



Specialty Crop Producers

The 2008 Farm Bill places additional emphasis on assistance for specialty crop producers. Specialty crops are intensively cultivated plants including fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture, and floriculture and nursery crops; wild plants are not considered specialty crops. Financial and technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) helps producers plan and implement conservation practices resulting in sustainable specialty crop operations.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) helps producers:

- Address soil, water, air, plant, animal, and energy conservation concerns;
- Obtain financial and technical assistance to plan and implement basic conservation practices; and
- Conserve and improve natural resources for a sustainable farming operation.

High-priority conservation practices that are tailored for specialty crops to address soil, water, air, plant, animal, and energy conservation may include:

- Conservation crop rotations;
- Cover crops;
- Conservation cover;
- Contour farming and strip cropping;
- Nutrient management;
- Pest management/Integrated Pest Management;
- Field borders and filter strips;
- Irrigation water management;
- Grassed waterways and diversions; and
- Agri-chemical handling facility.

The new Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is available to provide technical and financial assistance to producers who already have applied basic conservation practices but want to achieve a higher level of conservation. Eligible producers participating in CSP would receive payments to provide for additional conservation treatment on their operations.

For more information, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.



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