

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

New Jersey Program Details



National Program Eligibility Requirements:

Any individual or entity interested in EQIP must be an eligible applicant and control eligible land for the lifespan of the contract. Applicants are encouraged to read the document "[Applying for Federal Farm Conservation Programs](#)", which details the required forms for determining eligibility.

An eligible applicant must:

- Have an interest in an agricultural operation with an annual minimum of \$1,000 of agricultural products produced and/or sold, except forestry operations; and
- Have an interest in the farming operation associated with the land being offered for enrollment in EQIP; and
- Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation compliance provisions; and
- Be within appropriate payment limitation requirements; and
- Be in compliance with annual Adjusted Gross Income requirements; and
- Be in compliance with provisions for protecting the interests of tenants and sharecroppers, including the provisions for sharing EQIP payments on a fair and equitable basis; and
- Have control of the eligible land for the term of the proposed contract. Applications for structural or vegetative practices must include the written agreement of the landowner at the time the application is filed.

Forestry operations may waive the \$1,000 requirement, but are required to have a forest management plan and a prior record of timber harvest or revenue from timber or firewood sales. "Eligible land" means land on which agricultural commodities are produced. This includes:

- Cropland
- Hayland
- Pasture and Rangeland
- Grassland
- Land used for subsistence purposes
- Private, non-industrial forestland
- Other land on which crops or livestock are currently produced, where risk may be mitigated through operation diversification or change in resource conservation practices

Applicants must submit a completed Conservation Programs Worksheet and EQIP Program Application (CCC-1200), available at www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EQIP or at any USDA Service Center. They must initiate or update their farm records with the Farm Service Agency **prior to** application submittal.

National Program Requirements:

- No practice can be installed until the final contract document is approved by NRCS, unless a waiver is granted in advance by the State Conservationist.
- At least one practice must be commenced within 12 months of contract signature. If no practice has been started, the contract will be subject to termination.
- Land must have been irrigated at least 2 of the past 5 years to be eligible for irrigation practices.
- All practices must be maintained and functional for the lifespan indicated in the conservation program contract, regardless of contract length.
- Conservation practices must meet the specifications of the Conservation Practice Standard for program payments to be approved.
- Payment rates in the approved conservation program contract are based on practice extent and not cost.

New Jersey Special Requirements:

- Grazing and animal waste control practices will be planned only for the livestock that have been housed or grazed on land under the operator's control for at least 12 of the previous 36 months, with an allowance for variations in animal numbers normal for the operation. The contract holder may increase the size or extent of a contracted practice at their own expense. Waivers to this provision can be requested in writing to the State Conservationist.
- Contracts that include irrigation systems must also include Irrigation Water Management as an agreed-to practice.
- Practices eligible for multiple payments must be contracted for three consecutive years. A payment is forfeited if the practice does not meet standards for the year scheduled, unless the State Conservationist approves a written justification request submitted in advance by the contract holder. If two years of the practice are forfeited, the contract will be in violation.

Organic Operations:

Applicants may request special consideration for implementing practices on an **organic operation**. Payments for practices related to obtaining or maintaining organic certification may be based on the higher costs involved in using organic certified products. Contracts under this provision have an annual payment limitation of \$20,000 and a six-year payment limitation of \$80,000.

Funding:

All eligible applications are grouped for competitive ranking into "funding pools" with the highest ranked applications in each pool selected for contract development.

Ranking systems address how well an application meets state and national priorities, and includes a practice cost efficiency calculation. A copy of the current ranking system can be found at www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EQIP or at the local USDA Service Center office.

The major funding categories for 2009 ranking are: Grazing Management; Animal Waste Management; Cropland/Forest Management; Organic Operations; Historically Underserved Farmers (HU), and Air Quality Resources.

Applicants who meet any of the Historically Underserved criteria (see the Payments section below) may choose to enroll in either the HU pool or in the other pool that applies to their operation and application.

Supporting Practices:

Practices are considered supporting practices when they are required, due to specific site conditions, to allow the efficient implementation of other approved practices under a comprehensive resource concern system. These practices may not be contracted as "stand-alone" practices in any contract. See the 2009 Practice Catalog for more details on eligible practices.

Brush Management	Obstruction Removal	Runoff Management System	Subsurface Drain
Grade Stabilization Structure	Pipeline for Watering Facility	Sediment Basin	Underground Outlet
Heavy Use Area Protection	Pond Sealing or Lining	Solid/Liquid Separation Facility	Vegetated Treatment Area
Irrigation Water Pipeline	Pumping Plant	Stream Crossing	Waste Facility Cover
Lined Waterway or Outlet	Roof Runoff Structure	Structure for Water Control	Water Well for Livestock

Payments and Payment Rates:

A copy of the current payments available, by practice, can be found at www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EQIP or at the local USDA Service Center office.

Payments listed in the approved contract are based on realistic estimates of the practice amounts needed to achieve the desired resource benefit at the time of contracting. It is the responsibility of the applicant/contract holder to verify practice amounts and the estimated costs to implement.

The approved payment amount is based on the amount of the practice actually required and completed once the system is designed. Payments can not be adjusted for excessive costs related to contractors or materials used, or practice amounts beyond that required to address the resource concern.

Payments are made after the NRCS technical representative has confirmed that the implementation meets the practice standard, and the contract holder has signed a request for payment (CCC-1245) generated by the NRCS office.

Applicants may request higher payment rates at the time of program application by indicating on their application their eligibility for one of the following categories: **beginning farmer**, **limited resource farmer**, or **socially disadvantaged farmer**.

The specific eligibility criteria for each of these groups are found on the website <http://www.lfctool.sc.egov.usda.gov/>.

If one of these special emphasis categories is selected, the applicant must file documentation to support the selection, and is subject to a review of their qualifications at any time during the contract period.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to verify that the increased payment rates are included in the contract prior to signing.

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