

REALTIME FILE

EVENT: USDA – NRCS SUPPORT FOR ORGANIC TRANSITION

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>> KATIE (CAPTIONER): Standing by.

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JENNIFER RYAN: With that, we will now begin. At this time, I would like to welcome our moderator Marina Oriel, she is an Organic Conservation Specialist in a joint position with NRCS. She works to provide technical assistance and training to NRCS staff on organic topics.

>> MARINA ORIEL: Thank you so much. I am very excited to introduce her to the speakers today. Lindsay Haines is the National Organic and Pest Management Specialist, USDA NRCS National Headquarters, Washington, DC. She has worked with NRCS for over 30 years. She started as a conservation planner and spent her career as a district conservationist between local field offices providing technical and financial assistance to local farmers in land managers. She has been involved in the organic agricultural sector throughout her career from working on organic farms to providing conservation assistance, and farming organically herself. She lives in rural Maryland with her husband.

Donna Hopwood is an EQIP Organic Program Specialist, USDA NRCS National Headquarters, Washington DC, and a graduate of the University of Florida with a degree in soil and land- use conservation. Donna began her career as a soil conservationist in Florida. Assisting in various capacities including over 15 years as a district conservationist. Donna's next career phase was in the Pacific Island area as the assistant director of field office operations, and field offices, and the Hawaiian Islands and American Samoa. After three years, Donna headed back east to join the financial assistance program division and has spent over seven years developing policy and implementation guidance for states to implement financial assistance programs. Donna is a member of the in HQ organic team working at the cross areas to help the organic transition towards producers. With that I will turn this over to Lindsay first.

>> LINDSAY HAINES: If you are so much. Thank you for joining us today, what a great opportunity. We want to share this exciting new initiative. This presentation will be focused on the farmers of the audience, I imagine there are NRCS staff online as well. I ask that any NRCS folks reserve the questions for internal discussions and allow the questions and discussion to be focused on the farmer customers today. So, thank you. We want to share our overview. We want to focus on the goals and the major parts and then go into the technical assistance side and the financial assistance side.

So, the purpose and goals of the organic transition initiative. It has been noted by the department that the number of farms actively transitioning to organic production has dropped nearly 71% since 2008. Through the comprehensive support provided by the initiative, the USDA hopes to reverse the trend by opening opportunities for new and beginning farmers and expanding drug consumer access to organic foods through increased production.

We will be doing this through NRCS through technical assistance to financial assistance to increase, support, and new practices for standards for gaining management. We want to increase organic expertise we will partner with organic technical aspects through a five-year agreement. We will work regionally with the folks to provide support and training. The funding will provide 1-on-1 support through NRCS staff, TSP's, and developing additional options.

The USDA organic transition is expected to start with about \$300 million and without the NRCS part is about \$75 million in management. That is broken into two pots, one for the regional coordinators and the research position for the latest and greatest research. The rest will go to direct financial assistance and technical assistance to develop contracts with farmers.

I will not read all the deliverables but as you can imagine we hope to get a lot of assistance in that it actually is building upon the very successful move that we have had for many years. We want to provide all of that great technical support that they gain from their knowledge and their interaction and the organic community, to conduct training, surveys, develop tools, all of the great stuff that they have been doing. We hope to expand on that. We hope to have a regional approach this year.

So that brings us to our new organic management standard. I do want to overview at least either get an idea from the states and have those brought up to the national level or in this case, the state has a similar initiative many years ago, we thought we would reinvigorate it and then share it with all the states, and have another try the standard for conservation. We will try for a number of years and in the pudding on the outcome, we will make final decisions whether it becomes permanent. We use the

definition right out of the organic manual. It is all about managing, improving the national resources on land and adjacent to organic production using methods which integrate culture right, biological, mechanical practices that foster cycling resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biodiversity.

