

## PROHIBITION OF POST-APPROVAL OF CONTRACTS

To maintain the integrity of cost share programs it is important that all involved parties have a common understanding of policy and eligibility criteria. District and NRCS employees at the field office are primarily responsible for the technical phase of this program.

~~The Division continues to hear about situations where work on BMPs has been started or even been completed before the cost share agreement (form NC-ACSP-2) has been signed. **Work on BMPs best management practices (BMPs) areshall not to be started before the district receives division approval.** Certification that a practice is needed after the practice has been installed could be fraud. In many field offices, NRCS has technical supervision of District employees; therefore, in these field offices NRCS is ultimately responsible for all needs determinations. In cases where NRCS does not have technical supervision of District employees, the Supervisors have this responsibility.~~

~~NRCS employees who condone post-approval of practices are subject to disciplinary action by NRCS management.~~ District and NRCS employees are prohibited from assisting operators in developing or signing a commission cost share program plan of operations (form NC-ACSP-11) for BMPs that have been started prior to receiving the necessary approvals.

~~Except for Supervisors contracts, Districts may approve contracts for vegetative practices in the amount of \$2500 or less.~~ For Agriculture Cost Share Program contracts, cooperators may choose to begin work on best management practice(s) once approved by the district prior to receiving final approval from the Division of Soil and Water Conservation if the following conditions are met:

- i. The total amount of the contract does not exceed thirty-five hundred dollars (\$3500); and
- ii. The best management practices described in the conservation plan of operations (CPO) are solely vegetative in nature. Please refer to the BMP matrix of required conservation effects to determine if practices is eligible for vegetative exception; and
- iii. The cooperator(s) is not a district supervisor or Soil and Water Conservation Commission member.  
;~~and~~  
The cooperator (s) has not used this exception prior to this instance during the program year of the CPO.  
**District approvals are limited to one per cooperator per year. Installation may begin on these contracts prior to the District's receipt of the approval card. However, Districts assume any responsibility for inaccuracies in the CPOs.**

If districts find that work has begun before division approval is received, the cooperator should stop work immediately, and ask the district board to consider requesting an exception to this policy from the commission. The district has the authority to ~~approve or deny~~ the cooperator's request or to refer the request to the commission for consideration of approval. If the request is referred ~~board approved~~, a district supervisor is required to appear before the commission to request the ~~is~~ exception.