

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD Conservation Division AGRICULTURE VOLUNTARY INCENTIVES PROGRAM	
EFFECTIVE DATE: April 1, 2024	REVISION DATE:
SUMMARY: TO ESTABLISH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE DEPARTMENT’S AGRICULTURE VOLUNTARY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (AGVIP)	

Program Purpose

To implement practices that can increase crop yields, improve soil health, and add value to operations while improving water quality using the following methods:

- Implementing comprehensive nutrient management plans (CNMPs).
- Taking soil tests on an annual basis to determine nutrient loading in soils.
- Keeping annual manure and commercial fertilizer application records.
- Taking manure or compost tests to determine nutrient availability.

Definitions

AgVIP – Agriculture Voluntary Incentives Program

UDAF – Utah Department of Agriculture and Food

DWQ – Division of Water Quality

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

CNMP – Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan

UCC – Utah Conservation Commission

Nutrients – Commercial fertilizer (dry or liquid), manure, compost, soil amendments, liquid waste

Policy and Procedures

The Utah Conservation Commission (UCC) will oversee the Agriculture Voluntary Incentives Program. This program will operate as a UCC grant program, pursuant to Utah Code Section 4-18-108 and specifically Subsection 4-18-108(1)(b) and (c) that allows the UCC to award grants to eligible entities to improve manure management practices and water quality.

The UCC shall assign an advisory board, pursuant to Utah Code Subsection 4-18-108(4)) to oversee the program and rank applications. This advisory board will include one representative from each of the following groups: Utah Association of Conservation Districts, Natural Conservation Service, Utah State University Extension, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food, Utah Division of Water Quality, and Utah Farm Bureau. The advisory board will also

include at least three representatives who are agricultural producers within the State. Advisory board representatives will have four-year terms. Day-to-day activities of the program will be directed by a program manager.

Each funding cycle will have specified information regarding that cycle which will include an application period, required information needed for each application and ranking criteria. Ranking criteria will be used to evaluate funding potential for each application submitted.

The UCC may apply total contract payment limitations based on available funding for the program each year. Small acreage payments may be utilized at amounts determined reasonable by the UCC.

Program information may be shared as needed with the Utah Division of Water Quality (DWQ) following guidelines agreed upon in the most current UDAF-DWQ MOU.

All applications submitted during each funding cycle will be evaluated and ranked by the advisory board. Previously determined ranking criteria will be followed. Applications that are recommended for funding by the advisory board will receive final approval from the UCC prior to contracting.

Pursuant to Utah Code Section Subsection 4-18-108(2)(a), in considering applications, the UCC shall consider the following criteria in addition to any published ranking criteria:

- The ability of the grantee to pay for the costs of proposed plans or projects.
- The availability of matching funds provided by the grantee or another source or the availability of material, labor, or other items in value provided in lieu of money by the grantee or another source.
- The benefits that accrue to the general public by the awarding of a grant.

All funded applications are required to have a comprehensive nutrient management plan within the first 12 months of the contract.

The AgVIP program may designate priority areas or application types based on specific water quality concerns.

AgVIP participants are required to submit annual manure, compost, and commercial fertilizer application records. All fields enrolled in AgVIP must have at least one soil test completed during the 3-year contract. One manure or compost test must be completed for each type (i.e., raw manure, liquid manure, compost) of organic nutrient applied during the 3-year contract. Annual record keeping following the 3-year contract period is encouraged, but not required.

The AgVIP will gather annual nutrient application records, soil tests, manure tests (as applicable), number of acres under current CNMPs, and other relevant information as needed. Information gathered will be presented as aggregated data to protect individual private information.

Applications and personal information will be protected under Utah Code Title 63G, Chapter 2, Government Records Access and Management Act (GRAMA)

The Agriculture Voluntary Incentives Program will follow all state and federal regulations.