

Watershed Agricultural Program SOP

3.1.10.01

WHOLE FARM PLAN (WFP) ANNUAL STATUS REVIEW (ASR)

There are currently three separate types of WFP Annual Status Reviews that will be used to monitor participating farms in the Water Agricultural Program (WAP): Basic Status Review, Comprehensive Status Reviews and a Verification Status Review for inactive farms:

1. Basic Status Review (BSR)

This review may be completed by WAP whole farm planners, conservation technicians, easement stewardship monitoring staff, subcontracted agency staff and other WAP staff as assigned.

A. Goal: The goal is to perform a BSR on of actively participating farms each year to:

- a. Thoroughly review the WFP with the participant.
- b. Review status of BMP implementation and reschedule BMP implementation as needed.
- c. Evaluate performance of BMPs,
- d. Review the farmer level of O&M compliance,
- e. Explain to the participant aspects of effective BMP function as needed,
- f. Determine if new environmental issues have arisen,
- g. Determine if there have been changes in the participants goals and objectives and
- h. Promote other WAC, WAP and partnering agency programs.

This BSR will determine if there is a need for a WFP revision. This will be recorded in the box in the upper right hand corner on the first page of the ASR form.

B. Before the visit:

- a. Review Whole Farm Plan Summary- WFP-2 and NRCS Toolkit plan if applicable.
- b. Review Operation and Maintenance agreements.
- c. Review past Status Reviews
- d. Schedule the on-farm visit with the farmer at a time when you and the farmer can invest time to properly complete the review.
- e. Plan to spend two hours with the Participant (the actual time needed will vary with participant needs) so that there is time for open discussion.

C. Conducting the BSR:

- a. Discuss and complete the Basic Status Review form.
- b. Be conversational, rather than like a survey enumerator. You don't have to read the question and can ask for the information in your own way. The intent is to provide an open dialog with the participant.
- c. Complete farm status change form if major changes are observed in the status of the farm (e.g., no agricultural activity on the farm, change in ownership of the farmstead or farm business).

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- d. Be sure to open dialogue of changes in the WAP and how these changes may affect the participants WFP. (changes in applicable standards, R&R Program, the change to long term Whole Farm Planning and O&M relationships with extended expectations)
- e. Be sure to clarify land ownership changes and transfers with the proper names as listed on the landowner deeds.
- f. Use photo documentation to record condition, use and status of existing BMPs and/or to record new environmental issues. Photo's to be stored in the WAC data base "FAME" as per 3.0.05.02

D. Basic Status Review for "Active – Ineligible" and "Active" with limited resource concerns.

This review will be submitted using the 'Verification Form'. It may be completed by a WAP Whole Farm Planner, designated intern, easement stewardship Monitoring staff, and subcontracted agency staff and other WAP staff as assigned.

1. Goal: The goal of the BVR is to determine if the level of agricultural activities presently being conducted on the farm. A Basic – Verification Status Review will be conducted if:
 - The Farm status is Active-Ineligible
 - Active-Ineligible is defined as "participants that have active agricultural production in the NYC Watershed, however their operation is currently below the minimum eligibility requirements." (i.e. under 5AU, or less than \$1000 gross annual agricultural sales for a 2-year period)
 - Or; the farm has limited resource concerns meeting the following:
 - No animals (0 AU)
 - No tillage (ex. Hay, syrup, etc.)
 - Limited nutrient imports (if a standard NMP would be required the farm should be considered active and a BSR/CSR conducted)

This will determine if there is a need to update the farm status and/or if resource issues need to be addressed by a Whole Farm Planner. This will be recorded in the box in the upper right hand corner on the first page of the ASR form.

2. Before the visit:
 - a. Review past Status Reviews
3. Conducting the Status Review:
 - a. Complete the verification form by phone and/or drive-by.
 - b. Complete farm status change form if necessary (e.g., agricultural activity on the farm, change in ownership of the farmstead or farm business).
 - c. Be sure to clarify land ownership changes and transfers with the proper names as listed on the landowner deeds.

This status review shall be conducted annually and a Comprehensive Status Review (CSR) shall be conducted every 3-years.

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2. Comprehensive Status Reviews (CSR)

This review may be completed by WAP whole farm planners with the assistance of conservation technicians.

A. Goal: The goal is to perform a Comprehensive Status Review (CSR) on participating farms every four years to:

- a. Thoroughly review the WFP with the participant.
- b. Review status of BMP implementation and reschedule BMP implementation as needed.
- c. Evaluate performance of BMPs through a visual inspection of every implemented structural practice. Evaluate each BMP for compliance with the latest water quality technology, safety components and NRCS Standards and Specifications.
- d. Review every BMP O&M agreement with the participant to determine the participant's level of O&M compliance.
- e. Explain to the participant aspects of effective BMP function.
- f. Determine if new environmental issues have arisen and to revise the WFP to include new BMPs within the WFP to address these issues.
- g. Determine if there are changes in the participant's goals and objectives.
- h. Promote other WAP and partnering agency programs.

The CSR will determine if there is a need for a WFP revision. CSRs will be scheduled throughout the year. CSRs shall also be completed for all WFP revisions being developed.

