

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

2009 FACT SHEET



United States Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources
Conservation Service
New Jersey

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

Decisions related to how a crop is produced affect the environment, and vice-versa. The EQIP program provides payments for implementing conservation practices that have a positive environmental impact, while protecting long term agricultural production and sustainability.

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 implement conservation practices 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.



Stabilized animal trails reduce erosion



Water consumption reduced with a drop nozzle center pivot

What are the Payment Rates and Terms?

Program payment rates in New Jersey are calculated at between 45 and 75% of the typical cost of implementing the practice, as determined by the resource concern being addressed. When the applicant is a beginning farmer, socially disadvantaged or limited resource producer, the rates are 25% higher, up to a maximum of 90%. Payments are made after conservation practices are implemented to the standards agreed to in advance.

Contracts are subject to payment limitations. No applicant may receive more than \$300,000 during any six-year period. Organic farms have different limitations; \$80,000 during any six-year period with an annual limit of \$20,000.

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 lists 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.



Erosion controlled with a tailwater recovery system

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 developed during the annual ranking period. The final offer approved by the applicant 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 are the Applicant Qualifications?

Applicants must have an interest in an agricultural operation, and be compliant with the conservation provisions of the 2008 farm bill with current crop and producer records on file with USDA's Farm Service Agency. They must own or control the land, and agree to implement conservation practices according to the contract schedule.

The 2008 Farm Bill has these NEW provisions!

- *Special emphasis for organic operations and those transitioning to organic!*
- *Forestry operations qualify for practices that address soil, water quality or wildlife concerns!*
- *Socially disadvantaged producers receive increased payment rates, along with limited resource farmers and beginning farmers!*
- *Special funds available to reduce air quality emissions and energy consumption!*

Sign up by August 1 each year for practices you wish to install the following year!

For More Information or to Sign Up, Contact Your Local 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

Bergen, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren counties

Hackettstown Service Center

Bldg #1, 101 Bilby Rd, Hackettstown, NJ 07840

Telephone: (908) 852-2576

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

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3/6/09