

2000 Environmental Quality Incentives Program



Connecticut Summary

Overview

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides technical, educational, and financial assistance to eligible farmers to address soil, water, and related resource concerns on their land. In Connecticut, NRCS EQIP funds have leveraged financial, educational, and technical assistance from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DOA), and University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System (CES) under the guidance of the State Technical Committee, chaired by NRCS. This collaborative approach provides greater benefits to the agricultural community than if each agency provided assistance separately.

Accomplishments

From 1997 to 2000, 263 farmers applied for EQIP. Technical and financial assistance were available for 61 contracts. Total project costs (financial assistance) were \$3.3 million. EQIP financial assistance provided 61 percent of the funding (\$1.9 million). DOA provided 12 percent (\$360,700), and the farmers contributed 28 percent (\$862,200). Technical and educational assistance to get conservation practices installed were provided by NRCS, DEP, and CES.

Customer Focus

On the Freund's Farm in East Canaan, CT, conservation practices made possible through the EQIP Program help protect the Blackberry and Whiting Rivers. The bunker silos, which store silage corn and haylage had a problem with high BOD leachate entering the river. Through EQIP, the Freunds have installed an innovative leachate collection system. The collection system catches the leachate in an underground piping system and pumps the waste to the lined manure storage structure.

Through EQIP, the Freunds also installed a roof and gutters over feeding areas. The runoff now enters the nearby streams uncontaminated and the manure volume is lessened by the amount of rain water diverted; thus, storage costs are reduced. The roof runoff management practice and silage leachate collection system were part of an agricultural waste management plan which was prepared jointly by the farm, CES, and NRCS and approved by the CT Department of Environmental Protection. EQIP also helped complete a pasture management plan that included fencing, watering system, and a buffer along the Whiting River to keep young stock off the riverbanks. In addition, EQIP funds helped pay for 15 acres of permanent seedings on highly erodible lands in the same watershed.

The EQIP program has also helped the Freunds prepare and follow a nutrient management plan. Technical assistance for this plan was supplied through a cooperative agreement with CES. The plan covers over 487 acres of hay land, 184 acres of corn, 262 acres of rotational pasture and 6 acres of vegetables. The plan makes more efficient use of the nutrients stored in the agricultural wastes and recycles these nutrients back into the crops, minimizing the risk of water quality degradation.

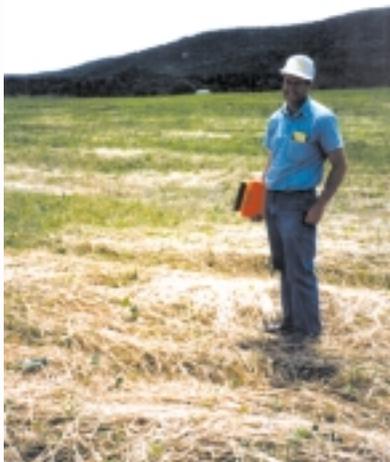
Outlook

EQIP funding in FY 2001 has the potential to leverage additional State of Connecticut (DEP, DOA) funding. Connecticut farmers, Federal and State government, and the university have created an efficient partnership to address agricultural environmental responsibilities.

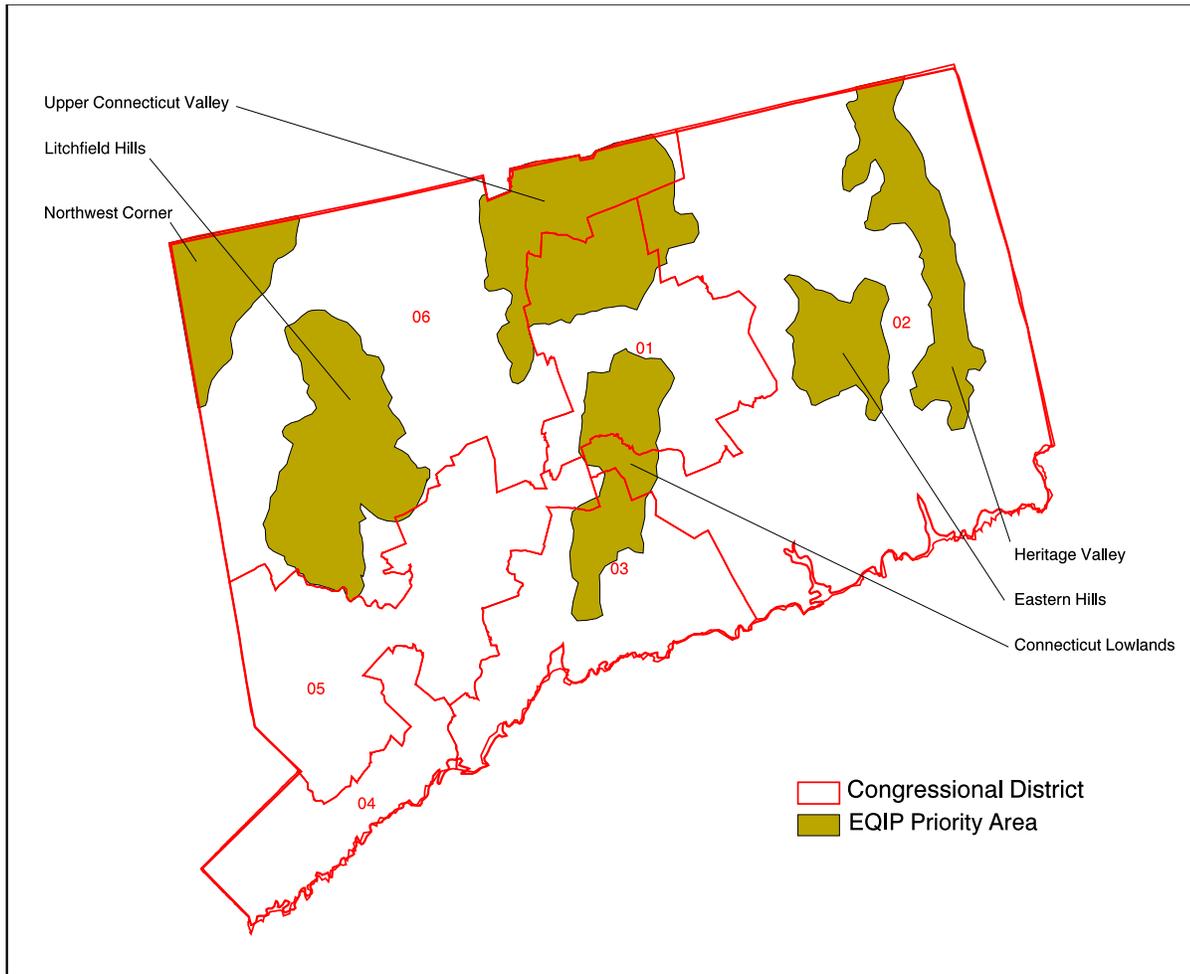
State contact

Jan Dybdahl, State Resource Conservationist, 860-871-4018, fax: 860-871-4054, e-mail: jan.dybdahl@ct.usda.gov

Ben Freund standing in one of his hayfields.



Connecticut EQIP Priority Areas Within Congressional Districts



Connecticut EQIP Dollars and Contracts by Congressional District

Congressional Districts	Fiscal Year 2000		Cumulative Total (97-00)	
	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts
District 1	\$38,000	1	\$97,806	3
District 2	311,590	9	921,055	30
District 5	0	0	27,755	2
District 6	111,210	4	856,634	26
State Totals	\$460,800	14	\$1,903,250	61

Source: NRCS Connecticut, December 2000

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