



Natural Resources Conservation Service
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October 10, 2002

OKLAHOMA BULLETIN NO. OK440-3-2

SUBJECT: PGM – Local Emphasis Area Proposal Process

Purpose: To provide guidance to field offices regarding the new procedure for developing and submitting proposals for local emphasis areas.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2003

Action Required by March 31, 2003

With the passage of the 2002 Farm Bill, the requirement for priority areas was eliminated. However, local NRCS personnel have requested, and the State Technical Committee recognizes, that a focus should be maintained on prioritizing treatment when the locally-led process indicates a specific geographic area where a special natural resource conservation emphasis is needed. These special emphasis areas are now called Local Emphasis Areas (LEAs), and approximately 15% of the state allocation will be obligated for funding LEAs. An abbreviated version of the old priority area proposal has been developed and is available for field offices to submit as an LEA proposal to address this need. As discussed at the Farm Bill Programs Overview Training conducted statewide September 10-13, 2002, the proposal is now only three pages long. The proposal worksheet may be accessed at the Oklahoma NRCS web site using Internet Explorer. Select "Conservation Programs" under the "Quick Links" on the left side of the screen. From the "Conservation Programs" web page, scroll down to and select "Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)". On the "Environmental Quality Incentives Program" page, scroll down to and select the link for "EQIP Activities". On the "Environmental Quality Incentives (EQIP)" page, find the sub-heading "FY-2003" and the bullet "Local Emphasis Areas (LEA)". Select either of the links to the "EQIP LEA Proposal" or "EQIP LEA Proposal Instructions" to download. This information may be immediately accessed under the sub-heading **FY-2003** at: <http://www.ok.nrcs.usda.gov/PGM/html/EQIP.htm>

The Programs staff is available on request to assist with LEA proposal development.

The entire process requires significant effort "out front" of the proposal development in the locally-led process. Documentation of the locally-led and local work group meetings utilized to gather the resource issues to be addressed in the proposal must be obtained first. With this groundwork laid, the proposal document may be developed and forwarded, with documentation of the locally-led process, for funding consideration in

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The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

FY 2004. It is important to note that the approval of LEAs for EQIP funding will be based on documentation of a fully developed locally-led conservation effort and not the LEA proposal. The LEA proposal is only a summary of key statistical information for the area. New local emphasis area requests may be forwarded at any time to the Assistant State Conservationist, Programs, for review and consideration, but must arrive before **March 31, 2003**, to be considered for funding in FY 2004.

Currently, there are thirty-three (33) local emphasis areas active in the state (see attached map). Designated conservationists will need to continue to provide updated information relative to existing LEA activity and projected needs to maintain funding for an additional year. Please transfer previously submitted information for the revised LEA proposal, and provide documentation of the locally-led conservation meeting(s) and the local workgroup meeting(s) to the Assistant State Conservationist, Programs, for review and consideration. This information must also arrive before **March 31, 2003**, to be considered for funding in FY 2004.

Local input is essential for development of a Local Emphasis Area proposal. Field offices should begin preparations for obtaining this input through locally-led meetings and other outreach activities as soon as possible in FY 2003 so that proposals may be evaluated for potential funding in future fiscal years. Please forward any questions you may have concerning the contents of this bulletin to the Programs staff.

/s/

M. DARREL DOMINICK
State Conservationist

[Attachment](#)