

Environmental Quality Incentive Program

Agency/Organization: Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

Program: Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

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Program Description:

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program for farmers and non-industrial private forestland owners that promotes agricultural production, forestry, and environmental quality as compatible goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural or forest land. Forest practices that may be covered include Forest Stewardship/Management Plan development, forest trail and landing improvements, pest management—invasive plant control, and various wildlife habitat improvement practices.

Assistance Type: Financial, Technical

Financial Assistance: All conservation practices can be cost shared up to 75%, higher rates may be available if the practice will be implemented as a component of a planned Resource Management System (RMS). Up to 90% cost-share for eligible limited resource producers, beginning farmers and ranchers, and socially disadvantaged farmers. Limited Resource Farmers and New and Beginning Farmers with approved 2005 EQIP contracts, will receive 25% above the base practice cost share rates listed in the '2007 EQIP Eligible Conservation Practice List', and 90% cost share for practices implemented as a component of a planned treatment at the RMS level. EQIP offers contracts for practice implementation ranging from 1 year to a maximum of 10 years in length. The minimum contract length is 1 year after certified completion of the final cost-shared practice. These contracts provide incentive payments and cost share payments for implementing eligible conservation practices.

ELIGIBILITY

Landscape Type: Agriculture, Forestland

Resource Type: Water Quality

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Criteria: Applicants must be engaged in livestock or agricultural production including forestry on eligible land, or be owners of such land; contact program official for extensive land eligibility details. Applications and funds are divided into three categories:

- The first funding category is for applications addressing water quality problems associated with animal wastes and/or silage leachate. These applications contain requests for conservation practices associated with the construction, storage, transfer, handling, or application of animal wastes/wastewater and silage leachate.
- The second funding category will include all other applications that address nutrient, pathogens, and/or sediment loading issues.
- The third funding category is for applications whose purpose is specifically for completing a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP), and/or for implementing a CNMP. This funding pool provides the applicant the option to implement their CNMP progressively through separate contracts, rather than agreeing to implement their CNMP all in one contract. Agricultural Waste Storage Facilities are not acceptable practices in this funding pool. Applicants who wish to install an agricultural waste storage facility must apply through the first funding category, water quality problems associated with animal waste and/or silage leachate.