

Environmental Quality Incentives Program



What is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program?

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) assists farm, ranch, and forest production and improves and protects environmental quality. The Farm Bill program offers financial and technical assistance to help agricultural producers voluntarily implement conservation practices that keep lands healthy and productive.

The Plan

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assists applicants with developing conservation plans for EQIP enrollment. Plans include conservation practices that meet NRCS' standards and the applicant's objectives.

Applications are ranked based on the level of conservation benefits that will be achieved in meeting those objectives.

The Professionals

NRCS offers expert analysis and recommendations to help you plan and design conservation improvements for your farm.

Our technical assistance is one-on-one, personalized advice and support — and is offered free of charge.

Eligibility

Farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who own or rent agricultural land are eligible. EQIP offers payments for over 100 conservation practices to help all types of farmers and landowners.

How to Apply

Landowners or agricultural producers may apply by contacting their local USDA service center in the county in which the land is located.



USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. EQIP Factsheet • October 2018

EQIP applications are accepted throughout the year. Cutoff dates are scheduled to allow for current year ranking and selection of applications for funding. State and local ranking criteria are developed considering annual stakeholder advice.

Visit the website below to review current EQIP cutoff dates, eligibility information, and special initiative opportunities.

Something for Everyone

EQIP offers assistance for all types of agriculture, including:

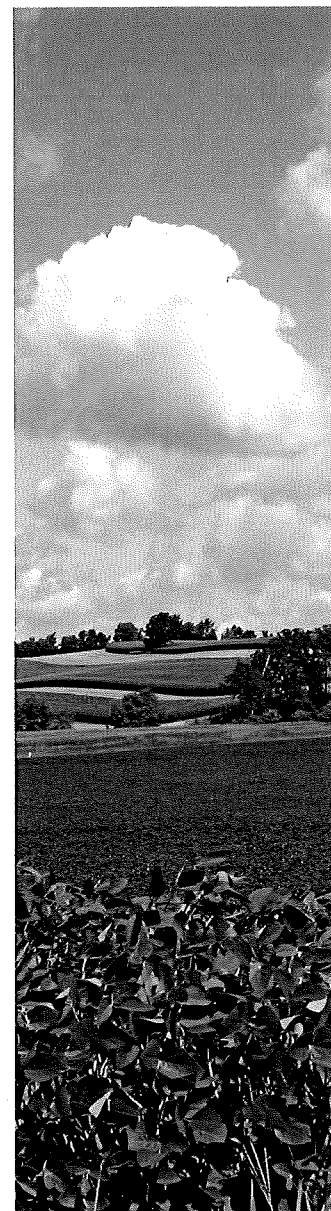
- Conventional and specialty crops
- Forestry and wildlife
- Historically underserved farmers*
- Livestock operations

*Special payment rates available for farmers who qualify under beginning, economically and socially disadvantaged criteria. Special provisions apply to qualifying veterans.

Some of the Eligible Practices

- Buffer strips
- Contour strip cropping
- Cover crops
- Critical area plantings
- Erosion control
- Grassed waterways
- Grazing management
- Livestock water systems
- Manure management systems including storage structures and barnyard runoff protection
- Nutrient management
- Pollinator and wildlife habitat
- Stream exclusion

For more information about EQIP, visit:
www.nrcs.usda.gov/EQIP



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Apply for Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

HOW DO I APPLY?

Have a resource concern you are ready to address or a management system you want to try? We are ready to help. Applications for EQIP financial assistance are accepted throughout the year. Specific deadlines are set for ranking and funding opportunities within each state. Download and complete the EQIP application form.

Contact your local NRCS field office for more information.

PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION

Applications will be accepted for all eligible lands and persons. Eligible land includes:

- Cropland and Hayland
- Rangeland
- Pastureland
- Non-industrial private forestland
- Other farm or ranch lands

Eligible person(s) include:

- Agricultural producers
- Owners of non-industrial private forestland
- Indian Tribes
- Those with an interest in the agricultural or forestry operations

Additionally, farm records must be established or updated with the Farm Service Agency for both the person(s) and the land for your application to be eligible and evaluated. Farm records for the person must indicate the applicant:

- Controls or owns eligible land;
- Meets adjusted gross income (AGI) and payment limitation provisions;
- Is in compliance with highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements

Conservation Stewardship 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 Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns. CSP pays participants for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

Benefits

CSP addresses various resource concerns including soil quality, soil erosion, water quality, water quantity, air quality, plant resources, and animal resources as well as energy.

How It Works

CSP provides two possible types of payments through five-year contracts: annual payments for installing new conservation activities and maintaining existing practices; and supplemental payments for adopting a resource-conserving crop rotation.

Who is Eligible?

Applicants may include individuals, legal entities, joint operations, or Indian tribes that meet the stewardship threshold for at least two priority resource concerns when they apply. They must also agree to meet or exceed the stewardship threshold for at least one additional priority resource concern by the end of the contract. Producers must have effective control of the land for the term of the proposed contract.

Eligible lands include private and tribal agricultural lands, cropland, grassland, pastureland, rangeland, and nonindustrial private forest land. CSP is available to all producers, regardless of operation size or type of crops produced, in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Caribbean and Pacific Island areas.

New CSP Grasslands Conservation Initiative

Provides financial assistance to conserve grasslands through a single opportunity to enroll in a 5-year contract. Eligible lands are limited to cropland for which base acres have been maintained under FSA's ARC/PLC and were planted to grass or pasture, including idle or fallow, during a specific period. Enrolled acreage must be managed consistently with a grassland conservation plan.

How to Apply

Apply at your local USDA Service Center, which you can find at farmers.gov/service-locator. Applications are accepted at any time.

Payments are made soon as practical after October 1 of each fiscal year for contract activities installed and maintained in the previous year.

What's New in the 2018 Farm Bill

Increases payment rates for adoption of cover crop rotations and advanced grazing management activities.

Extends contracts to facilitate renewal under new program authority.

Authorizes specified annual funding levels.

Provides specific support for organic and transitioning to organic production activities.

Adds new CSP Grasslands Conservation Initiative.

More Information

For more information, visit nrcs.usda.gov/farmbill or farmers.gov.

Find your local USDA Service Center at farmers.gov/service-locator.

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