

Growing Forward

Beneficial Management Practices

Policy Supplement – July 13, 2009

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<p>Stacking: Program policy is that the maximum amount of government funds for a project is not to exceed 75% of the total project costs.</p>	<p>Part of the reasoning behind this clause is that it has always been the case that producers should have some vested interest in the improvements made on their operations. We are certainly aware of the financial issues faced by some of your clients and that many improvements are not always seen as economically beneficial to an operation. The BMP's are meant to be economically, socially and environmentally beneficial to varying degrees. We did see situations under the APF where there were very creative solutions to funding the remaining 25% of a project.</p> <p>Community solutions that do not use government funding (Provincial, Federal or local) can be found – as was done in the Salmon River Watershed. In some cases rock, trees, live stacks and labour came to projects at little or no cost to the landowner- although these items are not normally seen as in-kind – unless they come from the land owner applying for the project – they can aid in reducing the overall cost. And, in the case of BMP category 10 – with a “community based action” –(practice code 1007) on a watershed – the cost share for an individual producer can go as high as 70%</p>
<p>Nutrient Management Plans requirement</p>	<p>If the completion of the workbook triggers the need for a NMP (for another BMP) then ARDCorp needs to be contacted and advised: type of plan, value, producer and date of plan OR submit the short application for the plan if it is intended to be funded by the program. The advisor bills the producer for the plan and the producer claims the cost through the program.</p> <p>The plan will need to address the manure stores and its handling in detail and should include the amount of manure produced, the use and cycle and period required to store. If the manure is removed from the farm, the plan is complete. Whereas if not, then the plan devised.</p> <p>All advisors have the initial training required to develop</p>

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	<p>the plan. The plans will be submitted to ARDCorp with producer claims and reviewed individually and marked on a performance level similar to the Biodiversity plans. The plans will be reviewed until the planning advisors shows they are meeting an acceptable level.</p> <p>Nutrient composition readings are to be submitted to ARDCorp with claim submissions. Only the technical information will be forwarded and no client info divulged.</p> <p>Technical assistance is available from Orlando Schmidt at MAL - Orlando.Schmidt@gov.bc.ca 604-556-3001 / 888-221-7141</p>
<p>Riparian Management Plan Requirement</p>	<p>All advisors have the initial training required to develop the plan. The plans will be submitted with producer claims and reviewed individually and marked on a performance level similar to the Biodiversity plans. The plans will be reviewed until the planning advisors shows they are meeting an acceptable level.</p> <p>Technical assistance is available from Dave Trotter at MAL - David.Trotter@gov.bc.ca 604-556-3001 / 888-221-7141</p>
<p>Consultant Requirements for Plans - several of the advisors were trained to do Biodiversity Planning and had to submit plans to prove they were qualified. Although previous EFP advisors have been authorized (because of our training.) to complete riparian/irrigation/grazing (with 5 years range management exp)/NMP/ etc the training and proven ability to complete Biodiversity planning is not recognized and authorized in the documentation we received this morning.</p>	<p>Yes, PA's who did the requisite number and quality of Biodiversity Plans would be approved for doing biodiversity plans under Growing Forward.</p> <p>Note there are no eligible BMPS in category 28 (Biodiversity Enhancement Planning) for 2009-2010.</p>
<p>Does the farmer have to make a specific application for funding to do the various Riparian, Nutrient, Grazing, IPM plans etc that are required for obtaining funding for the specific BMP categories that require them? If that is not required, when does the farmer submit their invoice for these required plans? Can the required plan go in with the BMP funding application and be reimbursed when the project is done or are they reimbursed when the funding application is approved?</p>	<p>Yes, a short bmp application from has been drafted (short form v.2) and is available on the member's portion of the ARDCorp website. If you cannot submit the application before completing the plan please advise ARDCorp so the funds can be allocated/approved for that BMP. Submit the application as soon as possible. The plan will not be considered one of the two bmps for the producer in this calendar year.</p> <p><i>Reminder: the producer pays the PA for developing the plan and then recovers portions of the cost</i></p>

