Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition Criteria (acres and/or animal units)

1. Definition

A Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition (CPSOT) is a conservation system for an organic farming system operation to be used while transitioning from conventional to organic production that:

a. Meets NRCS quality criteria for soil erosion, water quality, and other identified resource concerns;
b. Follows USDA National Organic Program Standards;
c. Complies with federal, state, tribal, and local laws, regulations and permit requirements;
d. Addresses operator's objectives

2. CPSOT Criteria

This section establishes the minimum criteria to be addressed in the development of a conservation plan to support organic transition.

A. General Criteria

1. National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) Documentation and other Environmental Compliance Documentation (including National Historic Preservation Act, Endangered Species Act, Environmental Justice, Air Quality compliance) —see comments below about using the Resource Concerns and Special Environmental Concerns worksheet (CPA-52) as a checklist. Reasons/justifications for data gaps or planning limitations and biases should be provided in a brief statement here.

2. Cultural Resources and other Resource Concerns and Special Environmental Concerns, extract from State's current CPA-52, Environmental Evaluation Worksheet (see National Environmental Compliance Handbook). CPA-52 includes benchmark conditions for all resource concerns and special environmental concern (e.g. soil, water, air, plants, animals, human (cultural resources, environmental justice, scenic resources and economic and social concerns). This is just a checklist and the level of resolution for inventory of these resource concerns may vary depending upon the nature, size, and intensity of possible positive and negative effects to these resources. If any are not considered, a short explanation for these data gaps should be given here.

3. A CPSOT shall be developed by NRCS partners and certified Technical Service Providers (TSP). The specific criteria required for each type of certification for TSP is located on the TSP website (TechReg) at: http://techreg.usda.gov/

B. The planner shall address the following items during the CPSOT development process:

1. Background and Site Information
2. Site History
3. Seeds and Planting Stock
4. Production of Seedlings, Transplants, Greenhouse Crops
5. Fertility, Soil Quality and Erosion Control
6. Production of Compost
7. Pest Management
8. Locations of sensitive resource areas to include:
   - Rivers, streams, drains, surface waters, coastal waters, wetlands, wells, groundwater, drains, grassed waterways and buffers;
   - Sensitive plant species and/or essential fish and wildlife 9including invertebrates)habitat (on and off-site), and food plots;
   - Drinking water sources.
9. Prevention of Contamination by Contact
10. Post Harvest Handling
11. Livestock
    a) Livestock Operation Profile
    b) Origin of Livestock
    c) Entire Herd Profile
    d) Livestock Feed
    e) Water
    f) Health and Preventative Management
    g) Operations Producing both Organic and Non-organic livestock
    h) Manure Management
12. Biodiversity
13. Monitoring Procedures and Record Keeping
14. Associated NRCS Practices and Mitigation
15. References

C. CPSOT Specific Element Criteria

Each of the CPSOT elements will address specific criteria. The degree to which these elements are addressed in the development and implementation of a site-specific CPSOT is determined by the General Criteria in Section 2.A and 2.B and the specific criteria provided for each element of the CPSOT below.

1. Background and Site Information Element

   This element provides a brief description of:
   - Name of owner/operator;
   - Farm location and mailing address;
   - Soil map units;
   - Map of streams, surface waters, wetlands on or adjacent to site

- Conservation plan map;
- Total acres to be transitioned to organic;
- Field names or codes;
- Date producer began management of parcel;
- Date producer plans to harvest certified organic crops from the parcel;
- List of crops grown on the parcel, with acreage for each crop

2. Site History

   This element provides a brief description of:
   - Date of last prohibited material application and materials applied;
   - Crops or land use, if not cropland;
   - Brand name of fertilizers and application dates per crop and field;
   - Brand name of pest control substances applied and dates per crop and field

3. Seeds and Planting Stock

   This element addresses:
   - Type of seed used: list organic, non-organic, untreated, treated or inoculated; if non-organic, untreated seed used must document "good faith effort" seed search for organic seed;
   - Annual seedlings: list organic with certificate;
   - Perennial stock: list organic, non-organic;
   - Other planting stock: list organic, non-organic: rhizomes, shoots, tubers, cuttings or roots;
   - Non-Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) documentation (only needed for crops that have commercially available GM seed and if an inoculant is used for alfalfa;
   - Seed treatment documentation: pelletized, coated, primed, fungicide, insecticide, inoculated.

4. Production of seedlings, transplants, greenhouse crops if applicable

   This element addresses:
   - Soil mix used to grow crops;
   - Method used to separate and identify organic and non-organic areas;
   - Method used to prevent commingling of organic and non-organic plants;
   - Labeling;
   - Prevention of prohibited materials drift/contact through ventilation or irrigation system;

- Prevention of prohibited materials contact into sensitive areas, through streams, surface water, or irrigation system;
- Method of cleaning seedling containers, equipment used for both organic and prohibited substances;
- Method of documenting cleaning and insuring materials stay on site (not airborne or waterborne).