We have a purpose action that we talk about particular natural resources concerns. We think that this will really be an opportunity to address and that being said it is never an exhaustive list. All of our natural resource concerns can be addressed through organic management. You pick some high points or some popular ones that we think people will be using the standard to assert. The first ones have to do a soil, so we want to improve soil health, and reduce soil erosion. We want to go into greenhouse gas emissions and reduce those. We want to reduce the transport of pesticides and nutrients transported to surface water, groundwater, and air. We want to improve moisture management. Improve plant productivity and health we want to reduce plant pest pressure. Plant habitat for wild love, pollinators, and other beneficial invertebrates. All that good stuff. Not an all-exclusive list but some of those things. This practice will apply to all land management methods that will be used.

The interim process is a three-year process. Each year we evaluate at the end of the year, and we make changes for the following year, so in August this year we will receive feedback from all the states and what they think works. What works well and what could work better. We know that each state has the ability to tailor this to their state and they may have already done that to share. So, you can see a national version, the state had the ability also to tweak it a little bit to make it fit their needs and their states also.

Later after the three-year. We will determine if the interim becomes a permanent conservation practice standard. There was a former interim as I mentioned but no definitive outcome. They were both pros and cons that were assessed. So that was around the 2008 Farm Bill where there was a lot of dedicated organic support. So, it was sort of table. So, we are resurrecting and dusting it off. We want to decide if that will become permanent.

This is sort of an internal analysis of our management practices or our structural practices. Many of our management practices actually do refer to other conservation practice dinners. While that may seem a little messy or too much duplication, it makes sense that management practices want to incorporate other practices to create a whole system. This is no different.

We have that PAMS system, which is the one with which I am involved. Their organic management standard refers to a long list of other practices as well. So do not be alarmed. It's a good thing it's about systems planning and it's an opportunity to look at all the things into integrate together. Also do standalone activities. So, pest management refers to a lot of other standards. But also has a long list of other prevention, avoidance and monitoring activities. Specifically mitigation activities for when people are using pesticides. Even organic pesticides. So, the 823 organic management standard is connecting to the NOP standard. So, things like composting, outdoor access, those activities that we do not have standards for. If we can conduct or document the activities and how they will address natural resources, it can be covered through the new standard.

A lot of opportunities to have full systems plans and incorporate a lot of different practices as well.

What is unique about the 823? First, it really requires the development of a full conservation plan to assess and address all identified resource concerns. This is a tall order for all folks to be fair. Our folks have so much financial assistance that we often focus on just the few things that people are really wanting to focus on. To get both technical and financial assistance upon. We develop contracts and plans and help people with these practices. As you all know, as organic farmers, you need to look at all of the natural resources and while we may call them a little different, and NRCS than the organic regulations, it basically is looking at all of what we consider, soil, water, air, animals, etc. So, folks will want a full conservation plan pickup will be rejected. We asked in Step 1 what are your objectives? What do you want to do in your conservation plan? It will be that I want to assess all my natural resources and find a way to address them all. That's different.

It will also provide the expert technical support to learn a new way of natural resource management in organic production. The focus really is on how we can get people connected with organic experts. We often do not prioritize or provide enough assistance in time to get the technical expertise. We are trying something new. For single practices like no till the time is much less but it is still as a whole new way of production and learning things. In organic management everything is different pre-much. You have a very different toolbox. You have in the conventional production. So, we want to invest in people connecting with other experts to set up a new way of doing business. It also includes producer education. So, it could support those opportunities as well. It will support natural resource activities not an existing standard. Many of our standards today do have some reference to the National organic program standards. Acknowledging that folks organic you will need to make sure that you implement any

particular practice organically. There is also some activity that is not covered. This incorporates the organic standards and also picks up things that are not in the other existing standards.

One piece that we did a lot of data analysis upon was on the foregone income. So, thank you to all the farmers who filled out the mass surveys that you get. This is the data that we needed to justify providing forgone income. So, we spent many hours looking at the results of the data. We were able to document that many crops in many states will be eligible for forgone income. There was a clear drop in production. And we have documented that, and we can provide the component of forgone income. So, thank you for taking the time to fill in the survey. It really does dictate and help us roll out the program for the future.

