



CLIMATE  
ACTION  
RESERVE

# Rice Cultivation Project Protocol V1.1

## Protocol Summary

### Project Definition

The adoption and maintenance of one or more approved rice cultivation activities that reduce methane emissions:

- ⌘ Dry seeding with delayed flooding: the adoption of a dry seeding method that involves sowing of dry seeds into dry or moist soil with field flooding delayed until rice stand is established
- ⌘ Post-harvest rice straw removal and baling

One or more approved project activities may be implemented on a single field, known as a single-field project, or on two or more individual fields, known as a project aggregate. An individual field is defined as one that is under the control of a single producer, has been growing rice for at least the past five cultivation cycles, is contiguous across field checks, and has relatively homogenous water, fertilizer and crop residue management.

### Project Eligibility Requirements

**Location:** Project fields must be located in the California rice growing region, must not contain soils with organic carbon content greater than three percent in the top 10 cm of soil and must not have applied nitrification/urea inhibitors or controlled release fertilizers.

**Start Date:** The first day of a new cultivation cycle (i.e. the first day after completion of the previous harvest) during which one or more approved project activities is implemented on a field. Fields must be submitted as a single-field project or join an active or new aggregate before the end of the first cultivation cycle after the field's start date. Fields may always be submitted to the Reserve prior to their start date.

**Crediting Period:** Five years, renewable up to three times (for a maximum of 20 years of crediting). During a crediting period, reporting must be continuous with no gaps between reporting periods. Crediting periods apply to single-field projects and to individual fields within a project aggregate.

**Baseline:** Each field must have management records that demonstrate continuous rice cultivation with flooding for at least 100 days during each of the five rice growing cultivation cycles preceding the field's start date, with no more than one fallow season. If a field has previously implemented any of the approved project activities in the five cultivation cycles prior to the start date, these activities will be built into the baseline management scenario.

**Performance Standard:** Implement at least one of the approved project activities on each field.

**Legal Requirement Test:** Project must demonstrate that the GHG reductions achieved by the project would not have otherwise occurred due to federal, state or local regulations. The project developer or aggregator must submit an Attestation of Voluntary Implementation for each field at the start of each crediting period.

**Ecosystem Services Payment Stacking:** USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides payments for rice straw baling (Practice Standard 344A) and dry seeding (Practice Standard 329). Stacking NRCS payments with rice cultivation carbon credits is permissible as long as NRCS payments were not received and the activity not implemented before the project was submitted to the Reserve.

**Regulatory Compliance:** Project must be in compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations relevant to project activities. Project developer or aggregator must sign the Attestation of Regulatory Compliance for each verification period.

**Reporting and Verification Schedule:** Project must report annually. The reporting period is uniformly defined for all aggregates as starting on October 1 and ending on September 30 of the following year. Individual fields must quantify their emission reductions for their field-specific cultivation cycle. Project aggregates must undergo annual verification. Single-field projects are allowed additional reporting and verification options to provide flexibility and help manage costs.

### Project Is Ineligible If:

- ⌘ Located on lands without a recent cropping history of flooded rice cultivation
- ⌘ Management records from the past five cultivation cycles are not available
- ⌘ The field received funding for and implemented NRCS Conservation Practice Standards 344A or 329 within 12 months prior to the field's submittal to the Reserve