5. Fertility, Soil Quality and Erosion Control

   This element provides a description of:
   - Crop rotation plan;
   - List of cover crops, hedgerows, and/or artificial structures for beneficial insects, bats, and raptors or other diversified plantings in annual and perennial crops;
   - Consideration of wildlife-friendly cover crops;
   - List of nutrients applied (incorporated, foliar, soil inoculants, compost);
   - Results of soil tests, tissue tests, microbiological tests, crop quality testing;
   - Cover crop management;
   - Side dressing, drip applications;
   - Method and frequency of fertility management monitoring;
   - Methods of erosion control and documentation:
     - Soil map units used for erosion prediction and predicted soil erosion from wind and/or water as a result of planned using approved prediction tools such as RUSLE2 and/or WEQ when applicable

6. Production of Compost (when applicable)

   This element addresses:
   - Method of producing compost;
   - Compost that contains manure;
   - Addition of pelleted manure to compost;
   - Description of uncomposted manure application

7. Pest Management

   This element describes:
   - Substances used for controlling insects or disease;
   - Biological controls 9including encouraging and managing bats and raptors);
   - List of all materials used by name and formulation, manufacturer, reason for use;
   - List any synthetic pesticides not on the National List in or around facilities where organic products are stored; split

operations shall list crops in individual fields with pesticides/inputs used;
- Identification of beneficial predators and parasites.

8. Prevention of Contamination by Contact

This element addresses:
- Adjoining land use;
- Fish and wildlife habitat inventory and effects assessment;
- Width and type of riparian and other vegetative buffers;
- Width;
- Separation of organic, non-organic at harvest;
- Safeguard methods to prevent contamination from drift;
- Use of lumber treated with prohibited substances;
- Application equipment, type, and cleaning method documented that is used for both organic and non-organic crops;
- Water source;
- Storage of any prohibited materials on farm;
- Methods of crop storage

9. Post Harvest Handling

This element addresses:
- Sanitation;
- Water use;
- Packaging

10. Livestock when applicable to operation

This element addresses:

a) Livestock Operation Profile
   - List of livestock, poultry, breeds, gender, numbers, hatch or purchase dates;
   - Description of livestock and livestock products, processing;
   - List activities: milking, cooling/storing milk, grinding, washing, packing, slaughter, process fiber;
   - Crop production activities if growing crops and/or documentation for organic livestock feed;

b) Origin of Livestock
   - Type, flock ID, date of purchase, whether certified organic, age at purchase, source, projected date of egg-laying, slaughter

c) Entire Herd Profile
   - Group ID, animal type and breed, number of animals, date acquired, age when acquired, source, organic

d) Livestock Feed

- Type of livestock, age, daily feed rations and supplements, additives
- Access to pasture for all ruminants

e) Water
- Source of water;
- Additives

f) Health and Preventative Management
- Materials & Medications Used or Planned for Use;
- Type, substance brand name, reason for treatment, animal type;
- List of strategies;
- Parasiticides and Synthetic Medications

g) Operations Producing both Organic and Non-organic livestock
- Records to distinguish between organic and non-organic livestock

h) Manure Management
- Storage and application techniques, application rates, number of acres manure applied to, and when applied

11. Biodiversity
- Biodiversity conservation plants, habitat for birds, pollinators, bats, beneficial insects, natural areas restored or protected, wildlife friendly farm practices

12. Monitoring Procedures and Record Keeping
- Records required for Federal and State Certification

13. Associated NRCS practice standards

This element includes NRCS conservation practices needed for the implementation and management of the organic production system and to minimize potential environmental risks of transition to organic production management. The "Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition" may include but is not limited to the conservation practices listed below. Additionally, additional mitigation measures such as setbacks will be addressed, as needed, in this section.

- Alley Cropping (311)
- Cover Crop (340)
- Conservation Cover (327)
- Conservation Crop Rotation (328)
- Early Successional Habitat Development/Management (647)
- Field Border (386)
- Filter Strip (393)
- Forest Stand Improvement (666)
- Hayland Management (512)
- Hedgerow Planting (422)
- Herbaceous Wind Barriers (603)
- Irrigation System, Microirrigation (441)

- Irrigation Water Management (449)
- Land Smoothing (466)
- Mulching (484)
- Nutrient Management (590)
- Pasture and Hayland Planting (512)
- Pest Management (595)
- Prescribed Grazing (528)
- Residue and Tillage Management, Mulch Till (345)
- Residue Management, No Till/Strip Till/Direct Seed (329)
- Residue Management, Ridge Till (346)
- Residue Management, Seasonal (344)
- Restoration and Management of Rare and Declining Habitats (643)
- Stream Habitat Improvement and Management (395)
- Stripcropping (585)
- Terrace (600)
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management (645)
- Windbreak/Shelter Belt Establishment (380)

14. References
    - USDA National Organic Program
    - California Certified Organic Farmers
    - USDA NRCS Field Office Technical Guide
    - ATTRA Organic Documentation Forms, Organic Crop and Livestock Workbooks