



FSA Issues Errata Sheet for the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement On the Emergency Conservation Program

March 7, 2003

ECP Program Manager
Conservation and Environmental
Programs Division
USDA-Farm Service Agency
Washington, D.C.

Dear ECP PEIS Reviewer:

The Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (DPEIS) for the Emergency Conservation Program has been reviewed and commented upon. FSA is issuing this errata sheet in accordance with 40 CFR 1503.4 to address the comment received on the ECP DPEIS.

This errata sheet contains the full comment and FSA's response to that comment. The entire draft document with a new cover and this errata sheet shall be filed as the final statement. The entire final document can be viewed on the FSA website at the following address:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/epb/nepa.htm>.



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
AGENCY WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460**

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**OFFICE OF ENFORCEMENT
AND
COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE**

Mr. Clayton Furukawa
Emergency Conservation Program Manager
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-05130

Dear Mr. Furukawa:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Farm Service Agency's (FSA's) Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Emergency Conservation Program Implementation and Expansion. Our review is pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

As described in the Draft Programmatic EIS, the proposed action is to make changes to the existing program that would:

- eliminate the tiered level of cost sharing currently in use, allowing for a consistent cost-share rate;
- add provisions for measures dealing with confined livestock;
- provide for a higher level of cost-share assistance for limited resource producers, and;
- require the completion of the environmental evaluation checklist form, FSA 850, prior to the awarding of the cost-share assistance.

Given the administrative nature of these changes, we have assigned the Draft Programmatic EIS a rating of LO (Lack of Objections) (see enclosed "Summary of EPA Rating System" for a more detailed definition of the ratings). We would also like to note that while we appreciate the additional environmental protections that may result from the requirement to evaluate and document the environmental impacts of each potential cost-share proposal through completion of the proposed checklist form, it is not clear whether producers will, in all cases, have the training or expertise necessary to complete the form. We suggest that FSA consider making completion of the form a responsibility of FSA staff, rather than the producers themselves. If you have any questions, please call me or Cliff Rader of my staff at (202) 564-7159.

Sincerely,



Anne Norton Miller
Director
Office of Federal Activities

Enclosure

cc: ECP Draft PEIS Comments
PO BOX 6830
Falls Church, VA 22040-6830

FSA Response to Comment: The Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) Handbook will be revised to require that the FSA-850, Environmental Evaluation Checklist, be completed and signed, by appropriately trained FSA personnel prior to the awarding of any ECP cost share assistance. This environmental evaluation will address environmental concerns at the site specific level.

Change: On page 4-4, the following statement has been changed to read:

“This environmental evaluation checklist also provides a format for assessing potential impacts and reviewing alternatives and mitigations measures when potential impacts to any of the protected resources listed on the FSA-850, item 3, are identified, these protected resources include: wetlands, floodplains, sole source aquifer recharge areas, critical habitat for threatened and endangered species, wilderness, coastal barrier in coastal barrier resources system or approved coastal zone management areas, natural landmarks, and historical and archaeological sites. *The revised Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) Handbook will require that the FSA-850, Environmental Evaluation Checklist, be filled out and signed, by appropriately trained FSA personnel prior to the awarding of any ECP cost share assistance.*”