an NRCS rangeland specialist is qualified to write a Grazing Management Plan.
23. Q. Does HSP funding come from federal sources?  
A. No, the HSP program is funded by the [California Climate Investments](#).
24. Q. Does the conservation plan need to be written in a specific format?  
A. No, but a conservation plan must include all required information as stated on page 16 of the [2020 HSP Incentives Program Request for Grant Application](#).
25. Q. Is a new orchard with no crop history eligible to apply for the HSP Incentives Program?  
A. The applicant should provide as much information as possible about the field/APN in the past three years. An application without cropping and/or management histories may be disqualified.
26. Q. If a mistake is made on an application, can the application be withdrawn and resubmitted?  
A. No, once an application is submitted, it will be moved to administrative review. The application may be scored lower or disqualified if answers were wrong, not relevant or unusable documents are attached. However, the applicant can re-apply upon receiving notification and feedback from CDFA if it occurs prior to grant money expenditure or closure of the application period (June 26, 2020).

**2020 HEALTHY SOILS PROGRAM  
INCENTIVES PROGRAM  
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)  
MARCH 13, 2020**

27. Q. Does compost have to be applied once every year of the project or can it be applied one time for the whole grant duration?
- A. For the CDFA HSP, compost must be applied once a year for each project year for the duration of the project (i.e. Project year 1, 2, and 3).
28. Q. Does a farmer have to own the land to be eligible for the HSP program?
- A. No, the farmer must either own the land or get a signed letter from the landowner that gives the applicant permission to implement the CDFA HSP agricultural practices throughout the duration of the grant.