

# FAQ

## Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)



### Frequently Asked Questions About EQIP

**Q** Who is eligible to apply for EQIP?

**A** Anyone engaged in agriculture or forest management who owns or has documented control of agricultural or private forestland is eligible to apply for EQIP. USDA program eligibility rules apply for participating in EQIP.

**Q** When and where are EQIP applications be submitted?

**A** EQIP applications are accepted on a continuous basis. Applications are accepted at USDA Service Centers and online via Conservation Client Gateway.

**Q** By submitting a Conservation Program application am I obligated to enroll in a conservation program?

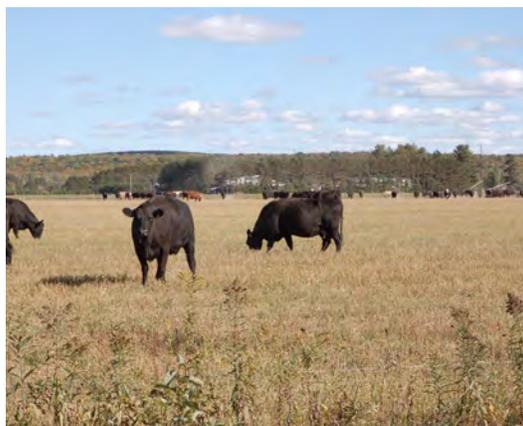
**A** No, only when an application is selected for funding can the producer enter into a contract for financial assistance.

**Q** What is involved in the application process?

**A** The application process includes conservation planning to identify natural resource concerns, confirming operations records are up to date with USDA Farm Service Agency, establishing eligibility for USDA assistance, and completing the required forms.

**Q** What is meant by a “natural resource concern?”

**A** Resource concerns are risks or potential risks to natural resources including soil, water, air, plants and wildlife. Specifically they can include excessive soil erosion, degraded soil quality, uncontrolled runoff of silt and agrichemicals to surface water, lack of habitat for pollinators and other wildlife, inadequate storage for livestock waste, and lack of age and species diversity in forestland.



**Q** What conservation practices are eligible for EQIP assistance?

**A** There are a large number and variety of conservation practices eligible for EQIP financial assistance. There are practices compatible with all types of agricultural and forest production. Conservation practices receiving financial assistance must address an identified resource concern on the operation.

### EQIP

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides conservation financial assistance for working lands. Rather than take land out of production, EQIP helps farmers maintain or improve production while conserving natural resources.

EQIP assistance is available for all types of agricultural operations, including field crops, specialty crops, organic, confined livestock and grazing, and private non-industrial forest land.

**Q** How does NRCS determine what applications are selected for EQIP financial assistance?

**A** Applications are ranked and selected for funding based on their conservation benefits.

**Q** Can I receive EQIP financial assistance for a practice that I've already implemented?

**A** No, financial assistance is only provided for the implementation of new practices. Producers may not receive assistance for implementing a conservation practice on land where it was already in use. Assistance may be available for expanding a practice on additional land or enhancing a practice, such as planting a mixture of cover crops instead of a single species cover crop.

**Q** Can I enroll land into a conservation program that I farm but don't own?

**A** Yes, assistance can be provided if the producer can document control of the land for the duration of the EQIP contract.

**Q** Do I have to enroll all of my land into the program or can I choose to only enroll a portion?

**A** Producers can choose to enroll only a portion of their land in EQIP.

**Q** If my application is selected for enrollment in EQIP how soon can I begin implementing practices?

**A** When an EQIP application is selected for enrollment the applicant will be notified and given the opportunity to enter into a program contract. The contract will include a schedule stating when the practices will be implemented. After the contract is completed the producer can begin implementing practices.

**Q** How long do I have to implement the conservation practice(s) after I sign an EQIP contract?

**A** Producers must begin implementing at least one contracted practice within one year of enrollment.

**Q** When do I receive payment for the conservation practice(s) I implement?

**A** In most cases, producers receive payment after the practice is implemented and determined to meet NRCS standards and specifications.

**Q** Will the financial assistance pay the full cost of implementing the conservation practice?

**A** EQIP assistance is not intended to pay the full cost of implementing many conservation practices. The applicant will know the amount of assistance provided and should determine if the cost of implementing the practice is affordable.

**Q** Can I cancel my EQIP contract if I change my mind?

**A** Yes, the producer can choose to cancel an EQIP contract. The producer may be liable for administrative expenses depending on the circumstances of the cancellation. Participants may have to return EQIP payments if only a portion of contracted practices are implemented.



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