This will also integrate the NRCS to nurse with some of our criteria to clarify and document natural resource management. We are very detailed and how we estimate erosion. In what we consider tolerable. So, while the standards do not require a set number, we know how to measure that to improve and integrate those to clarify in measure how people make those improvements. We also support monitoring data collection to inform decisions.

I won't read the whole sinner but just know that the first two bullets in the standard of what farmers need to do they must adhere to the USDA National Organic Program or NOP standards. This is how we connect the standard to all of the National organic standards. Also, it's important that producers know that they must correlate all activities and inputs with organic certifiers. We know that not all certifiers offer or offer certifying services in year one. Many wait till year three to transition when you're ready to go. I am hoping that if you reach out to certifiers you will ask them to provide the service. Because it would be very helpful for everyone to have a yes or no place to go. When you're learning something new you need to know what you can do and what you cannot do. Although they're all consultants people should reach out to those if they're certified, consultant, or another certified farmer, finding experts, will be very important. So, AMS that program is to provide a lot of resources to folks. We do not want to duplicate services, but we want to make sure the people connect, and we are hoping that the regional organic communities will really be enhanced by all the connection.

We talk about buffers, and inputs, and all those things that are important. We are encouraging each of our states and what we call the implementation requirements. To align for all the farmers to sign in the knowledge that it is their role to make sure that things meet those standards. Our folks are great planners, but they were never intended to become certifiers or act like certifiers or no other regulations.

They are experts in conservation planning. That will get you to meet a lot of organic standards, but they cannot make those in and out calls.

The standard incorporates everything in the NOP standard. The standards are somewhat different than how we see our standards. It still is important to connect those two pieces of some of the standards as you know are very clear. We have great criteria like NRCS loves like numbers. And thresholds. In what is in or out. So, compost is a great example. So even in the definition section of the regulations, a great criterion for what compost is. People can really understand and latch onto that and what that is.

It does get more difficult. So, we develop what we call a technical note to go along with the organic management standard. So, a place where we put additional information to guide our conservation planners and how to implement the new standard.

It will describe the conservation activities that organic producers commonly implement. How they address natural resource concerns. It will describe how NOP compliant practices that organic producers used to manage soil, nutrients, water all those resources, it will provide research based tractable information on conservation benefits of organic systems. It will train the staff with practical knowledge to help organic producers. So, the standard by itself is not all that we need we need additional support to help our staff understand it. I would say that we all need to learn from each other.

Everyone comes to the table with different expertise. So, the conservationist will come with the conservation expertise, and you have organic expertise, or you'll find other experts to bring onto the table. They can teach folks in transition. We can all learn from each other.

So, this is not the best diagram, it's my first attempt to show how it may integrate together. So, the circles just have one of the practice numbers in it. So, we say a farmer wanted both the new organic and intimate standard, and something like 590 which is the new standard. There will be a need to document which each practice is doing. So, if someone makes sense to me that all farmers have nutrient management plans. So, they have that in their plan. Then the way development nutrient management plan to be a component plan. It may need standard soil testing or a recommendation. It may not go so far as some organic farmers want to go. There is great breaking research that is talking about how to get really the best balance of the biologically based nutrient management piece. It is not really in the nutrient management standard, but folks want to do things to really look at this balance of the sources from NP to avoid balance position then that activity could be covered under 823 if it's not covered under 590. That being said the planners will have to do a little bit of work to make sure we do not duplicate

payments. So do not be surprised at farmers or staff asking questions about, "What activities are you doing that are nutrient management and is there anything that is flowing over into 823?" You could have cover crop or crop rotation in thereto. Just to show you that there is a need for the conversation of documentation to document what the practices are doing. I will now pause and give a break and then I will turn this over to Donna. She will talk about the financial system inside. So, Donna takes it away.

