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April 11, 2003

Melissa Hammond  
Technical Service Provider Coordinator  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
P.O. Box 2890  
Washington, D.C. 20013

**RE:** Request for information on current market prices to help in setting FY 2003 payment rates for Technical Service Provider Assistance (7 CFR Part 652),

Dear Melissa:

I am writing to respond to your request for current market prices to help USDA in setting payment rates for technical services for FY 2003.

This letter is a cooperative effort between six companies and organizations and a rangeland and animal science specialist -- Stewardship America, Inc.; Dynamac Corporation; EarthBalance; Glades Crop Care, Inc.; Prairie Land Management, Inc.; and Florida Agricultural Consultants, Inc.

These companies are working together in a coordinated fashion through a series of MOUs to complement, build on and leverage each other's resources to create a comprehensive Conservation Delivery Team (details about each company and the individual collaborators who are a part of the team and their capabilities can be viewed at [http://privatelands.org/FSP/FSP\\_partners.htm](http://privatelands.org/FSP/FSP_partners.htm))

A teleconference call was held on Tuesday, April 8, among 12 members of the team to discuss the information request from NRCS. Several members of the team have responded to the website survey posted at <http://tspcost.sc.egov.usda.gov/index.aspx>. Several team members also have contacted you directly to provide you with price schedules and to find out if they have to enter information on the web site multiple times for each state they work in, when the price data is the same for each state.

We agreed during the teleconference call that the scope of the survey on the website is limited and does not provide the opportunity to provide information on many functions and services that must be provided to a grower to assure adequate conservation delivery. We also have found that local conditions, the willingness of a grower to participate in one program or another, and other factors must be taken into consideration. These functions and services, and considerations to address local conditions, all affect price.

We would like to share some observations about our experiences in working with producers on the ground in the hopes that these observations will be of value to you and other USDA staff in developing an equitable, fair, locally-responsive pricing structure for the TSP program.

Our comments fall into three categories. The first is a series of considerations we feel you should take into account about:


- the process that should be used in developing the prices,
- the services that should be included in your pricing structure, and
- the types of flexibility that should be built into the pricing structure to address local conditions (which sometimes change from one field to the next on a single parcel of property).

The second expands on Attachment 1 by drawing on excerpts from my February 18, 2003 comments to you regarding the interim TSP rule to emphasize these points.

The third addresses the roles that different groups can play to complement and support the TSP program, and how these roles are important since they have the potential of being supportive and complementary, or of being competitive and undermining.

These three sets of comments are being sent to you as attachments to this letter. I hope you will find these comments of value. Should you have any questions, or wish to obtain any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me, or any of the other members of the Conservation Delivery Team.

Sincerely,



Craig Evans  
President

Attachments - 3

**Members of the Conservation Delivery Team contributing to this letter:**

Craig Evans - Stewardship America, FL  
Kyle Thompson - Prairie Land Management, MN  
Brooks Lundeen - Prairie Land Management, MN  
Julie Deters - Prairie Land Management, MN  
Sid Sumner - Florida Agricultural Consultant, Bartow, FL; Florida Cattleman's Association  
Sharon Bennett - Rangeland & Animal Science Expert, FL  
Paul Shaffer - Dynamac Corp., Corvallis, OR, Water Resource Specialist  
Jerry Barker - Dynamac Corp., Corvallis, OR, Range scientist  
Vickie Larson - Dynamac Corp., Cape Canaveral, FL  
Don Ross - EarthBalance, FL, restoration specialist  
Charlie Mellinger - Glades Crop Care, Inc., FL  
Madeline Mellinger - Glades Crop Care, Inc., FL  
Conservation Delivery Team website: [http://privatelands.org/FSP/FSP\\_partners.htm](http://privatelands.org/FSP/FSP_partners.htm)