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	<i>from the program.</i>
<p>Different advisor but same EFP- A producer that had originally done his EFP with another PA has approached me to do 2 BMP applications. One for a mulching mower and one for a tower sprayer. Neither of these items were originally listed on the action plan.</p> <p>However the producer has undergone some changes in his operations including replanting some of the original acreage from tree fruits to grapes. With this change (crop rotation) he has identified that a tower sprayer would be a benefit that would allow him to apply crop protection products more accurately with less spray drift. Also the mower that fits within tree fruit row plantings does not fit between vineyard rows.</p> <p>I feel that these two items are reasonable to be included for BMP funding for this producer. The fact that neither were listed on the original Action Plan in April of 2007 may well have been a case where the future need was not foreseen. Arguably this could as much the PA's responsibility as the producer's.</p> <p>In this instance is it possible to amend the original Action Plan? Or where is the line with regard to changes to operations where a new EFP is required?</p> <p>The same producer has also brought new acreage into production within the property boundaries of the farm. However the same farming practices are used throughout the property. The producer is anxious to make application and have the equipment on site.</p> <p>Please advise to proceed.</p>	<p>The producer certainly could do a new EFP if the enterprise has undergone significant change (new crop and new land), however that does not automatically make them eligible for BMP incentive funding for practices that resulted from the new cropping or possibly even the land newly brought into production.</p> <p>This question goes to the key objectives of the EFP and BMP programs. The EFP was designed to raise the level of awareness of agri-environmental risks on a farm/ranch operation. It helps identify areas of non-compliance with existing legislation as well as areas where a change in practice may be more beneficial to the producer and/or operation from a social &/or economic &/or environmental prospective. The key outcome being environmental awareness.</p> <p>The BMP program was designed to help producers make changes to their operations where practices &/or structures were identified as risks to the environment by the EFP. The fact that the BMP program was an incentive, addresses the issue of trying to get changes made where producers would not have normally made changes to protect the environment. In some cases this resulted in bringing producers into compliance with existing legislation. The program was not designed to support capital investments that should have been part of the business planning decision of the farm enterprise. The key outcome being changes to identified higher risk activities that existed on the operation at the time of the EFP.</p> <p>The policy decision to stay with the January 1, 2004 date as the relevant date for BMP's relates to the fact the program is designed assist producers in incenting change to existing practises identified in their EFP. It is not designed to incent changes to an operation to cover any part of the cost of changes in practices that should have occurred as a result in a change of enterprise.</p> <p>In the case raised below the producer did an EFP which would indicate a raised level of agri-</p>

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	<p>environmental awareness. The particular practices the PA (and producer) is asking about were not identified as risks in the original EFP as they likely did not exist as a risk on the operation. The identification of the need for these changes in capital cost items has resulted in a change in the type of farm operation/crop. The new EFP may identify risks and may identify the risks related to herbicide use (need for inter-tree/vine mower) and pesticide drift (need for sprayer modifications – could be a tower). However when the BMP application is made the question would need to be asked – did these cropping conditions (farming practices) exist on or before January 1, 2004 on this operations?</p> <p>Specific to your question – the producer can do a new EFP – should probably only be an update.</p>
<p>Riparian Health Assessment - I had an approved application for a culvert replacement under the old program that was unable to be completed because the permitting did not come in time. A riparian assessment is now required but the area where the culvert is required isn't grazed and is in good shape however there are other riparian areas on the operation that are impacted. What area do I assess? If there were no impacted areas how would we handle that?</p>	<p>The Riparian Management Field Workbook has four components: Site description, the Whole Farm Assessment(WFA) , the Riparian Health Assessment (RHA - Cows & Fish) and the Action Plan. The culvert in question would be identified in WFA Factor 1: Physical Barriers to Fish Movement. In addition, other areas that are identified as requiring improvements to livestock crossings would be captured under WFA Factor 3. To further demonstrate the effectiveness of these BMPs, it would be advantageous to include a RHA representative of the surrounding areas to demonstrate the maintained or improved riparian baseline of the site if an assessment is done at a later date.</p>
<p>Which PA's can complete a RHA?</p>	<p>Dave Trotter has indicated all PAs on the currently available web list are qualified to at least complete the Riparian Health Assessments portion of a riparian plan. And he feels most could do the remainder of the project plan – again with the proviso all plans be filed with ARDCorp for review by ARDCorp and MAL to determine if they are satisfactory.</p>
<p>Riparian Health Assessment & Overwintering site- How about a situation where an intact riparian area that would score "Healthy" in the RHA field sheet needs to be fenced to protect it from future damage because an overwintering area needs to be expanded or moved to reduce the environmental damage in the current</p>	<p>The movement of the current overwintering area is still eligible for BMP funding until 2010. The new designated overwintering area may impact a riparian area that is deemed healthy. The overall riparian health assessment and action plan would conclude that the potential impacts of moving the overwintering area could be mitigated with riparian fencing. Therefore, the</p>

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<p>overwintering area, (there was no expansion of the herd). How do we fund this kind of project?</p>	<p>BMP applications should demonstrate that the placement of the new overwintering site will reduce the impacts of the current site and that the added riparian BMP would then ensure that this added protection will provide for an overall reduction in impacts related to the entire ranch operation.</p>
<p>Irrigation conversion rate - In the previous program, the amount for equipment to convert to drip was \$3,000 per hectare (\$900 from the program). I don't see any of this wording in either the BMP or policy documents. Has this been changed? And if so how are we to calculate the eligible amount or is the \$3,000 amount still to be used.</p>	<p>Unless Ted feels otherwise (he is out of the office today so I am including him as a cc) I would suggest that for ease of approval you can continue to use the flat conversion rate of \$3,000 per hectare (\$900 from the program) up to a maximum of \$5K for conversions from inefficient irrigation systems (sprinkler) to drip. Installation costs are not eligible so it is only the materials. And as before the certified plan must show the conversion is going to improve the efficiency. Also evidence of the existing system is required. A reminder we should not be paying an incentive for systems where the cropping has changed.</p>
<p>Crop conversion Eligibility - I have a producer that converted part of an intensive pasture paddock system into blueberries, he was irrigating the paddocks with a fixed sprinkler irrigation system mounted on the fences and still uses the old system to water the blueberries. Is he eligible for funding to convert to a drip system?</p>	<p>The answer is no. This would have been eligible under the previous program however, crop conversions are no longer eligible.</p>

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