

Energy Enhancement Activities

For 2004, the Conservation Security Program (CSP) offers a limited number of enhancement payments as incentives to reward or encourage on-farm energy conservation and management. These enhancements are available once the applicant qualifies for CSP by meeting the program's entry requirements for soil and water quality.

This information will help landowners and managers determine if they are eligible for the offered payment(s) for energy enhancement activities.

Energy Audits and Recycling On-Farm Lubricants

Energy Audit of Agriculture Operations

Agriculture faces rising costs for energy, regardless of whether the energy is embedded (energy used for production, transportation, and application that is 'captured' in fertilizer and pesticides), photosynthetic, or direct (energy derived directly from a source, such as electricity, butane, etc., and consumed for a particular use like heating, lighting, or transportation). Through CSP, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is encouraging farmers and ranchers to review how they use energy in their operations and look for ways to reduce costs, improve energy efficiency, and reduce impacts on the environment. An energy audit is the first step in energy management. Operators need to know current energy use before changes in efficiency can be measured. Once energy consumption and costs have been measured, users can perform a variety of analyses to determine which actions are most efficient, and take steps to make changes where necessary.



Definition – An energy audit identifies and evaluates energy management opportunities on the farm or ranch. During an audit, a baseline is developed to characterize and record energy use. Individual unit operations, processes, and major energy-consuming equipment are evaluated to identify energy management opportunities and high-return-on-investment projects. Typically an action report is produced that describes the baseline, each conservation opportunity area, an estimate of the cost to implement the changes, the savings that will be generated, and an estimation of the payback period.

Who Performs Energy Audits? – Farmers and ranchers interested in receiving an enhancement payment for an energy audit may hire a professional contractor or utility of their choice to conduct the audit. Operators should ensure that the contractor has relevant educational and professional experience, has a

successful track record, can provide objective advice, has declared any financial relationships with equipment vendors or service companies, and has qualified staff.

A list of potential audit contractors is available from your local NRCS field office.

Documentation Required: A receipt from the professional energy auditor is required prior to payment approval.

Enhancement Payment Rate: The payment for an energy audit is a one-time flat payment, not to exceed \$500.

Recycle 100 Percent of On-Farm Lubricants

Farm and ranch waste is inevitable. Things which are used, replaced, or no longer needed add to the waste stream produced on working lands. Without proper disposal, waste enters the environment; some wastes, especially those that are petroleum based, may enter groundwater. Good management of these wastes can help protect the quality of the groundwater and of drinking water supplies furnished by the watershed.

Lubricants are widely used on farms and ranches to reduce friction in a variety of machinery and equipment. The first step in reducing potential associated water quality degradation is to carefully purchase and use only essential products, reuse them when possible, and recycle them at a recycling depot. Through CSP, NRCS is encouraging farmers and ranchers to review how they treat waste lubricants in their operations, look for ways to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, and reduce potential impacts on the environment. Payments are offered for several of these activities through the program.



Definition – For purposes of CSP, farm lubricants are defined as oils, fluids, or greases, including all mineral-based oils, synthetic oils, or semi-synthetic oils used to reduce friction in equipment and machinery.

Documentation Required: Receipts from the receiving recycling company or depot are required prior to payment approval.

Enhancement Payment Rate: The payment rate for recycling on-farm lubricants is an annual payment, not to exceed \$200.