Section by Section

Section 1. Short Title – Converting Our Waste Sustainably (COWS) Act

Section 2. Alternative Manure Management Program

Within the Conservation Title of the Farm Bill, the COWS Act creates a new Chapter 5 of Subtitle D of Title 12 of the Food Security Act of 1985. USDA will accept contract offers from producers and evaluate and rank them based on criteria that ensures selection of applications that will maximize carbon sequestration, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, and overall environmental and public health benefits. USDA will also take steps to ensure geographic diversity and to prioritize awards that address air, water, and public health concerns of underserved communities.

Contract Provisions

Contracts may be up to 3 years. At least one eligible management measure must be adopted. Eligible management measures include:

- Pasture-based management
  - Converting a non-pasture operation to pasture-based management
  - Increasing time spent on pasture at an existing pasture-based operation
  - Improving pasture-based management by adopting management-intensive rotational grazing
- Alternative manure treatment and storage practices
  - Installing a compost-bedded pack barn
  - Installing a slatted floor pit storage manure collection system
  - Other similar treatment and storage practices
- Solid separation systems
  - Installing a new solid separation system with significantly higher efficiency than the existing system, or developing or retrofitting manure management to avoid wet handling infrastructure, in conjunction with one or more of the following:
    - Open solar drying or composting of manure onsite
    - Enclosed solar drying
    - Forced evaporation
    - Manure storage in unconfined piles or stacks
    - Enclosed composting with forced aeration and continuous mixing
    - Composting in piles with forced aeration
    - Composting in intensive windrows with regular turning
    - Composting in passive windrows
    - Other similar management measures
- Scrape technologies, including vacuum technologies, in conjunction with one or more of the composting practices named above

Payments

AMMP payments will cover up to 90 percent of the costs associated with the management measures being adopted, including the costs of planning, design, materials, equipment, installation, labor, management, maintenance, and training. Up to 50 percent of the total payment will be made in...
advance to cover the cost of contracting for technical assistance and contracting or purchasing needed materials and equipment. Payments may not exceed $825,000 during any 5-year period.

**Duties of the Secretary**

USDA will determine and publish factors for estimating the carbon sequestration and emissions reductions for each eligible management measure. USDA will also review the adequacy of existing conservation practice standards for supporting eligible management measures and, as needed, will revise current standards and develop new ones. In addition to AMMP payments, USDA will provide eligible producers with technical assistance and training to aid in the implementation of eligible management measures. No more than 15 percent of total AMMP funding will be available for technical assistance via the Department or third-party providers.

**Funding**

Using the funds, facilities, and authorities of the Commodity Credit Corporation, $1.5 billion will be made available for AMMP to implement the program from FY 2024 through FY 2028. USDA will use a majority of the funds made available to serve beginning, socially disadvantaged, and limited resource farmers and ranchers and those transitioning to higher levels of GHG emission reductions.

**Section 3. Composting**

This section defines “composting practice” for the purpose of the farm bill conservation title, as –

(A) an activity (including an activity that does not require the use of a composting facility) to produce compost from organic waste that is –

(i) generated on a farm, or
(ii) brought to a farm from the nearby community; and

(B) the use and active management of compost on a farm to improve water retention and soil health, subject to the condition that such use shall be in compliance with applicable Federal, State, and local laws.

**Section 4. Environmental Quality Incentives Program**

This section makes composting eligible for funding under the EQIP program.

**Section 5. Conservation Stewardship Program**

This section makes composting eligible for funding under the CSP program.

**Section 6. Delivery of Technical Assistance**

This section requires USDA to review its existing composting facilities practice standard and soil carbon amendment practice standard to determine their adequacy in advancing alternative manure management measures and on-farm composting production and utilization and to develop and implement a new conservation practice standard for the on-farm production of compost.