>> DONNA HOPWOOD: Okay thank you so much Lindsay. So, welcome everyone. In the next few slides, I will talk a bit about NRCS and how we implement OTI and producer opportunities. For technical and financial assistance. So just a little bit of OTI will be offered throughout the environmental quality incentive program which is EQIP. EQIP is an abroad program which offers technical and planning assistance to evaluate the resources on the farm operations. So, it is through EQIP that NRCS helps producers address and its resource issues to manage and help fit the resources that are available. Lindsay touched a bit on that. So, the technical and financial assistance will be interested in making producers available or available to producers and interested in transitioning all or part of their operation to organic and for new producers who want to develop organic operations.

Per so just a note that. Refer to all resources to soil, water, air, and most which NRCS refers to as SWAPA which refers to as resource management. This relates to resource management as well.

So about three weeks ago, we began information that offer the OTI sign-up. So, the state should have the information in it that should be available. So, the dates for the sign of themselves are set by the states. So, you need to refer to your state website for local information.

We asked states to finish the sign-ups by June 15th. So, funds will be assessed and allocated based on these local priorities from the states in a number of applications received. We have a deadline of September 15th for all contract obligations.

So, a little bit about the organic transition and the EQIP. So, the NOI is a, separate from the but it has a statutory requirement that has a lower equipped payment limitation. So EQIP is set at \$450,000. So that is a big difference between the two. It's different pots of money as well. So different opportunities. So, OTI is actually a part of the department of agriculture food system transition program. The department wide effort for organic transition. So, the OTI is not subject to the NOI payment limitation. So as Lindsay mentioned the OTI, the interim will be required. So, there are certain contracts that are solely for developing a plan or certain design activity. You would not have 823 as well.

Okay, as I mentioned OTI payments applied towards the producers EQIP aggregate of \$450,000 limitation. So how payments are made for EQIP? EQIP is based on a cost share contract prices of the payment schedules are developed regionally. They may be based on a percentage but there is an actual practice rate and that is the rate that will be paid out no matter what the actual cost is.

Note that EQIP is an incentive program and helps producers address resource concerns and try new practices and activities. It is not intended to cover 100% of the cost. So typically, what will happen is when a producer goes in a planner helps them to develop a plan and produce the contract, they will have a schedule of operations which will lay out each of the practices were activities that they agree to do in the extender unit. You will then have the payment rate and from the information the producer can determine what will actually cost to do that or do the fence, pipeline, or plant cover crop. They will then be able to take what they would get from the contracts and subtract the difference to determine their out-of-pocket costs.

So, note, practices and activity payments are made after implementation, when certified that they meet NRCS specifications and standards. So, we do not just write a contract and sake do a great job. So NRCS or other planners will provide the requirements, the implementation requirements if there is a design required, or if you need someone to come out and survey or layout, NRCS and partners will help with that as well. We want to ensure that whatever the producer does that they are successful. So, when they are finished with the implementation, in the certifier can go out with the NRCS certifier... the NRCS people can go out and say, "Yes this meets the standard." So, note that NRCS does have what we call historically underserved or HU producers. They can receive a higher payment rate. They may be able to receive an advanced payment to buy or purchase supplies, contracting services, or that type of thing. These HU producers are farmers and ranchers that have been historically underserved by or subject to discrimination and federal policies and programs. These HU include beginning, socially disadvantaged, veterans or limited resource farmers and ranchers. The best place to get details on these is when you go into the NRCS office. There are some variations. Limited resource farmers are raised on financial, and you can get more information locally.

I will now turn this back to Lindsay.

>> LINDSAY HAINES: Thank you so much. Now let's go into how do we pay people for practices? So, for those of you that worked with us for many years you know that used to make your bill and we pay a certain percentage and are typically about 75% but it could be up to 90%. A few years ago, we moved to

