

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Natural Resources Conservation Service



USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service offers voluntary Farm Bill programs that benefit both agricultural producers and the environment.

Overview

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides technical and financial assistance to producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, increased soil health and reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, improved or created wildlife habitat, and mitigation against drought and increasing weather volatility.

Benefits

Through EQIP, NRCS provides agricultural producers with one-on-one help and financial assistance to plan and implement improvements, or what NRCS calls conservation practices. Together, NRCS and producers invest in solutions that conserve natural resources for the future while improving agricultural operations.

Program at a Glance

NRCS will help you develop a conservation plan that meets your goals and vision. This plan becomes your roadmap for selecting the right conservation practices for your land. NRCS offers about 200 unique practices designed for working farms, ranches, and forests.

NRCS financial assistance can cover part of the costs of implementing conservation practices.

Guidance documents lack the force and effect of law, unless expressly authorized by statute or incorporated into a contract. USDA may not cite, use, or rely on any guidance that is not available through their guidance portal, except to establish historical facts.

Who is Eligible?

Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who own or rent agricultural land are eligible. EQIP assistance can be used on all types of agricultural operations, including:

- ◆ Conventional and organic
- ◆ Specialty crops and commodity crops
- ◆ Forestry and wildlife
- ◆ Historically underserved farmers*
- ◆ Livestock operations

*Increased and advance payments available for historically underserved producers beginning, limited resource, socially disadvantaged, and military veterans.)

How to Apply

Apply at your local USDA Service Center, which you can find at <https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/USDA-service-centers>.

Applications for EQIP financial assistance are accepted throughout the year. Specific state deadlines are set for ranking and funding. If your application is ranked and selected, you will enter into a contract with NRCS to receive financial assistance for the cost of implementing conservation practices. Payment rates for conservation practices are reviewed and set each fiscal year.

More Information

For more information, visit nrcs.usda.gov/farmbill or farmers.gov. Find your local USDA Service Center at <https://www.farmers.gov/working-with-us/USDA-service-centers>.

What's New in the 2018 Farm Bill

Adds potential resource concerns related to beneficial cost-effective operation changes.

Raises cap for organic producers to \$140,000 over four years.

New enrollment option through incentive contracts to address priority resource concerns.

Requires advance payment option be offered to historically underserved producers.

Authorizes direct program assistance to WMEs such as irrigation districts, acequias and other public or semi-public entities for the purposes of improving water use efficiencies.