

Environmental Quality Incentives Program FORESTRY INITIATIVE 2010 New Jersey FACT SHEET


United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources
Conservation Service
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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.

Forestry is an eligible land use under the EQIP program. EQIP provides payments for implementing conservation practices on forest land that have a positive environmental impact, while protecting long term production and sustainability.

Applicants with forest land must have a Forest Stewardship Plan for their operation prepared by a certified forestry consultant. They must be willing to enroll at least 10 acres into an EQIP contract, and follow the implementation schedule agreed to in the contract.

Who is Eligible?

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

Land is not eligible for EQIP if it is currently enrolled in another USDA Farm Bill conservation program such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). Land is also ineligible if it is used for mitigation purposes, or if it is publically owned, unless the publically owned land is part on an eligible landowners operation and is not the only land offered for enrollment in EQIP.



What Practices Receive Funding?

NRCS will review the Forest Stewardship Plan and determine the conservation practices that are recommended to improve environmental quality both on and off site. Eligible practices must reduce soil erosion or sedimentation, promote forest soil quality, enhance habitat for wildlife species of concern, or improve ecologic conditions for desirable forest species. The practices must be described in detail in the Plan and scheduled for implementation within three years of contract signing.

Forestry applications will be grouped for competitive ranking into a forestry funding pool, with the highest ranked applications selected for contract development.

Practices may not be started until the contract is signed by NRCS, unless the applicant requests a waiver from the state conservationist.

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

Burlington, Camden and Ocean counties

Columbus Service Center (1971 Jacksonville-Jobstown Rd)

Telephone: (609) 267-1639

Hunterdon, Somerset and Union counties

Frenchtown Service Center (687 Pittstown Rd Suite 2)

Telephone: (908) 782-4614

Atlantic, Cape May and Cumberland counties

Vineland Service Center (1317 South Main Rd. Bldg 3)

Telephone: (856) 205-1225

Mercer, Middlesex and Monmouth counties

Freehold Service Center (4000 Kozloski Road)

Telephone: (732) 462-0075

Bergen, Morris, Passaic, Sussex and Warren counties

Hackettstown Service Center (Bldg #1, 101 Bilby Road)

Telephone: (908) 852-2576

Gloucester and Salem counties

Woodstown Service Center (51 Cheney Road, Suite 2)

Telephone: (856) 769-1126

EQIP Conservation Practices for Forest Land

Resource Concern	Eligible Practices on Forest Land
Reduce soil erosion or sedimentation	Critical Area Planting, Forest Stand Improvement, Streambank and Shoreline Protection, Tree & Shrub Establishment, Forest Trails & Landings
Promote forest soil quality	Critical Area Planting, Forest Stand Improvement, Tree & Shrub Establishment
Enhance habitat for wildlife species of concern	Access Control, Brush Management, Firebreak, Forest Stand Improvement, Fish Passage, Prescribed Burning, Tree & Shrub Establishment, Tree & Shrub Site Preparation
Improve ecologic conditions for desirable forest species	Forest Stand Improvement, Prescribed Burning, Tree & Shrub Establishment, Tree & Shrub Site Preparation

What is the Contract Period?



EQIP offers contracts with a minimum term that ends one year after the last scheduled practice is implemented and a maximum term of ten years. Contracts provide pre-determined program payments to the producer for the implementation

of the planned practices according to a schedule developed 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.

What are the Payment Rates and Terms?

Program payment rates are calculated at between 45 and 75% of the typical cost of implementing the practice, as determined by the resource concern being addressed. If 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.

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.

Don't Have a Stewardship Plan?

EQIP offers contracts to develop Stewardship Plans! Producers are eligible for a one time only payment to develop a NRCS-defined Forest Management (Stewardship) Plan for forestland acreage that is at least ten contiguous acres. The Plan must address all resource concerns, including critical wildlife habitat, protection of stream corridors and environmentally sensitive areas.

Once the Plan is approved by the State Forester, the producer may apply for another EQIP contract to implement practices scheduled in the Plan, as described above.