a set payment rate. We do a lot of analysis to decide what things typically cost regionally and what folks typically do in this scenario. We then pay you the scenario is matched up with what you plan to do. That is the rate that you will be paid at. We still have prepaid bills paid because that helps us keep the economic analysis up to date. That no system is perfect. We try to produce what typical scenarios that we call them may be to pay folks during the practice. So, for this new practice we decided to try to keep it simple and the unlimited number of scenarios. So, we started based on the complexity. So those five scenarios we have a small-scale scenario so anyone with less than five acres would fit that. So, the next categories or scenarios would be 40-acre blocks. We try to break that out in terms of complexity or the number of enterprises. So, you could be simple co-ops only, simple crops and livestock. I think of a dairy farm like this. So, you have one kind of livestock, and you may be growing feed. You have pasture obviously and growing some corn for example. That would be a simple different number of enterprises. There could be a lot of organic farmers that have complex crops. You could have a crop rotation that is large. That would become much more complex. And then adding to complex crops you could have that and livestock. You may not just have dairy cows, she might have beef cows, or goats, chickens, any number of things. So, the number of different enterprises would factor into the complexity. That's where the five base scenario comes from. So, we also of the forgone income. We had to double the numbers for each with, with or without forgone income. That got us 10 and then we needed to have the historically underserved group and each of those ten could be there and that got us to 20. That is how we come up with the smallest mix of payment scenarios that we could have.

One thing that has been different about this program in the people that we train folks, they do have a lot of questions. It is different. I see it as a paradigm shift to investing in formal education and support for learning a new agricultural system. It really is to develop a conservation plan; people will have to pick the closest payment scenario to the plan. We also have to remind folks that I hope none of you and with the payment scenario says. But this is what you will be doing with practice and be prepared and ready for those conversations. He is willing to help with documentation or different activities that folks may be doing. So, the payment scenarios are not checkless, you do not have to do every component on the checklist. It is just to give folks an idea for what the rates would be to show a typical scenario.

The implementation requirements document is what becomes unique for each farmer. Or implementation work.

These are the 20 payment scenarios. This is to show you the range of the 20 payment scenarios on an acre basis to provide the investment and focused learning a new management system.

I wanted to enlarge the secrets he would look like. So hopefully you will not have to go further than this, but this is what the payment scenario ends up being. To list the components that we would show may be typical to document the kinds of activities that folks would be doing. So, as she could see the top three components are labor. It's all about finding those experts to teach you new ways of doing things. So, it may seem more to some of our folks, but we really break it down on a week-by-week basis. So, if this is simple crops only with forgone income, we are looking at the growing season. So, we split the year and half and for 26 weeks, you will be doing new things. Thinking about your new ways of doing things. So, you will need let's say in our skilled labor every week for 26 weeks. Then you will need some general labor to actually implement or start up the new ways of doing things and that could be two hours per week or two new six weeks. And then the manager who may end up being you as the farmer but hiring the other consultants to help you get set up. You are the one that has to figure out all of how it will fit together. So, you get the most hours per week at four hours. It adds up. It's a decent investment. We are hoping that this will support the new way of learning with new things to do.

We also have the scenario of going to workshops. You could go to zero workshops or five workshops, the average could be two workshops. So, soil testing seems to be common. This is not standard soil testing this is more biologically based soil testing because you were reconfiguring the biology testing on the farm. So composting is another integral part. Even if you do not have livestock, you may be composting plant materials. Or other nitrogen sources. Again, setting up a new system takes time. It takes testing, tractor time, mixing time, application time, all of those things. Here's an example of the forgone income on a simple crop only would be about \$683 over the 40-acre plot. All of this averages out to about \$227 an acre. So just to show you this, this is how we come up with the typical scenarios. You do not have to do each of these items, it's just an idea of what may be some of the activities. Your planner will work with you to document those activities that you do give whatever payment scenario they have paired you with.

There is an opportunity for states to have limits on this. They will announce that with the sign up as well. There is no intention to lower contracts. All over the place just with acres but you can see examples here, maybe with forms of different sizes. There's a 40-acre track using the scenario. You get about \$9000 a year according to all these activities in \$27,000 over three years. And if it was a bigger farm of 100 acres. Maybe \$22,000 a year or \$68,000 year. We have multiple contracts that are well within the range. Or a lot more than this. So, it is not out of sight for us to do this financial assistance. It is a shift in terms of hiring the experts.

