

Coalition Exhibit 'H'

Background Information for NMP Certification

1. According to the American Society of Agronomy website:

Certified Professional Agronomists (CPAg), Certified Professional Soil Scientists (CPSSc), and Certified Professional Soil Classifiers (CPSC) are certified by ARCPACS, a federation of certifying boards in agriculture, biology, earth, and environmental sciences. The certification program is a membership service of the American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, and Soil Science Society of America. Certification requirements including a college degree, certain level of experience and passing an exam.

A copy of the certification requirements is located online at:

http://www.swcs.org/en/members_only/continuing_education_units/which_professionals_need_ceus/certified_professional_agronomist_cpag/

2. The certification requirements for a Certified Professional Agronomist (CPAg), which may be found online at: <https://www.agronomy.org/certifications/cpag> includes:

- Pass the International Certified Advisor (ICCA) Exam and the local board exam for your state or province.
- Have at least 5 years experience with at least a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agronomy or closely allied field, 3 years with an MS Degree, or 1 year with a PhD.
- Document education and experience with transcripts and supporting references. University degrees and transcripts must be in English and based on United States educational standard.
- Sign and agree to uphold the Agronomy Code of Ethics
- Once certified, earn 50 hours of continuing education every two years and pay an annual renewal fee.

3. The certification requirements for a Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) includes the following (<https://www.certifiedcropadviser.org/about-the-program>)

- Pass two comprehensive exams (international and local board)
- Have at least 2 years of experience with at least a Bachelor of Science Degree in agriculture or 4 years experience with no degree.

- Document education and crop advising experience with transcripts and supporting references.
- Sign and agree to uphold the CCA Code of Ethics
- Once certified, earn 40 hours of continuing education every two years and pay an annual renewal fee.

4. The NRCS and ASA have a Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") for Certified Professional Agronomists, Coalition **Exhibit 'I'**, may be found online at:

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1046462.pdf

5. The NRCS and ASA have an MOU for Certified Professional Crop Scientists, **Coalition Exhibit 'J'**, may be found on line at:

http://techreg.usda.gov/help/ASOA_Certified_Professional_Crop_Scientists_3_23.pdf

6. The NRCS has nutrient management planning proficiency areas and performance measures for certified crop advisors (CCAs), certified professional agronomists (CPAg), certified professional soils scientists (CPSS) that must be met in order to be certified as a Technical Service Provider for the USDA-NRCS. NRCS views the certification requirements as extremely important, as they are intended to assure that Technical Service Providers are competent, which is a duty of the NCRS:

Providing clear guidance to Technical Service Providers (TSPs) for their role in protecting resources is one duty of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The TSPs provide vital service to the producer, and must be competent in all phases of nutrient management planning. Because there are many components in all phases of nutrient management planning, it is imperative that the necessary knowledge and skills be clearly stated in an easily located and understood document.

Coalition Exhibit 'K' - online at: <https://www.soils.org/files/certifications/tsp-nutrient.pdf>

The document contains instructions on how to obtain certification as a TSP that includes submitting a nutrient management plan to the NRCS for their review. The NRCS can either accept or reject the adequacy of the submitted plan, and if necessary request a second plan to be developed that also passes their criteria. If the applicant fails both submittals, they will be required to obtain additional training and reapply. If the applicant

passes and adheres to the other requirements of the program, then they become certified TSP by the NRCS.