

307.24 Honey Bee Pollinator Initiative

Name and Acronym: Honey Bee Pollinator Initiative (HBP)

Description/Summary

The honey bee pollinator effort will provide floral forage habitats on private and Tribal lands through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), to benefit hive nutritional health as part of an overall effort to increase the health of honey bee. Feral honey bees and other pollinators will also benefit from the establishment of plant forage habitats high in nectar and pollen. A large percentage of the nation's commercial honey bee hives are brought to the upper Midwest for the bees to rest and feed upon quality forage in preparation for overwintering. The targeted five States are home to 65 percent of the Nation's 2.5 million commercial colonies. Increased availability of forages that have low or no pesticide exposure should improve the condition and eventual survival of honey bees. This effort will leverage existing capabilities and resources, target assistance where it is most needed, cooperatively engage State and local partners, and facilitate collaboration with agricultural producers, Tribes, and others.

Target Species and Participating States

Species

Honey Bee Pollinators (*Apis mellifera*)

Priority Locations

Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Note: No other States may participate at this time.

Program Contact Information

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ProTracts Requirements

1. Subaccount Guidance
Approved States must establish HBP subaccounts in ProTracts. States must select the "Honey Bee Pollinator" account type in ProTracts. Only contracts with this account type will be considered as supporting the HBP effort.
2. Application, Evaluation, and Ranking Tool (AERT) Guidance – Choice Lists and Matrix Data
 - a. Approved Land Use Types

| |
|------------------------------|
| Crop |
| Farmsteads |
| Forest |
| Pasture |
| Range |
| Associated Agriculture Lands |

- b. Approved Resource Concerns

| |
|---|
| Livestock Production Limitation |
| Inadequate Feed and Forage |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat |

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| | |
|--|---|
| | Inadequate Habitat – Food |
| | Inadequate Habitat – Cover/Shelter |
| | Inadequate Habitat – Water |
| | Inadequate Habitat – Habitat Continuity (Space) |
| | Degraded Plant Condition |
| | Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health |

Note: No additional resource concerns may be added or used in ProTracts AERT to support this effort.

c. Core Practices

| Core Practices |
|--|
| 327 – Conservation Cover |
| 340 – Cover Crops |
| 386 – Field Border |
| 390 – Riparian Herbaceous Cover |
| 511 – Forage Harvest Management |
| 512 – Forage and Biomass Plantings |
| 528 – Prescribed Grazing |
| 550 – Range Planting |
| 612 – Tree/Shrub Establishment |
| 645 – Upland Wildlife Habitat Management |
| 647 – Early Successional Habitat Development |

d. Supporting Practices

| Supporting Practices |
|---|
| 315 – Herbaceous Weed Control |
| 328 – Conservation Crop Rotation |
| 380 – Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment |
| 382 – Fence |
| 391 – Riparian Forest Buffer |
| 484 – Mulching |
| 490 – Tree/Shrub Site Preparation |
| 516 – Livestock Pipeline |
| 533 – Pumping Plant |
| 595 – Integrated Pest Management |
| 614 – Watering Facility |
| 642 – Water Well |
| 655 – Forest Trails and Landings |
| 666 – Forest Stand Improvement |

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| NRCS Approved Resource Concerns | Conservation Cover | Conservation Crop Rotation | Cover Crops | Early Successional Habitat Development | Fence |
|--|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------|--|-------|
| Practice Code = | 327 | 328 | 340 | 647 | 382 |
| Livestock Production Limitation – Inadequate Feed and Forage | 0 | X | X | X | X |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Food | X | X | X | X | 0 |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Cover/Shelter | X | X | X | X | 0 |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Water | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Habitat Continuity (Space) | X | X | X | X | 0 |
| Degraded Plant Condition – Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health | X | X | X | X | X |

| NRCS Approved Resource Concerns | Field Border | Forage Harvest Management | Forage & Biomass Plantings | Forest Stand Improvement | Forest Trails and Landings | Herbaceous Weed Control |
|--|--------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Practice Code = | 386 | 511 | 512 | 666 | 655 | 315 |
| Livestock Production Limitation – Inadequate Feed and Forage | 0 | X | X | X | X | X |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Food | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Cover/Shelter | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Water | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Habitat Continuity (Space) | X | 0 | 0 | X | 0 | X |
| Degraded Plant Condition – Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health | X | X | X | X | X | X |

| NRCS Approved Resource Concerns | Integrated Pest Management | Livestock Pipeline | Mulching | Prescribed Grazing | Pumping Plant | Range Planting | Riparian Forest Buffer |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------|----------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Practice Code = | 595 | 516 | 484 | 528 | 533 | 550 | 391 |
| Livestock Production Limitation – Inadequate Feed and Forage | 0 | 0 | 0 | X | 0 | X | X |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Food | X | 0 | X | X | 0 | X | X |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Cover/Shelter | 0 | 0 | X | X | 0 | X | X |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Water | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | X |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Habitat Continuity (Space) | 0 | 0 | 0 | X | 0 | X | X |

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| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Degraded Plant Condition – Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health | 0 | X | X | X | X | X | X |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| NRCS Approved Resource Concerns | Riparian Herbaceous Cover | Tree/ Shrub Establishment | Tree/Shrub Site Preparation | Water Well | Watering Facility | Windbreak/ Shelterbelt Establishment |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Practice Code = | 390 | 612 | 490 | 642 | 614 | 380 |
| Livestock Production Limitation – Inadequate Feed and Forage | X | 0 | 0 | X | X | X |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Food | X | X | 0 | 0 | 0 | X |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Cover/Shelter | X | X | 0 | 0 | 0 | X |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Water | X | 0 | 0 | X | X | 0 |
| Fish and Wildlife – Inadequate Habitat – Habitat Continuity (Space) | X | X | 0 | 0 | X | X |
| Degraded Plant Condition – Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health | X | X | X | X | X | X |

Legend:

X = Check the corresponding box in the AERT matrix.