So, what other programs are available for organic producers? Donna mentioned the national organic initiative or NOI that started in 2009. I hope you are participating because it is still available. It is still available for all categories were getting producers. You can be certified or transitioning or exempt. It does offer a separate funding pool in its funded to stay allocation. Provides all practices that the states offer. It does have the payment limitation that Donna mentioned that is much lower than what the traditional program is committed to. States could offer this new interim and other programs. The standards are not tied to financial systems programs. They may have been developed thing he might transition folks, but it is not limited to transition folks if states elect to use the practice in general input. Certified folks could sign up for that. There is still value in using the standard if you are certified or you want a new enterprise or new weigh-in. So, if you are already certified you are still eligible to use this practice. Some states have other programs into which it could fit. Please know that everyone has the standard available to them if the state has adopted it in it's a matter making sure that the financial assistance and the goals of the producer lined up. So, OTI is just for transitioning people, but there are still other ways that folks could get their technical assistance. You do not even have to use the interim practice you could use the general practices if you prefer to do it that way if you have a lot of options. There is EQIP CIC, CSP, AMA. Know that you have a lot of options as an organic farmer.

So here are the different programs on a chart. So, you see a lot of yeses the only "No" you will see will be under EQIP OTI. So exempt people cannot sign up for that because if they're under \$5,000 of sales at the whole different category management under the financial assistance. Just note that CSP does require a producer to sign- up their entire operation, but enhancements for only the organic acres can be a part of the contract. You might be able to make a case if they are distinct operations because they are not on the same farm, or if there is a distinct line between them, you could probably, there is a process to go to evaluate, and the CSP contract.

But there are a lot of options for, and we are hoping to touch on forgone income. But I will briefly cover this. So, this was an amazing work that was done the deep dive to support providing forgone income. We are very strict on when we allow forgone income. And for good reason too. But it takes in-depth data analysis to justify it.

She started with the risk management agency data set with more than 27,000 rows of data. So, thank you to all the farmers that filled in the survey. The data was analyzed, sorted, grouped, average, and rounded within the USDA farm production regions and state boundaries. This is a map of those USDA

production regions. We developed the forgone income values representing typical farm scenarios for major commodities across the US.

We also looked at the national agricultural statistics service data that were used to find typical farm and ranch incomes for the size and operations used in organic transition production scenarios. So, we used it to find the typical farm and ranch incomes for the sizes of operations used in organic transition production scenarios. Commodities are designated either as in or out for FI payment based on the present reductions in, you'll derive from the RMA data set.

Basically, what the staff will do is know it's fair and what region they are in, but they will look at the commodities in the state and whether it is irrigated or not irrigated. Whether it qualifies for the forgone income piece. Then, as you know many farmers have a mix of crops, so we asked people to do a simple weighted average. So as long as it is 50% or more of the crops qualify as a "Yes." You can take the scenario with forgone income. If it is 50 or under it is out of luck. We have to have a line in the sand. We went with a simple weighted average there. So, that brings us to the question portion. I will now pause we put a few questions in here that we of gotten but we will shift over to the questions in the chat to take those as we can. So, starting with the first question. I see there was a question about the 71% drop data inward is I can say is that I did not do the analysis but what I'm guessing it ended up being was if you've tracked the number of certified farms over the years, it still continues to grow, I just don't think it's growing at the same rate as it initially did. Sometimes you start something, and you get a big flush of people and then the rate of increase decreases. So, I think that's what it was. I don't think the numbers are decreasing, the rate of increase was decreasing dramatically. They wanted to make sure that we took a look at what USDA does and are we doing what we can to support organic where can we do better? We know we can do better. So, I think that's where the data came from.

Is there a single PDF that shows the incorporation slide? We are hoping that this shows and helps people to decide what is in and out in what is being covered in every practice picture once we publish that all the technical notes are available on the website, and you will be able to take a look at that. So technical notes will be evaluated and improved over time. And it's an exciting document and we're getting help from the organic research for farmers organization. That will be great research for all of us in the staff and farmers alike.

