



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

RESOLUTION

SHORT TITLE: Review of FSA practice standards

SPONSOR CD: Foster Creek

AREA: NW SW NC SC NE SE

RESOLUTION TYPE:

- Policy
- Position Statement
- Recognition
- Study

RESOLUTION ACTION AGENCY (check any option that applies):

- WACD
- WSCC
- OTHER STATE AGENCY _____
- NRCS
- NACD
- NON-STATE/FEDERAL PARTNER _____ USDA Farm Service Agency

BACKGROUND/PROBLEM STATEMENT:

There has been a noticeable degradation of programs like EQIP and CSP due to the limited scope of applicable standards in relation to current regenerative agricultural practices. Currently, local Land grant universities lead the way for setting practice standards, in the past, this was an excellent way of keeping a program up to date and relevant as the new information was provided by the universities. However, we are now within an age where modern technologies inform masses within seconds creating an accelerated pace of advancement in regenerative agricultural practices and a lag of inclusion within federal programs. Grass root companies, public entities, and other private agencies have been trialing practices, crops, and technology and providing methodical information that backs these trials, however this information cannot be used as acceptable data to set standards since it was not provided by land grant universities. This in turn narrows the scope of practices and standards used within federal funded programs. Utilizing this information and comparing it against each other as a way of checking standards would help provide applicable science to back standards used within the federal and state systems and limit the lag time for information from land grant universities.

As we look to the future, we see large sums of money to help promote and incentivize climate resilient practices to be funneled out to the producers. This brings major concern as many producers are not able to include different regenerative practices to help ensure sustainability and climate resiliency within current program standards, leaving a large gap in acceptable practices and applied



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regenerative agricultural practices. How is this going to work for future funds if these regenerative practices still are not being acknowledged as standard practices?

In the CRP program the standards are set per ranking. This practice works unless you do not meet your ranking requirements for the chosen practice. Harsh destructive approaches are taken often hindering an ecosystem that has natively established itself over the period of the contract. CRP practice standards and rankings inhibit native revegetation through encroachment to happen over time leaving vulnerable species, like the sage grouse and sharp-tailed grouse, exposed if reseeding activities are needed due to the extreme actions taken for mitigation. Taking the established ecosystem into consideration and the habitat it provides is essential in this program as many uses it to protect vulnerable lands while ensuring active carbon sequestration over a period of time. Creating a more ecosystem approach to gradually achieve the changes necessary would benefit the habitat that is created through the CRP program and eliminate the release of stored carbon from these areas and inhibited years of established vegetation system below and above ground.

USDA, FSA, and NRCS need to expedite the inclusion of more regenerative agricultural practices and set standards using more scientifically sound agencies and companies rather than solely depending on land grant universities for standard support and backing.

PROPOSED RESOLUTION LANGUAGE:

Request for USDA FSA and NRCS to expedite existing program standards expanding practices and practice standards to include more regenerative ag practices, while ensuring the necessary training and awareness for staff, partners, and local cooperators is being provided.

TYPE OF TEXT OF RESOLUTION (check all boxes that apply):

- Technical (changes address grammar, punctuation, sentence flow and makes **NO** substantive change(s) to the existing policy.
- Substantive change to existing policy. If in doubt, check the box.
- New policy.

ARE WACD RESOURCES (FUNDING, STAFF CAPACITY, ETC.) REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT THE POLICY?

- NO**
- YES** (briefly explain):