

**Climate Resilient Farming
Frequently Asked Questions
4/3/19**

Can I apply for multiple tracks on behalf of the same farm?

Yes, but you must submit separate applications for each track and the systems must each stand alone and not be dependent on the other.

How long will the contract be?

The contract term will start as 3 construction/growing seasons plus three months for administration to close out the project, with an additional 24 months possible through no cost time extensions (with consent of all parties), consistent with the Agricultural NonPoint Source program policies.

Is an educational, publicly owned farm eligible?

The definition of a farm in the Agriculture and Markets Law (which is the definition that will be used for the Climate Resilient Farming program) is:

"Farm operation" means the land and on-farm buildings, equipment, manure processing and handling facilities, and practices which contribute to the production, preparation and marketing of crops, livestock and livestock products as a commercial enterprise" (AGM Article 25-AA §301)

The farm in question here is an educational rather than commercial enterprise and is therefore ineligible as a farm.

Is a not for profit farm eligible?

See question above for the definition of "farm operation." A farm is eligible as long as it meets the criteria of being a commercial farm, regardless of its 501(c)3 status.

Will there be a contract or a letter of agreement for a project seeking only \$10,000 in state funds? Page 8 indicates awards \$10,000 or under may be via letter of agreement.

The LOA is for the total state amount so yes, \$10,000 or under regardless of total project cost could be done under a LOA.

Can we use the new program Water Erosion Prediction Project (WEPP) instead of RUSLE for calculations that will be used on the CRF application?

WEPP may be used in place of RUSLE2 in the CRF application process, despite it not yet being allowed for use in planning for NRCS or CAFO purposes.

A local municipality along with a school district would like to partner with two downstream agricultural producers to implement a water management system to improve the stream corridor and make the whole watershed more resilient to increased severe storms. Is the municipality eligible as a partner with the agricultural producers for cost share and in-kind match as part of the project?

Yes, a municipality is eligible as a partner with the agricultural producers for cost-share and/or in-kind match as part of the project. Match resources from the municipality should be reflected as a sub-category under sponsor match.

Is rented agricultural land that is owned by a municipality eligible for funding?

Yes, rented agricultural land regardless of who owns the land is eligible for funding. BMPs to be implemented on rented property should not be submitted for funding unless there is a written lease for the use of the property for the life span of the BMP (page 6 of RFP).

Is a farm that has an easement on it eligible?

Yes, as long as the easement does not preclude any of the proposed practices.

With regard to Track 1, Agricultural Waste Storage and Flare, would a solids separator unit to help reduce carbon matter and gas development be an eligible component?

The solids separation is considered a critical component of the system to reduce solids accumulation in the storage. It is eligible for cost-share as a part of a manure storage cover and flare system (refer to RFP Appendix A—Guidance Document Track 1).

Does the program have a preference on whether equipment is brand new or refurbished?

Any District with specific questions about equipment etc. is welcome to ask specific questions regarding their situation.

However, a general rule of thumb consistent with the Agricultural Non-Point Source Program, is that equipment that has been professionally refurbished and/or carries a new warranty is likely to satisfy program requirements, and equipment that is being simply reused may not meet requirements.

Is the flare a required component of Track 1, Agricultural Waste Storage Cover and Flare?

Yes—the methane must be burned and converted to carbon dioxide.

Is there a minimum landowner/operator contribution requirement? Can the sponsor or County provide the whole 25% local match?

There is no landowner/operator contribution requirement. The maximum state cost share rate is 75% with a 25% local match, which can be provided through District, federal, or landowner funds (or any combination thereof). State funding cannot match other state funds.

However, one of the metrics for scoring under “Cost Effectiveness” (worth 20% of the overall score) is “Landowner support is documented.” If the landowner is not providing funding for the project, it may be advisable to add some other documentation of landowner commitment to completing the project and eventual upkeep, operations, and maintenance.

Is a CNMP required for Track 1? Are CNMP updates eligible for funding?

Any farm receiving funding for a manure storage cover and flare system must have a CNMP. Updates to the CNMP are eligible for in-kind match (refer to RFP Appendix A—Guidance Document Track 1).

We have a farm that is interested in applying for funds for a cover and flare. Does the storage need to already exist in order for the farm to apply for funding?

No, the storage does not need to already exist to be eligible to apply for funding. However, the RFP and Rating Sheet requires specific information about the proposed amount of methane reduced, clean water exclusion, etc. from the storage. A design for the pending storage system should be in place in order to answer the required questions pursuant to the CRF RFP.

The District received a grant through Round 1 of the CRF Program. The project design demonstrates a much higher cost than what was originally budgeted. Can the District apply for additional funds to cover the budget shortfall?

No, the District cannot apply for additional funds to cover the budget shortfall for the Round 1 project. The District and farmer could decide to re-apply under the current Round for funds with a design in hand and more accurate budget for the project and cancel the Round 1 project.

We have a landowner in the county that is in the process of establishing a small farm on about 25 acres. The farm plans to graze animals and plant about 10 acres of apple and nut trees. As far as the Climate Resilient Farming grant is concerned, they are most interested in Track 3, and specifically the Prescribed Rotational Grazing System. Regarding eligibility, they are in the process of purchasing the property and establishing the farm, with an anticipated property transfer closing date at before the RFP deadline. Does the CRF Program require a certain level of experience or 'establishment' for a farming operation to apply?

