

E3 IN MONTANA AGRICULTURE

e3.peakstoprairies.org



How to Use this Handbook: A Guide for Extension Agents

The E3 in Montana Agriculture Initiative Handbook is designed to aid Montana State University Extension Agents participating in the E3 In Montana Agriculture Initiative with the process of completing on site assessments. This handbook includes a variety of forms, factsheets, and tools for you (the Extension Agent) to use when completing an E3 Assessment. The handbook is divided up into four sections:

- Producer Information Sheets,
- Extension Agent Information Sheets,
- Tools and Data Collection
- Background Information.

As an Extension Agent, be sure to familiarize yourself with every section of this handbook. By following the recommendations and instructions in this guide, you are ensuring that every assessment you complete is comprehensive, consistent, and meets the producer's expectations.

Producer Information Sheets

This section contains a variety of resources that are designed to be shared with the producer. Some of the material in this section include factsheets to inform the producer about best management practices and various opportunities to reduce waste and conserve resources. Also included are worksheets, such as the Questions for Ag Producers sheet, for the producer to fill out and return to you before you complete the assessment. Use the Assessment Components to be Provided by the Extension Agent to the Producer Check List to ensure that the right information arrives on time. The information included in the Producer Information Sheets section pertains to various aspects of the E3 process. As an Extension Agent, you should be familiar with the material in this section. It is likely that the producer will have questions regarding some of this material. Also stated in this section is information regarding what the producer can expect to receive from the E3 process. There is also a generalized timeline that the producer will expect the Extension Agent to follow. It is recommended that you email these documents to the producer as well as delivering printed copies at the time of your visit.

Extension Agent Information Sheets

Included in this section are guides for various types of data collection and evaluation. There are also checklists and information sheets that are designed to help organize and streamline the E3 process for both the producer and the Extension Agent. This information is directed at the Extension Agent specifically



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and is not designed to be shared with the producer directly. Following the directions in this section ensures that assessments that are completed are uniform across the state, an important requirement for their acceptance into programs run by the NRCS, USDA, SBA, and other government agencies.

Tools and Data Collection

The Tools and Data Collection section contains all of the data collection forms that are used in the E3 assessment. These forms should be printed and labeled with the producer's information prior to your visit. During the pre-assessment period, you should contact the producer to get details on the type of operation the producer has and which types of assessments the producer is interested in having completed. The data collection sheets are connected to a variety of web-based tools. At the bottom of every form are directions on what website you need to visit to complete the assessment. Prior to your visit, review the producer's energy and water use billing statements and input the required information into the appropriate forms

Background Information

The information in this section is designed to help you give the producer an overview of the Agricultural Energy Management Plan (AgEMP). The assessment that you complete for the producer is accepted by the NRCS in lieu of an AgEMP completed by a Technical Service Provider (TSP). A Sample AgEMP is included in this section so that you can mimic the format accepted by the NRCS. The E3 Initiative allows the Producer to qualify for grant and loan programs that typically require an AgEMP, saving the producer between \$1,900 and \$3,000.



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