

\$100,000 REAP Program Okayed Locally; Replaces ACP

A \$100,000 conservation program was approved for Lancaster County at a meeting of various agencies at the Farm and Home Center this week.

The program, known as Rural Environmental Assistance Program (REAP), replaces the former Agricultural Conservation program (ACP) which has been in existence here for several years.

Miss Dorothy Neel, county executive director of the program, explained this week that she expects no major differences in the county conservation program, explained this week that from ACP to REAP. The main differences she said will be in the types of programs which are available to farmers and in the proportion of federal money available to them for the work.

The \$100,000 budget for REAP represents a substantial reduction from the \$125,900 available locally last year under ACP.

The new funding formula includes a reduction of federal reimbursement for some major practices including terraces and sod waterways. Federal participation in these practices has been reduced from 80 per cent to 50 per cent with the balance supplied by the land owner.

The reduction in federal participation terraces and sod waterways from 80 to 50 per cent means that the farmers share of the work will have to increase from 20 to 50 per cent under the new program.

Asked if this will likely detract from the ability of the county to get farmers to undertake enough of this kind of work to spend the full amount of the new \$100,000 budget, Miss Neel said she thinks farmers will use up the money under the new formula.

She explained that in recent years the demand for the money has far exceeded the supply and the money has been fully committed by as early as March and April.

While the county has less funds with which to work, the new formula lowers the federal share of the involvement and, if farmers participate, it could mean little or no reduction in work accomplished. This is true because each federal dollar under the 50 per cent formula will help accomplish more work than under the 80 per cent formula.

Practices Eliminated

Several practices that previously had been funded under ACP have been completely eliminated from the new REAP program. Most of the eliminated programs have no importance locally, however, since most of them either were not used at all or only slightly. An exception is the lime program under the heading of "application of lime alone."

Loss of the lime program, however, was in large part offset by retaining lime as part of some of the other types of practices, Miss Neel explained.

Other programs completely eliminated include vegetative cover in orchards, contour planting of orchards and vineyards, open drainage systems, tile drains, green manure cover crop, and home gardens.

Practices Approved

The list of REAP programs which were approved at both the national and state levels and from which Lancaster County

makes its selection include establishing permanent vegetative cover, (this program is unchanged at about 50 per cent federal participation and includes lime, fertilizer and seed).

Contour strip cropping and field strip cropping, planting of forest trees and shrubs, planting of trees and shrubs for erosion—unchanged at 80 per cent federal participation.

Improving vegetative cover with permanent grass fields including the use of lime and fertilizer and clearing and leveling of pasture land—50 per cent, unchanged.

Developing springs or seeps for livestock water—reduced from 80 per cent to 30 per cent federal funding. A few of these have been developed in the past in Lancaster County.

Improving stand of forest trees—80 per cent, no change.

Establishing sod waterways—now 50 per cent, reduced from 80 per cent last year. This is an important practice locally.

Permanent vegetative cover on problem areas—50 per cent, no change.

Constructing terrace system and diversion terraces—50 per cent this year, reduced from 80 per cent last year. These are major practices locally.

Structures to protect water outlets and channels—50 per cent, no change.

Winter and Summer cover crops—30 per cent, no change.

Establishment of permanent vegetative cover on field borders or turns—50 per cent, unchanged.

Wildlife food plots, habitat or cover—50 per cent, unchanged.

Shallow water areas for wildlife—50 per cent, no change.

Ponds or dams for wildlife—50 per cent, no change.

Woodland border and hedgerow management by cutting—50 per cent, no change.

Improvement of streams to control erosion and provide better fish habitat—50 per cent, down from 80 per cent. This practice is not important locally.

Improvement of habitat for wildlife in woodlands—50 per cent, down from 80 per cent. It is not important in the county.

Lagoos for annual waste—50 per cent, unchanged.

Sediment retention structures and measures to stabilize a source of sediment—50 per cent, down from 80 per cent. These practices are not important locally.

Miss Neel noted that in addition there is \$100,000 of 80 per cent federal money at the state

level available to those local areas which can develop special practices or projects that would involve the cooperation of several farmers.

She also noted that the practices involving 80 per cent federal money almost exclusively deal with forestry under the new REAP program.

REAP Approved

Those present at the meeting Wednesday to adopt the new REAP program included representatives of the ASC committee—Carlton Ricall, district director, Fred Seldomridge, county committee chairman, John J. Herr, county committee member, Frank W. Aument, county committee member, and Miss Neel.

Soil Conservation Service—Orval Bass, district conservationist, and Frank Lucas, Soil Conservation District—Aaron Stauffer, chairman.

Forest Service—Robert Schweitzer, service forester Extension—Jay Irwin, associate county agricultural agent FHA—Roy Giesman.

Game Commission—Wallace Woodring and John Eicholtz Fish Commission—Charles Printz and David Daniels.

The REAP Program

In commenting on the program back,

Miss Neel said REAP appears to be moving toward the more permanent type of practices.

This coincides with the direction of the local program. Almost 80 per cent of local practices last year were permanent practices she said.

She also noted that the state is working on a practice for structures or tanks for animal waste. When this practice is available it will be included in the county program, she said.

The conservation program funding is usually approved in November. It is about three months late this year because of a delay from the national administration that resulted in changing the program from ACP to REAP. Congress approved \$195,500,000, but the program was actually funded at \$150,000,000 as a result of administration decisions.

The change-over to REAP included placing more emphasis on solving environmental problems and controlling pollution. Programs which tended to be production rather than conservation oriented were among those which were eliminated or cut back.



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