

Part 404 – Pest Management

Subpart C – Responsibilities

404.30 Department of Agriculture

A. Responsibilities, as described in a June 3, 1988, memorandum of understanding between NIFA and NRCS, are as follows:

- (1) NIFA agrees to provide assistance to NRCS in support of the development and use of site-specific information and to address water quality issues.
- (2) NIFA and NRCS agree to cooperate in encouraging each State's (or equivalent) Extension and NRCS organizational unit to develop guidelines and appropriate pesticide components for use in landowners'/operators' conservation plans.
- (3) NRCS agrees (as outlined in a USDA companion document to the June 3, 1988, memorandum of understanding between NIFA and NRCS) to:
 - (i) ". . . provide site-specific resource data and planning assistance with regard to pesticide use and impacts on water quality to pesticide users and others making land use and management decisions."
 - (ii) ". . . assist landowners with the implementation of acceptable pesticide management practices."

B. Additionally, to meet the requirements of the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996, NRCS is committed to promoting IPM that provides both economic and environmental benefits.

404.31 NRCS National Headquarters Office

A. The Deputy Chief for Science and Technology, under the direction of the Chief, is responsible for providing national leadership for policy and procedures for NRCS pest management and identifying pest management research and technology development needs.

B. The Director of the Ecological Sciences Division (ESD) is responsible for developing, implementing, and evaluating NRCS pest management policy and procedures, in coordination with USDA's Office of Pest Management Policy.

C. The National Pest Management Specialist of the ESD provides national leadership for pest management policy, environmental hazard technologies, and training. Including:

- (1) Assisting agency leadership in formulating and recommending national policies, procedures, and standards.
- (2) Technical leadership and guidance for all things related to pest management.
- (3) Quality assurance and quality control.
- (4) National coordination of pest management related deliberations with other pest management discipline leads.
- (5) Promoting and maintaining relations with groups and agencies that have common interest in pest management in all landuses.
- (6) Technology transfer and direct technical support to States and State staff.

- (7) Provide training and guidance to the National Technology Support Center Specialists charged with supporting Pest Management activities in the agency.

D. The National Pest Management Specialist along with the National Agronomist and the National Nutrient Management Specialist are responsible for leadership on NRCS agronomy-related activities. (M 190 Part 500 Subpart 500C)

E. The National Water Quality and Quantity Team provides the technology development and technical assistance for pest management environmental hazard analysis technologies.

F. The Director of the Soil Survey Division is responsible for maintaining the soil database to support interpretations for pesticide leaching, solution runoff, and adsorbed runoff loss potentials.

404.32 NRCS National Technology Support Centers (NTSC)

NTSC Directors will provide technical assistance to STCs/Directors of the Pacific Islands and Caribbean Areas for pest management assistance in their respective areas.

404.33 NRCS State Offices (or Equivalent)

STCs/Directors of the Pacific Islands and Caribbean Areas are responsible for:

- (1) Targeting pest management technical assistance to specific resource concerns and locations within their respective States/Areas. For example, watersheds with pesticide-impaired sources of drinking water, pesticide Total Maximum Daily Load requirements, air quality non-attainment areas, or highly vulnerable areas that may contribute to future pest suppression-related contamination, increase risk of fire, and livestock production reduction.
- (2) Supplementing the pest management guidance and requirements in appropriate directives, as necessary, making it applicable to local conditions and providing a copy to the Director, ESD.
- (3) Ensuring that appropriate training is provided to all NRCS personnel who provide pest management technical assistance and establishing a process to provide continuing education to maintain employee certifications.
- (4) Making certain that all NRCS personnel who provide pest management technical assistance to the public meet the applicable requirements for their positions and the State or local testing requirements as required by law.
- (5) Working in consultation with respective State Technical Committees to address State-specific pest management issues.
- (6) Utilize current technology to evaluate pest management environmental hazard. Environmental hazard assessment tools must be reviewed by the National Pest Management Specialist.
- (7) Providing assistance, training, and technical tools (with support of NTSC) to NRCS field service centers so that they are able to provide assistance to clients to recognize, inventory, assess, and suppress weeds in non-cropland.

404.34 NRCS Field Service Centers (or Equivalent)

A. NRCS field service center technical leaders (e.g., District Conservationists and Team Leaders) are responsible for providing local leadership with implementation of the pest management policy.

B. NRCS field service center (or equivalent) employees are responsible for:

- (1) Evaluating environmental hazards associated with the client's chosen pest management concerns.
- (2) Providing technical assistance to clients to mitigate identified environmental hazard of pest management strategies with conservation practices (NRCS FOTG practices) and/or Prevention, Avoidance, Monitoring and Suppression (PAMS) activities recognized by the local land grant university or regional IPM center as being a viable PAMS activity.
- (3) Assisting clients to adopt PAMS activities that protect natural resources in addition to those activities used solely for the mitigation purposes above. When the client works with qualified individual(s) (e.g., University Extension, Certified Crop Advisor/Pesticide Control Advisor, etc.) to evaluate and select PAMS activities, the field office staff should document which activities were adopted.
- (4) Providing assistance to clients to recognize, inventory, assess, and suppress pests in non-cropland. The field office staff will bring to the client's attention any population of pests in non-cropland that may prevent the successful establishment of a desired plant community, conservation practice, or degrade the resource base to the extent that the land cannot support its intended use. Additionally, field office staff may refer the client to qualified individuals (e.g., University Extension, Certified Crop Consultants, State or county pest coordinator, etc.) for pest management recommendations, or provide the client with pest suppression references. Field office staff shall encourage producers to work with their State and/or county pest management program.
- (5) Identifying pest management needs and informing STCs/Directors of the Pacific Islands and Caribbean Areas, or designee(s), of these needs, as appropriate.