The CRF Program does not require a certain level of experience or establishment for a farming operation to apply. However, landownership and/or control must be established before the closing of the RFP and the District must conduct the required Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) assessment before the proposal details can be developed. In addition, the goal of the CRF Program is to reduce the impact of agriculture on climate change and to increase

the adaptability and resiliency of New York State farms in the face of a changing climate. Any applications made on behalf of the farm(s) must meet these goals.

If a farm is applying to implement a double cover cropping system using a no-till drill and does not have a no-till drill, would that be an eligible expense to request funds for based on the equipment definition in the grant RFP? (If the equipment is directly related to the function of the BMP state assistance payments can be used.)

Equipment that is directly related to the function of the BMP can be eligible for state assistance under the CRF Program. If being cost-shared for a farm, it should be explained why this specific piece of equipment is needed, why it cannot be purchased by the District and made available to all applicable farms in the county, and why the standard rate per acre reimbursement for cover crop practice systems is not the most feasible option to incentivize adoption of the conservation practice system(s).

A farm in the County is in the process of developing a two-staged earthen manure storage system to function with a new barn facility. The first facility is going to be smaller. The second storage facility is going to be much larger. Since both storage facilities are going to be considered part of the same system do they both have to be covered to prevent rainwater from mixing in? In addition, how long is the producer required to track and report the amount of methane destroyed through the system?

There is no requirement that both storage facilities be covered. However, additional consideration may be given for Adaptation/Resiliency points if both storages are covered. There is no required length of time for the producer to track and report the amount of methane destroyed. The Track 1 Proposal Rating Sheet includes consideration of the commitment by the producer and District to engage in regular testing and/or recording to be able to demonstrate greenhouse gas emission savings because of practice systems implemented. Additional consideration may be given in the scoring based on the length of time the producer and District commits to tracking and reporting greenhouse gas emissions savings.

Can nutrient management, NY NRCS 590, be eligible for reimbursement through the CRF RFP in the Soil Health Track?

Yes, nutrient management, NY NRCS 590, is an eligible practice system for reimbursement through the CRF RFP, Soil Health Track.

Under the RFP, Soil Health Track, can the District purchase equipment for assisting landowners in completing no till or composting practices and then work with them to implement?

Equipment that is directly related to the function of the BMP can be eligible for state assistance under the CRF Program. Districts can request state assistance payments to cost-share the expense related to the purchase of equipment to be used on farms to implement BMP Systems. Specific farm(s) must be listed on the proposal who will be working with the District to implement the BMP systems.

Could you please provide some clarification on the CRF proposal Rating Sheet on page 23 under Cost Effectiveness part b? Specifically, what is a clear definition of farm expansion as it relates to practice proposals under the Soil Health Track?

Projects addressing needs due to farm expansion shall be defined as any proposed practice system(s) needed to enhance adaptation to climate driven extreme weather from intended or recent farm growth, as opposed to solely due to the new realities of changing climate. Examples could include proposals to extend current or recently cost-shared cover cropping to new crop fields obtained by a farmer or to expand current or recently cost-shared rotational grazing systems on new land acquired by a farmer.

Is replacement of an existing waste storage cover eligible for funding? We have a farm that installed an anaerobic digester over 20 years ago and the cover needs replacement, would this be an eligible project under CRF, Track 1?

Replacement of an existing waste storage cover that was installed as a component of an anaerobic digester is not eligible under CRF, Track 1.

Can CRF funds, under Track 1, be used to upgrade a non-functional manure separator?

No, CRF funds cannot be used to upgrade a non-functional manure solids/liquid separator.

On page 22 track 3 section d, “will there be a reduction in nitrogen fertilizer as a result of practices systems implemented, and if so, how much? How do I answer the questions when RUSLE2 does not estimate Nitrogen loss?

Nitrogen fertilizer reductions may be estimated a number of ways, including comparing current nitrogen fertilizer applications by the farm with those predicted to result from project implementation. Cornell University Nutrient Guidelines (<http://nmsp.cals.cornell.edu/guidelines/nutrientguide.html>) and associated tools and methods may be used to perform the estimates.

Is a farm that has received previous funding from an AgNPS grant eligible for funding a similar or related practice through CRF? For example, is a farm that is currently in the middle of an AgNPS Soil Health grant eligible for a CRF grant for additional cover crop plantings, to take the cover crop program to the next level by planting mixes of cover crop species? What about a farm that wants to apply for funding to add a cover and flare system to a manure storage that was partially funded by AgNPS?

There are no restrictions in the Climate Resilient Farming program on farms that have received state, federal, or local grants; current or in the past. Previous conservation projects can be used to demonstrate landowner commitment to this project (a factor in the “cost effectiveness” portion of the rating). The Track 1 Cover and Flare retrofit is eligible, regardless of how the initial manure storage was funded. The Track 3 Soil Health cover crop system is eligible, as long as it is on *additional acreage* from the first grant. Climate Resilient Farming funds cannot be used to “extend” an AgNPS cover crop grant on the exact same fields as received the previous grant. It is also advisable for the application to highlight the ways in which this proposal would take the farm’s cover crop program to the next level.

If a farmer is going to do cover cropping or buffers in order to try and get mitigation points in conjunction with a project in track 2, should the cover crop or buffers be close by the main project?

There is no requirement that the cover crop/buffers be proximal to the main project. However, a project with systems that are designed to function together in event of extreme weather are more likely to score better than a similar project with discrete systems that function on their own but do not build on each other.