

RECEIVED MAR 13 2009

98

EQIP Manure Lagoons: I am a medium sized grass farmer (320 acres) that would like to see conservation money being used for conservation. There are steward minded farmers and ranchers out there hanging on to an economic thread. Conservation minded farmers and ranchers are often on the verge of failing because their conservation ethics don't allow them to follow the trend toward bottom line factory farms. I don't agree with the idea of our cost sharing CAFO's (confined animal feed operations) manure lagoons, or having to bribe them with tax payer money to get them to reduce their grave hazard to our water and air. Keeping CAFO's viable isn't what our conservation tax money was intended for. CAFO's exist because they make money in a world of weakly enforced and designed water protection laws, and because they take advantage of short sighted government programs and large factory structure. Don't encumber NRCS with rules that give resources to CAFO's so they can expand and further threaten more conservation minded, sane sized operations.

Even if a lagoon was to be engineered for the 50 year flood (we guess at what that is) obviously our most precious resource (water) is still seriously threatened. That isn't conservation. CAFO's need to build their own lagoons and THEY should be responsible (bonded), if next years flood is the one that exceeds the design criteria. If NRCS designs and funds the lagoon, wouldn't it be the fault of our short sighted rule makers if it was our next EPA super fund site?

Payment Limitations: None should farm the government. Aid over \$10,000 a year is counter productive use of tax payer money.

#### CSP

I support the change from security in the CSP title to stewardship or sustainable.

I support help for organic certified farmers on organic issues, but the litmus test need not be organic to qualify for the program. Many sustainable operations are beyond organic, and are even more deserving then organic certified.

I don't like the idea of tying competitive ranking of farmers applying for CSP, to how much a farm operation can be improved. How much the farmer has already done should add a larger share of points toward being awarded a contract; as it indicates the farmer's true dedication to the spirit of stewardship. Don't we want to rescue farmers that are trying to do it on their own, but could use help to economically survive? We have lots of farmers that will follow the money and do whatever it takes to add equity and cash flow to their operations, but they will only do the minimum, and when the winds of change blow, they will dump stewardship and chase new money elsewhere.

cliff

*note www.regulations.gov is user unfriendly.  
(times out when loading - medium speed connection)*