

Environmental Quality Incentives Program



Water consumption reduced with a drop nozzle center pivot

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program for persons who are engaged in livestock or agricultural production that offers financial and technical help implement conservation practices on eligible agricultural land.

Environmental quality goes hand-in-hand with improved agricultural production. Most conservation practices implemented on a farm impact the sustainability of the farm operation. Decisions related to how a crop is produced affect the environment, and vice-versa.

NRCS professionals work with producers to develop a conservation plan for their operation, design conservation practices, and provide guidance to help implement the plan.

What Practices Can Receive Funding?

EQIP is designed to help get conservation practices implemented that address existing resource concerns on farms in order to improve environmental quality both on and off the farm. The resource concerns addressed through EQIP include soil quality, soil erosion, water quality, water quantity, air quality, and animal and plant species of concern.

NRCS, with input from the State Technical Committee, determines the eligible practices that address the state and local resource concerns.

Visit the NRCS-NJ website for the current list of eligible practices: <http://www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip>.

How Does Signup for EQIP Work?

Applications can be submitted anytime during the year. A signed application filed with the local NRCS office indicates an interest in developing a conservation plan as the first step in the application process.

A contract offer is then developed during an annual ranking period. The offer is based on the conservation plan, and is ranked on how well the proposed practices meet national, state, and local environmental objectives, as well as their cost-efficiency.

What is the Contract Period?

EQIP offers contracts with a minimum term that ends one year after the implementation of the last scheduled practice and a maximum term of ten years. These contracts provide pre-determined program payments to the producer for the implementation of the planned practices according to a schedule developed in conjunction with the producer.

The schedule identifies the conservation practice extent (amount), date to be installed, and payment. The practices are subject to NRCS technical standards adapted for local conditions. Any deviation from the contract schedule is considered a contract violation unless approved in advance.



Animal waste managed as a nutrient resource on the farm

What are the Payment Rates and Terms?

Program payment rates in New Jersey are calculated at between 45 and 60% of the typical cost of implementing the practice, except when the applicant is a beginning farmer or limited resource producer, in which case the rates are between 75 and 90% of the typical cost. Payments are made after conservation practices are fully implemented.

What are the Applicant Qualifications?

Applicants must be compliant with all conservation provisions of the 2002 farm bill and have current crop and producer records on file with USDA's Farm Service Agency. They must own or control the land, agree to implement specific eligible conservation practices according to the contract schedule, and qualify for farmland assessment.



Erosion controlled with a tailwater recovery system

For More Information or to Sign Up, Contact Your USDA Service Center:

Burlington, Camden and Ocean counties **Columbus Service Center**

1971 Jacksonville-Jobstown Road, Columbus NJ 08036
Telephone: (609) 267-1639

Mercer, Middlesex and Monmouth counties **Freehold Service Center**

4000 Kozloski Rd. Box 5033, Freehold, NJ 07728
Telephone: (732) 462-0075

Hunterdon, Somerset and Union counties **Frenchtown Service Center**

687 Pittstown Rd Suite 2, Frenchtown, NJ 08825
Telephone: (908) 782-4614

Morris, Sussex and Warren counties **Hackettstown Service Center**

Bldg #1, 101 Bilby Rd, Hackettstown, NJ 07840
Telephone: (908) 852-2576

Bergen, Essex, Hudson, and Passaic counties **Somerset Office**

220 Davidson Ave, Somerset, NJ 08873
Telephone: (732) 537-6057

Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland counties **Vineland Service Center**

1317 South Main Rd. Bldg 3, Vineland, NJ 08360
Telephone: (856) 205-1225

Gloucester and Salem counties **Woodstown Service Center**

51 Cheney Road, Suite 2, Woodstown, NJ 08098
Telephone: (856) 769-1126

Sign up by the first Friday in June each year for practices you wish to install the following year!



NRCS employees work with the State Technical Committee to annually update the list of practices eligible under EQIP.

New opportunities available for producers include reduced-emission engines for irrigation (left), alternative fuel greenhouse heating units, and forestry management practices (right).



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