Another question, someone is on the board of the organic crop improvement Association, and we want to help farmers transition to organic before certified who do we work with that NRCS do that? I

encourage you to go to your local office to introduce yourself. To schedule an appointment for folks to come to your farm. The most important step to me is that the offices are really busy. Show your interest, get an application that get signed up, for programs, scheduled time for someone to come to your farm and really start the conservation planning process. To learn about your objectives and your natural resource concerns on your organic form for transition.

We want people to start with year one and not wait till year three. Do not make those mistakes and have a fully successful transition from the beginning.

>> JENNIFER RYAN: Is there a way that certifiers can coordinate with NRCS to be supportive of these transitions?

>> LINDSAY HAINES: I would love for us in certifiers to be more coordinated. We have always done training together, we have a lot to learn from each other, I am on calls with some of them on the national level. I hope through AMS, program, and the regional corners I hope we create local regional networks. Again, we have a lot to learn from each other just like I was talking to organic experts. Certifiers are certainly experts. They are experts in organic production. Maybe not experts in conservation. But we all can learn from each other. So, I look for opportunities for certifiers to network with our folks and maybe even start a formal network. But at least informally to get people working together on farms together, so there are all sorts of opportunities to pick, that's a great question!

Another question was 823? My apologies if we use acronyms or numbers too much.

There's a question about organic nutrient management. And we are trying to get a big picture. We certainly hope that it was over crop rotation because there are credits from voluminous crops. But we want to make sure that we look at all the sources and when they are put in and when they are used. So yes, it would be a full form nutrient management plan would look at the timing and application of what the sources are. So, I think they also part with the phosphorus not overloading. Because even manure is a great organic source, but you need phosphorus at times. So, more manure is always better. So, if you advance nutrient management you want to make sure that you're not doing too much manure but that you apply other sources of nutrients. That may not have additional phosphorus to keep it in balance.

So, I am trying to remember our involvement with bioreactors. I know years ago I worked with a neighboring farm as well. There are things that we do in things that we do not do. So, I refer to our local office for the details. But certainly, nutrient management and how we recycle, and store applied

nutrients is such an important part of the conservation plan. So please reach out to your local office. There may or may not be things that we can do in advance. I am not a manure management expert. There is potential there for us to help some. There may be other resources to help with some of the details in the bioreactor.

There is no payment scenario for lifecycle we do not do that because I think it's sort of an ending usual, in unusual situation. I would still go to simple crops and livestock because often times we are farmers with just livestock, are growing some sort of feed whether it's pasture. I still think a pasture is a crop and maybe that is not correct thinking, but you are pasture needs to be organic so you need to manage that organically so that is a simple crop that may be with livestock operations. So, thinking about chickens, chickens need outdoor access more than our conventional forms. So, they need a place to go to move around and they may not be getting a lot of feed. But you still have to manage the outdoor area. I would still if that is the example that you're thinking of I would still call "simple crops and livestock". If folks think you need to develop that we can, but we right now place it in civil crops and livestock.

So next the payment scenario is not a checklist, but the implementation resources are functionally speaking. A checklist for the specific operation.

So yes, folks do not have to go through the sit payment scenario and do all those things but on the implementation requirements you may not do any of those activities. But you hire the experts who taught you to do something completely different on request. That's where you document what's actually done. Since you do not collect bills anymore. That was one way of documenting what people did, and we just needed to document in the folders. In all these implementation requirements. Between activities, which shows where things are not duplicating each other. That's an important way to show what each practice is doing.

Is the practice limited to three years?

Not necessarily the contracts could be 1 through 10 years. We tend to want them to be shorter. Folks do not always just transition in three years. Sometimes transition takes longer than three years. So, if there is a need for a longer contract you can work that out with your conservation planner. It does not have to be three years, which is an average. It could be longer than three years.

>> DONNA HOPWOOD: So, is the 823-practice limited to three years?