0 = Leave the corresponding box blank in the AERT matrix.

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**Honey Bee Pollinator Screening Criteria Worksheet
NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

A screening worksheet must be completed for each eligible EQIP application.

Instructions:

This screening worksheet must be completed for each eligible producer applying for EQIP Honey Bee Pollinator assistance. Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis; however, application periods are established for purposes of evaluation, ranking, and funding decisions. The goal of this screening tool is to ensure that conservation technical assistance and EQIP program benefits are managed efficiently to address priority conservation needs related to this national initiative.

Completion of this worksheet and documentation does not constitute agreement to provide EQIP program benefits nor approval of a program contract. The original screening worksheet should be filed with the applicant case file or EQIP program file and unless the application is determined to be ineligible, the screening priority (high and low) must be recorded in ProTracts. Upon request, a copy of any completed screening worksheet may be provided to the applicant.

Detailed Screening Criteria Worksheet – Complete for Each Eligible EQIP Applicant

| | | | |
|-----------------|--|---------------|--|
| Applicant Name: | | County: | |
| Application No: | | Field Office: | |
| Evaluator Name: | | Date: | |

Priority Determination for ProTracts:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p><u>Ineligible Category:</u> The application is located in the focal area or within 1 mile of an apiary? Yes (eligible) No (not eligible)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An apiary is defined as five or more hives or as being identified on a State apiary register. • If not on a State register, the producer provides documentation of location of apiary. | |
| <p>Has the producer had a financial assistance contract terminated in the past 3 years? Yes (low) No (High)</p> | |
| <p>Are any of the planned plantings located adjacent to a (i) cropland field, * or (ii) a pasture or hayland treated with insecticides? If so,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If cropland or treated pasture/hayland is located on only one side of the planting, is the planting width less than 125 feet? <i>Yes (low) No (high)</i> • If cropland treated pastureland/hayland is located immediately adjacent to both sides of the planting is the planting width less than 250 feet? <i>Yes (low) No (high)</i> <p>* it is assumed that all cropland is treated with insecticides or has the potential to be treated.</p> | |
| <p>Any rating of “low” will not be ranked.</p> | |

The priority determination of high or low must be recorded in ProTracts application priority for this applicant.

| | | | |
|----------------|--|----------------|--|
| D.C. Approval: | | Date Approved: | |
|----------------|--|----------------|--|

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AERT Guidance – Ranking Criteria Questions

The total ranking points associated with this project are to be distributed in AERT and approved ranking questions as follows:

| AERT Level | Maximum Points | Point Percentages |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| National Ranking Questions | 250 | 25% |
| State Ranking Questions | 400 | 40% |
| Local Ranking Questions | 250 | 25% |
| Efficiency Score | 100 | 10% |
| Total points for this project: | 1000 | 100% |

The following are detailed instructions for populating ranking questions and points in ProTracts AERT.

National Ranking Criteria Requirements: (250 Points)

National ranking questions are established in ProTracts by National Headquarters.

State Ranking Criteria Requirements: (400 Points)

State ranking questions are established by National Headquarters and will be entered into ProTracts by the States for this initiative. No Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide will be required or applied.

| EQIP HBP State-Level Ranking Questions | Points |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Proximity to registered or known honey bee apiary (select only one): | |
| 1a. Less than 1 mile | 100 |
| 1b. 1 – 2 miles | 50 |
| 1c. Greater than 2 miles | 25 |
| 2. Honey bee forage being provided by the contract will be available for (select only one): | |
| 2a. 1 year | 30 |
| 2b. 2 years | 60 |
| 2c. 3 years or more | 100 |
| 3. The planted honey bee forage will be available (select all that apply): | |
| 3a. During early bloom period | 30 |
| 3b. During mid-bloom period | 40 |
| 3c. During late-bloom period | 30 |
| Note: Bloom period is defined by State technical guidance | |
| 4. The seeding will include (select only one): | |
| 4a. One honey bee forage species only | 25 |
| 4b. Two to four honey bee forage species | 50 |
| 4c. More than four of such species | 100 |
| Total Points: | |

Local Ranking Criteria Requirements (250 Points)

Local ranking criteria are approved and entered into ProTracts at the State level according to the requirements below.

Local questions to be developed by each State, using the following guidance:

- NRCS State offices will work with partners and subcommittees to develop local criteria to determine potential honey bee forage opportunities.
- Examples of local questions States must follow to stay within intention of effort:
 - Will the plantings target critical times of nectar dearth? (seek input from local bee keepers)
 - Will grazing management be implemented to significantly favor (target) honey bee forage plants?
 - Will forest management be implemented to significantly favor (target) honey bee forage plants?