

GULF CITRUS COST-SHARE PROCEDURES

Purpose

This program has been established to promote agricultural BMPs in order to achieve water quality and quantity benefits in the Gulf Citrus Production Region in Southwest Florida. Through the program, FDACS will provide reimbursement for select agricultural practices that have potential water conservation, sediment control, and water quality benefits. It is anticipated that this program will provide Gulf Citrus growers with economic assistance that would facilitate their voluntary implementation of BMPs that would not otherwise be economically feasible.

Eligible Practices

Aquatic weed barrier
Chemigation infrastructure
Conversion/ Repair of Flash Board Riser Water Control
Conversion to low volume irrigation system
Grade stabilization
On-site water detention/retention
Permanent agrichemical mixing/washdown station
Portable agrichemical mixing station
Precision application equipment
Water table observation well
Soil moisture monitoring

Aquatic Weed Barrier

A structure installed upstream of outfall structures to reduce offsite discharge of aquatic vegetation and subsequent decay of plant debris and secondary release of nutrients. Accumulated vegetation should be physically removed periodically (do not treat chemically).

Chemigation Infrastructure

This practice includes equipment (i.e. pumps, storage tanks, etc.) that can be used to facilitate the application of fertilizers and other appropriate chemicals through a microirrigation system. Chemigation can be used to improve water quality by minimizing the loss of fertilizer and pesticides during storm events.

Conversion / Repair of Flashboard Riser Water Control Structure

Flashboard risers are used to facilitate water table control in citrus groves. As secondary benefits, flashboard risers also improve sediment control and water quality. Cost share is available for conversion to flashboard structures and for the replacement of existing flashboard structures that are no longer functioning properly.

Conversion to Low Volume Irrigation System

Converting from high volume flood (or seepage) irrigation to low volume micro irrigation conserves water improves water quality. With microirrigation, water is distributed through lateral tubing and applied directly to the soil above the plant's root zone. Modifications to existing micro irrigation systems that can be expected to increase system efficiency and reduce offsite movement of nutrients, pesticides, and sediment are also eligible.

Precision Application Equipment

Specialized equipment that allows nutrients and pesticides to be applied in a precise manner relative to the target of application. This includes sonic or optical sensors, devices that apply pesticides in a pre-defined, regulated manner, and equipment that uses GIS technology to allow application based on a pre-defined map. Precision application equipment often varies the rate of application, materials used, and location of application to achieve precise placement of the materials. Through this program, FDACS intends to cost share the precision elements of new equipment or retrofits to existing equipment that are needed to convert conventional machinery to precision application equipment.

Grade Stabilization

This practice includes the use of structures, pipe, concrete, rock, vegetation, synthetic fabrics, and other materials to maintain the stability and integrity of soils in ditches, swales, water furrows, and other erosion prone areas. Also included is equipment for chemical mowing of ditch banks to promote the proliferation of grasses and exclusion of higher growing weeds and brush.

On-Site Water Detention/Retention

This practice will provide for the attenuation of both the rate and volume of off-site water and sediment discharge following heavy storm events. The water may be stored for future use or released off-site later at reduced discharge rates.

Permanent Agrichemical Mixing/Rinsing Facility and/or Equipment Washdown Facility

This practice provides for the construction of a permanent facility to contain and recover spillage or rinsate from a fertilizer or pesticide mix and load area or from an equipment washdown site. It is intended to prevent fertilizer or pesticide contamination of ground or surface waters. The facility may include a concrete containment pad, pesticide storage building, sump/pump, rinsate tank, mixing tank, holding tank, and removable or permanent roof.

Portable Agrichemical Mixing Station

A portable device used in the field to prevent unintentional release of agrichemicals to the environment during mixing and loading of agrichemicals. The portable device must meet published standards and specifications (USDA-NRCS Field Office Technical Guide

– Interim Standard, Code 703). The device can be used at more than one citrus grove.

Water Table Observation Well

This practice facilitates observation of the water table in a citrus grove and will help the manager to determine when groundwater levels are optimal. This practice will also improve irrigation efficiency and conserve water within the watershed by providing growers with an empirical tool to more accurately determine irrigation scheduling needs.

Soil Moisture Measurement Devices

Good irrigation management requires that the status of soil water be accurately evaluated to avoid excess soil moisture depletion and minimize water volume requirements during irrigation cycles. Include in this category are tensiometers, capacitance probes, time domain reflectometry (TDR), resistance probes, and other techniques that allow growers to schedule irrigations to minimize leaching of fertilizers and agrichemicals, and to achieve high water use efficiency. Portable systems (e.g. TDR probes) can be used to manually monitor several groves. Automated systems with radio links that allow continuous feedback and graphical depictions of soil moisture are especially useful in fine tuning irrigation and drainage management.

Cost-Share Rates

Cost-share funds are available through this program for each of the practices listed in Table 1 at the designated cost-share rate. The FDACS cost-share rate represents the percentage of the eligible cost to be paid by Southwest Florida RC&D. The maximum cost-share rate given in Table 1 shall not to exceed \$50,000 per agricultural operation (individual or business) per fiscal year.

Cost-share may also be available through the USDA-NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Participants are encouraged to utilize both programs when possible to complement funding provided by FDACS.

Eligible practices for cost-share funding will be reviewed and revised on an annual basis. Growers are encouraged to contact members of the Gulf Citrus BMP Implementation Committee to suggest changes and/or additions to the list of practices.

Eligible Costs

Eligible costs consist only of the direct purchase expenses and the construction or installation costs for an eligible BMP. Some practices may require the purchase and installation of specialized equipment with no actual construction expenses. In these cases equipment and installation costs are considered implementation costs. Operation and maintenance costs, permit fees, design and consulting fees, etc. are not eligible for cost reimbursement.

The following is an example of a typical BMP project: (Agrichemical Mixing Station)

Total project cost \$120,000

Total eligible cost (construction and implementation) \$100,000

Permit Fees \$500

Design Fees \$500

Other costs \$19,000

Maximum cost-share amount is 60% (from Table 1 of handbook) of \$100,000 (eligible costs) equals \$60,000.

Maximum cost-share amount cannot exceed \$50,000.

Applicant is eligible for a cost-share amount of \$50,000