



United States Department of Agriculture

NRCS National Air Quality Initiative Update

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RMNP Ag Subcommittee Meeting
November 6, 2014

NAQI Background

- 2008 Farm Bill included provisions for the use of EQIP to assist producers with air quality resource concerns and to meet Federal, State, and local regulatory requirements
 - Authorized \$37.5 million per year
- NRCS designed the NAQI to help producers meet air quality compliance requirements and provide opportunities to install air quality conservation practices

NAQI – 2009-2014

- NRCS originally designed the program based on nonattainment areas and the number of acres of agricultural production in those counties
 - Great success in CA
 - Mixed results in other states
 - Lack of agricultural contribution to nonattainment issues
 - Focus on nonattainment left some real agricultural air quality issues unaddressed or inadequately addressed

NAQI of the Future

- 2014 Farm Bill left language pretty much intact, but reduced authorization to \$25 million per year
- NRCS has decided to supplement this amount to fund \$37.5 million for FY15
- Changes to nonattainment-only approach

NAQI Changes for FY15

- 3 National priority areas/funding pools
 - National nonattainment (\$20-25 million)
 - Right now, limited to CA and AZ
 - Regional air quality (\$5-10 million)
 - Multi-state projects
 - State air quality (\$5-10 million)
 - Single state projects

NAQI Changes for FY15

- States are no longer allocated funds based on nonattainment/agricultural production formula
- States apply for funds by submitting a “Request to Participate”
 - By December 1, 2014 for FY15

Request to Participate

- Intended priority area pool
- Geographic extent of initiative area
- Specific agricultural air quality issue to be addressed and reasons
- Existing or potential air quality regulatory requirements to be addressed, if any
- Proposed strategy to be used, including core practice standards
- Anticipated external partner participation
- Amount of funds requested

Funding Decisions

- NHQ will make funding decisions based on submitted Requests to Participate, with emphasis on:
 - Addressing nonattainment pollutants or precursors in a nonattainment area
 - Addressing an existing or potential Federal, State, or local air quality regulatory requirement related to agricultural sources
 - Involve significant partner participation

Summary

- Better ability to address true agricultural air quality issues, not just nonattainment
 - States will have more flexibility and say in what and how to address
- Ability to address regional issues
- Partner participation is encouraged and prioritized



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