>> LINDSAY HAINES: No, it's an annual practice but you can't have that in your contract for more than one year. You can implement it for more than one year. So, Donna, just let me know if there is a policy for management practices. I do not want to contradict that I just know we've had discussions about the forewarning companies. It sometimes takes people longer than three years to transition. We are supportive of that forgone income to provide for those three years. So, if it's within an 823 practice. There is support for it to breed more in three years.

>> DONNA HOPWOOD: Yes, I know some of our management is up to five years. I wasn't sure if that was the question about contract link or the practice?

>> LINDSAY HAINES: I was focusing more on the contract line, but I was assuming that the practice would be scheduled for each year of the contract. So, we want to support the activities and the expertise if it takes five years and set three years, I think when asked for that. Also know that your planner may want to start with three years, and then there may be a chance.

>> LINDSAY HAINES: So, the documentation needs to be there I did this activity, I did this activity. It may feel that is too much free rein but that is the challenge of the national initiatives to provide structure. Also flex ability because every firm is different. So have those conversations with your planners. You will try not to lean too much in one direction. Have a mix of activities to show the many things that people will be learning. Not to say that 1 or 2 activities would be not enough just matter of having discussions of the planner is clear on what you were doing.

Another question a brand-new farmer working on 20 acres of land would I be able to apply for the initiative?

Any farmer that wants to apply for the initiative, which is interested in transitioning, we do not really encourage people just to do it if you are not seriously interested and transitioning too organic. It's an opportunity to address natural resources on your farm. It's an opportunity to dive into the details of learning or gaining management pics so we really want people that are serious and committed. Knowing that you will have an opportunity at the end of your contract to make the decision if you become certified or not.

I think we are running out of time. We have a few more in. Did I miss whether qualified for foregone income? Each state has certain crops. I don't think there is any state that did not have any crops. It's a matter of taking a look at the list for each state and the crops that are in it. To see which ones, qualify.

Another question about wildlife management coming into play with her gaining tradition? Organic or wildlife conservation is important because you know the value biodiversity in the organic regulations picked, they really want you to have as much diversity within your cropping areas, adjacent to your cropping areas, and you can have a particular passion for a particular kind of wildlife conservation. You could be a bug enthusiast. And want to have a lot of insects on the farm. You could have another particular qualification and that is your job to convey those objectives to the conservation planner and then they will match you up with all the activities that will help you to meet the objective. That is a great question.

It was mentioned that OCI plans will be assessed as a full risk plan type meaning that all RC land will be analyzed. That is the goal. But I also think that I shared it it will be challenging for the folks. It is more time-consuming to do that. But be patient with folks, be aware of what you feel like your resource concerns on your form are in bring those to light. You are aware of things, and they will come out with their conservative eyes on that, and they will bring up the conversation about what they see in you will together develop a plan to address all the natural resource concerns. So that is the goal is to have a full farm plan. But be patient knowing that it does take extra time to do that. It will be a great learning opportunity. With one minute left I cannot get the questions but what we will do as with previous webinars, we will answer the questions in written form and post them is that correct?

>> JENNIFER RYAN: Yes, we can post them to the webinar page of the portal.

>> LINDSAY HAINES: So, we will do that thank you so much for spending an hour with us, it's an exciting initiative. It is changing a lot as new initiatives too. Just introduce yourself and get your name on the list and get the process started. We will learn a lot together about how this works and how we can better help anyone that is thinking about organic transition. Donna G of any last words?

>> DONNA HOPWOOD: No, I do not. I want to thank everyone for tuning in today.

>> LINDSAY HAINES: Thank you everyone I will turn this back over.

>> JENNIFER RYAN: Thank you on behalf of the USDA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. I wanted to say thank you to Lindsay and Donna for providing an excellent presentation on NRCS Support for Organic Transition. Again, thank you to our moderator as well. Thank you again to everyone for attending today's webinar. Just a reminder, do not forget to provide your feedback about the webinar

and if you selected to earn CEU's please return to your open browser window. Continue the process offered by Step 2. This concludes the webinar presentation. Thank you so much for joining.

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