

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Conservation for Working Lands



Program Overview

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial assistance to agricultural producers and private forest owners to help address natural resource concerns on their land. The environmental benefits from implementing conservation improvements benefit both the producer and the public. The program is administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Enrollment Process

Enrolling in the program begins with developing a conservation plan. The local conservationist and producer work together to develop a plan that identifies and prioritizes resource concerns such as soil erosion, soil quality, and water quality concerns among others. After the plan is developed, the producer and conservationist determine what practices can be utilized to address the identified resource concerns.

The producer can choose to apply for enrollment in EQIP to help pay for the cost of eligible conservation practices included in the plan. Applications are selected on a competitive basis based on their environmental benefits and cost effectiveness.

Successful applicants may enter into a contract to implement designated conservation practices. The contract establishes what practices will receive financial assistance, the amount of financial assistance to be provided, and a timeline for implementing the conservation practices. Terms of the contract are binding for both parties.

Implementing EQIP Conservation Practices

After a producer enters into an EQIP contract they may begin implementing conservation practices. At least one practice must be initiated within a year of finalizing the EQIP contract. Financial assistance is not provided for practices implemented before a contract is finalized.



Contracted practices must be implemented or installed to NRCS standards to receive financial assistance. Financial assistance is provided to the producer after the practice is implemented. Some producers may be eligible to receive a portion of the financial assistance prior to implementing practices.

What Conservation Practices are Eligible for EQIP

There are a large number of conservation practices eligible for EQIP assistance for every type of agricultural operation. NRCS determines the amount of financial assistance provided for each practice.

When and How to Apply

EQIP applications are accepted on a continuous basis. Application forms are available at local NRCS offices and on the NRCS website. Application forms can be submitted to the local office or online through Client Conservation Gateway.

On designated cut-off dates, applications are ranked and selected for enrollment. Cut-off dates are announced at least 30 days in advance. Producers will be notified by their local office if their application is selected.

Conservation Client Gateway

Client Conservation Gateway allows producers to request NRCS technical and financial assistance online.

Anyone with an existing USDA client record and an email address connected to their account can sign up to use Client Gateway.

Some Conservation Practices

Eligible for EQIP

Commodity and Specialty Crops

- Nutrient Management Plans
- Cover Crops
- Buffer Strips
- Grassed Waterways
- Integrated Pest Management Plans
- High Tunnel Systems

Livestock and Grazing

- Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan
- Waste Storage Facilities
- Grazing Management Plans
 - Livestock Pipeline
 - Watering Facility
- Waste Separation Facility

Private Forest Land

- Forest Management Plans
- Forest Stand Improvement
- Tree and Shrub Establishment
- Erosion Control Practices

Organic Production

- Conservation Plans Supporting Organic Transition
- Composting Facility
- Mulching

Wildlife Habitat

- Pollinator Habitat Plan
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat Plan
- Tree and Shrub Establishment

Energy Conservation

- Agricultural Energy Management Plans
- Farmstead Energy Improvement
- Irrigation Water Management

This is only a partial list of practices eligible for EQIP financial assistance. Practices must address an identified resource concern of the operation.

Producer & Land Eligibility Requirements

- Own or documented control of land
- Comply with adjusted gross income limitations
- Comply with highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements
- Develop an NRCS EQIP plan of operations
- Additional restrictions and program requirements may apply



Michigan

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