



Participating in AEM Tier 2

This document outlines the criteria for completion of AEM Tier 2 Assessment Worksheets. Meeting or exceeding these minimum requirements will be the basis for acceptable utilization of state and federal AEM funding.

AEM Tier 2 - Assessment

Objectives

- Document environmental stewardship and establish benchmark conditions.
- Identify environmental concerns and opportunities
- Provide an educational opportunity.
- Establish information that can be used to prioritize farms or issues for Tiers 3 & 4.

Procedure – Farmer

- Participate in the utilization of the appropriate worksheets identified in the Tier 1 Questionnaire.
- Describe with accuracy the current management practices on the farm.
- Consider the information presented through the Tier 2 Worksheets.
- Allow the assisting resource professional to have access to the farm property.
- Agree to continue with the AEM process.
- Provide feedback to the AEM Team on changes you are willing to make to address environmental concerns and opportunities.

Procedure – Resource Professional

1. Utilize the indicated Tier 2 Worksheets (determined by *Tier 1 Questionnaire*) for the highest priority farms on-site with the farmer.
 - a) If the *Watershed Site Evaluation Worksheet* was not reviewed with the farmer as part of Tier 1, it should be reviewed at this step. This worksheet should be substantially completed in the office prior to review with the farmer.
 - b) When completing *Specialized Worksheets* (Horse, Greenhouse, Vegetables, Fruit, and VineBALANCE) appropriate “Core” worksheets also need to be utilized as part of the Tier 2 Assessment. See AEM Tier 2 Worksheets – 1/2008 in your AEM Manual for a complete listing of worksheets. The actual worksheets are available at www.nys-soilandwater.org
2. Provide feedback to the farmer.
 - a) Complete and review the *AEM Tier 2 Worksheet Summary Report* with the farmer. At a minimum the report will contain (see example in the AEM Manual):
 - Worksheet name.
 - Overall level of concern for the worksheet.
 - List items of greatest concern to the watershed and the farmer, as well as issues of significant environmental risk.

- Document the existence of a low risk condition – or – recommendations to address items of high concern or risk
 - b) Provide supporting/requested information from the Tier 2 session or the Tier 1 interview.
 - c) Recommend next steps with the level of planning needed (Tier 3A, B, or C). Include information on programs that may be able to address concerns/interests/opportunities.
3. Update the cooperator file with the following:
 - a) Copy of the AEM *Tier 2 Summary Report*.
 - b) The *Watershed Site Evaluation Worksheet* (saving other worksheets is optional).
 - c) Complete *Assistance Notes* to document Tier 2 visits including any information or recommendations provided.
 4. Rank each farm assessed to advance to AEM Tier 3 Planning and Tier 4 Implementation.
 - a) At a minimum, ranking will involve placing farms in a high, medium, or low category for planning and implementation. Pollutants of concern, worksheet results, and/or farm location are examples of factors for ranking farms.
 - b) We suggest you develop a procedure for ranking your farms endorsed by your AEM Team.
 5. Enter key information collected during Tier 2 into a county-based data management system in order to report results and to guide future watershed management decision making. Key information may include:
 - a) Update any information related to the farm, animals, and crops that has changed since completing Tier 1.
 - b) Results of the Tier 2 Assessment for certain worksheets that are considered most significant for the watershed in which the farm is located.

Deliverables Summary – Tier 2

1. Document each farm that completes Tier 2 on the Final Report Form, and record the time spent in completing each Tier 2 in the Time Log. These forms will be reviewed and approved by your AEA at program close-out, and the Final Report will be submitted to the SWCC.