Part 539 – Introduction

Subpart C – Exhibits

539.20 NRCS Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives for NRCS are referenced in the USDA and NRCS Strategic Plans: 2006-2010. The goals and objectives for NRCS are:

(1) Mission Goal 1: High Quality, Productive Soils

Soil Quality Outcome: The quality of intensively used soils is maintained or enhanced to enable sustained production of a healthy and abundant food supply.

Objective: In 2010, farmers will manage 70 percent of cropland under systems that maintain or increase soil condition and soil carbon. Baseline: In 2003, 60 percent of cropland was farmed under systems that maintained or increased soil condition and soil carbon.

(2) Mission Goal 2: Clean and Abundant Water

(i) Water Quality Outcome: Water quality that supports desired uses.

- Objective: Between 2006 and 2010, reduce potential sediment delivery from agricultural operations by 70 million tons. Baseline: In 2003, potential sediment delivery was 970 million tons.
- Objective: Between 2006 and 2010, reduce potential delivery of nitrogen from agricultural operations by 375,000 tons. Baseline: In 2003, potential annual delivery was an estimated 6 million tons.
- Objective: Between 2006 and 2010, reduce potential delivery of phosphorus from agricultural operations by 70,000 tons. Baseline: In 2003, potential annual delivery was an estimated 360,000 tons.

(ii) Water Quantity Outcome: An abundant and reliable water supply for the Nation.

Objective: By 2010, conserve or store an additional 8 million acre-feet of water for more efficient or future use. Baseline: In 2005, an estimated 2.5 million acre-feet of water was conserved.

(3) Mission Goal 3: Healthy Plant and Animal Communities

(i) Grassland Outcome: Productive, diverse, and resilient grassland, range, and forest ecosystems

Objective: Between 2006 and 2010, farmers, ranchers, and non-industrial forest landowners will apply management that will maintain or improve vegetative condition over the long term on 150 million acres of rangeland and forestland that are at risk. Baseline: In 1999, 500 million acres of non-Federal grazing lands and non-industrial forestlands were at risk.

(ii) Wildlife Habitat Outcome: Working lands and waters provide habitat for diverse and healthy wildlife, aquatic species, and plant communities.

Objective: In 2010, an additional 9 million acres of essential habitat will be improved and managed to benefit at-risk and declining species. Baseline: In 2005, NRCS helped improve habitat for declining and at-risk species on 2 million acres.

(iii) Wetland Outcome: Under development

Objective: By 2010, resource managers will create, restore, or enhance 1.5 million acres of wetlands on non-Federal lands. Baseline: In 2003, there were 111 million wetland acres on non-Federal lands within the contiguous United States.

(4) Mission Goal 4: Air Quality

Outcome, Objective, and Baseline TBD

(5) Mission Goal 5: An Adequate Energy Supply

Outcome, Objective, and Baseline TBD

(6) Mission Goal 6: Land Fragmentation

Landscape Outcome: Connected landscapes sustain a viable agricultural sector and natural resource quality.

Objective: By 2010, 70 percent of farms and ranches protected under easements will remain in active agriculture. Baseline: A study is being conducted by the University of Nebraska to ascertain how many farms and ranches enrolled in the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program remain in active agriculture.