B. Before the visit:

- a. Prepare and review Whole Farm Plan Summary- WFP, NRCS Toolkit plan if applicable and Operation and Maintenance Agreements.
- b. Review past Status Reviews
- c. Schedule the on-farm visit with the farmer at a time when you and the farmer can invest time to properly complete the review.
- d. Plan to spend three to four hours with the Participant (the actual time needed will vary with participant needs) so that there is time for a visual inspection of all installed BMPs and open conversation.

C. Conducting the CSR:

- a. Discuss and complete the Comprehensive Status review form.
- b. Be conversational, rather than like a survey enumerator. You don't have to read the question and can ask for the information in your own way.
- c. Provide the farmer a copy of each Operations and Maintenance agreement and discuss the O&M with the farmer using the Comprehensive ASR form.
- d. Physically inspect BMPs (the whole BMP, e.g., every foot of laneway or fence) to evaluate O&M is being followed, check for design flaws, and determine if there is any need for modification. It is recommended the farmer participate in the inspection. If it is determined that a BMP needs maintenance that was the farmer's responsibility per the O&M agreement, then develop a plan with the participant to make necessary repairs using the CSR form. Follow-up to insure the maintenance was completed.
- e. BMPs with expired life spans:

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1. If the BMP is still functioning as designed and should for the next several years: explain the R&R Program & how the program suggest continued use and maintenance of the expired BMP to ensure repair and/or replacement should a failure occur.
2. If the BMP has failed or no longer operates as it was intended make recommendations for the farmer to repair (see above), or if determined a failed practice, schedule a WFP revision following the repair and replacement program.
- f. Be sure to open a dialogue with changes in the WAP and how these changes may affect the participants WFP. (changes in applicable standards, R&R Program, the change to long term Whole Farm Planning and O&M relationships with extended expectations)
- g. Be sure to clarify land ownership changes and transfers with the proper names as list on the landowner deeds.
- h. Use photo documentation to record condition, use and status of existing BMPs and/or to record new environmental issues.
- i. Complete farm status change form if major changes are observed in the status of the farm (e.g., no agricultural activity on the farm, change in ownership of the farmstead or farm business).

D. Animal Inventories Data- For both the Basic and Comprehensive Status Reviews, reviewers shall collect and calculate Animals Inventories uniformly throughout the program. The intent of the “Animal Inventory” is to record the accurate animal units (AU) for the farm operation as it relates to Whole Farm Planning.

- a. Eligibility into WAP
- b. Ranking for WFP (New & Revision) development
- c. Funding and incentive payments in government programs
- d. Eligibility and reimbursement rates for the WAP Nutrient Management Credit Program.
- e. For each species, choose the one time in the last year (within the last 12 months) when the farm had the most AUs for that species.
 1. Record the approximate date.
 2. Record the animal numbers and actual/correct weights of animals present on the farm at that time. Circle species on form.
 3. For temporary housed or grazed animals, note where these animals are from and duration and months to which they are on this WFP property.
- f. Seasonal animal operations
 1. Record any major seasonal changes in animal numbers in comment section of the Animal Inventory sheet.
 2. For example, a farm housing 30 AU for less than 12 months will be considered a 30 AU farm. Times of animal duration on the farm to be recorded on the Animal Inventory sheet.
- g. For species with multiple groups, or rotations (litters) per year
 1. Example: If a producer raises two separate groups of 10 feeder pigs at different times of the year, the pigs shall be counted as “10 feeder pigs” unless groups overlap. Record dates and AI in the information comment section of SR form.
 2. Poultry and Fowl example: a farm that raises three separate groups of 200 pasture poultry shall be counted as 200 chickens unless groups overlap.
 - h. For the short term agricultural events including fairs, shows, auctions/sales or any other congregation of animals for one month or less, record the actual total number of

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Animal Units on site for the length of time and time of year.

- i. Complete all sections of the Animal Inventory Sheet. Draw one diagonal line through box if documentation is not required.
- j. Complete the “Total Animal Unit” inventory per farm and initial.

3. Verification Status Review (VSR) Inactive Farms

This review may be completed by WAP whole farm planners, conservation technicians, easement stewardship monitoring staff, subcontracted agency staff and other WAP staff as assigned.

Goal: The goal of the Verification Review is to determine if any agricultural activities are presently being conducted on the farm. If it is determined the land is being actively farmed these activities need to be brought into a whole farm plan by revision.

All farms labeled as inactive will be tracked and need to be verified each year as still inactive.

A. For an active WFP and/or participant to be defined and classified as inactive, a one year inactive period was recorded with "no agricultural activities" conducted on the farm, farmstead and/or working landscape involved in the original WFP.

B. For a WFP/farming operation to be moved from the inactive category, the farm will need to show agricultural activities that meet the minimum eligibility criteria for the WAP. If agricultural activities are present for a minimum of a 12 month period, then the reviewer shall complete a "Farm Status Change Form" and submit to WAC management for approval.

C. VRs shall be completed throughout the year. Conducting the VR:

- a. A drive-by, phone call, or personal knowledge of the farm may be used to determine farm activity.
- b. If it is determined there is no agricultural activity then complete the first page of the BSR with farm information and state the farm remains inactive.
- c. If it is determined agricultural activity is taking place then complete applicable portions of the BSR (this will trigger the assignment of a whole farm planner to develop a whole farm plan revision).
- d. If a farm is found to have agricultural activities, then the reviewer shall complete “Farm Status Review” form, inform the planner/Group and submit to the Ag Program Manager for Ag Program Committee review and data base update.