

Cost-Share Questions for Board

Sod-busting- Current Policy states “no cost-share assistance allowed for lands from highly erodible pasture or grassland to cropland after January 1, 1987”. NRCS commented that we should consider changing this. Comment was that we shouldn’t incentivize sod busting but a shorter time frame might be better. One suggestion would be 20 years.

Allowing Producer to get Cost-share- We received a request to consider allowing a producer to get cost-share on practices if their landowner signed off on a release form. While this would allow for more efficiency there are also some potential risks involved. I have included a potential release form if we were to allow this.

Cost Share Limit- Policy is currently “a producer can receive up to \$5,000 per fiscal year or \$10,000 if they have a large project. Contracts over \$10,000 will be approved by the board.” Normally we just max contracts out at \$10,000. We don’t get a lot of these, but should we be bringing these to the board for approval if over \$10,000?

LB-21- Buried Pipeline Practice: Current policy states that we only pay cost-share on one gravity to pivot conversion per landowner per year. We already have the monetary limit which restricts how much a cost-share a landowner gets so the board should consider removing the 1 contract per year restriction.

Irrigation Management Incentive Program – II This program only allows 1 application per producer ever. Our other program for Watermark sensors allows 2 per year. Watermarks are still useful and provide good data, but we should consider providing similar or great cost-share opportunities for producers willing to try more high-tech soil moisture sensing technologies.

Cover Crop- If we added this as a practice, a targeted specific conservation concern might be best (ex. High nitrate areas, HEL where surface water quality is a concern). Budget a specific amount of our Water Quality CS funds.

If we were to add this we would have to consider what requirements/restrictions to consider for things like planting date, whether to allow grazing, acre or monetary limits,

CPNRD and LPSNRD have cover crop programs, below is a link to their requirements

CPNRD- <https://cpnrd.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/CSPage-68.pdf>

LPSNRD Program- https://www.lpsnrd.org/sites/default/files/cover_crop_program_1.pdf

Brush Management- One suggestion was to add brush management as an eligible practice. Some NRDs do this through NC-20.

NC – 20 Brush Management (mechanical and chemical means)

Purpose: Removal or reduction of non-herbaceous plants to restore natural plant community balance, create the desired plant community, and reduce competition between desired and unwanted plants. Practice to be planned in a manner that it will not adversely affect threatened or endangered species (plant or animal) or their habitat. Only chemicals approved by the Nebraska Department of Agriculture may be used, and in accordance with label directions. A Mechanical and chemical treatment methods at actual cost not to exceed NRCS established maximums.