

2000 Environmental Quality Incentives Program



Customer Focus—

The Matsumura's family farm is a vegetable enterprise started in 1912. The farm now operated by Ron was first operated by his grandfather Buntaro, then his father Kaoru. The farm is on the Yakama Indian Reservation just west of Wapato. Ron's concerns with water quality, stricter water quality guidelines required by EPA, and his ability to irrigate only two-thirds of his 70 acres at any one time prompted a change in his operation. Using conventional surface furrow irrigation, runoff (tailwater) negatively impacted water quality by transporting eroded soil, nutrients, and pesticides from the field and into the drainage system. The intensive labor demands of surface irrigating required the full attention of Ron's father.

Technical assistance from NRCS in developing a Resource Management System and cost share from EQIP facilitated the Matsumura's conversion to drip irrigation. The increased water saving allows all 70 acres to be in production and let Ron's father retire from irrigating, as monitoring the drip irrigation system requires little time. The system also saves time and money when planting. Since standard spacing can be used, fewer plants per acre are needed and fewer trips through the field are required. Prior to planting crops, plastic mulch is laid down with the drip line running through the center of the plant beds. Plants are bedded through the plastic into the ground, creating a greenhouse effect for the plants. This, along with the efficiency of drip irrigation, produced cleaner, larger, better quality crops and higher yields. Fields now stay in production longer into the season. Using the latest methods of fertilizer and pesticide application and elimination of tailwater problems made Ron's concerns about water quality a thing of the past.

Washington Summary

Overview

In addition to the statewide Natural Resource Priority Concerns, Washington funded 14 Geographic Priority Areas (GPAs) during FY 2000. Interest in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) remains high throughout the state with close to 500 applicants. About 75 percent of the applicants (319) submitted bids. Because of funding constraints, the state could accept only 152 bids, obligating just under \$3 million of Federal cost-share assistance on more than 40,000 acres. About 15 percent of those applicants accepted into the program this year were minority or limited resource farmers. The partnership contributions remain substantial this year, contributing about \$3 for every dollar of Federal cost-share obligated. The competitiveness of the program's bidding process continues. With common knowledge of the scarcity of USDA program funds, applicants submitted bids for much less than the maximum cost-share available. This year's bid down amounted to over \$4 million. On average, applicants were willing to reduce their maximum allowable bids by 40 percent to vie for the limited program funds. This competitive bidding allowed funding of additional contracts to applicants whom otherwise would have been below the offer index cutoff point.

Accomplishments

Over 150 contracts were developed this year. Although participants are only obligated to treat priority resource concerns, about 75 percent of the contracts developed address all resource concerns on the participant's entire planning unit at the sustainable level of treatment. About 10,000 acres were treated this year. EQIP financial assistance was directed toward the following resource issues: 70 percent addressed water quality issues, 20 percent soil erosion on cropland, 5 percent water quantity concerns, and 5 percent plant and wildlife concerns. Conservation practices installed with EQIP cost share include waste management systems, filter strips, fencing, fish stream improvement, tree, and shrub plantings, wildlife watering facilities, and high efficiency irrigation systems. Incentive practices contracted with producers include measures for increased management of nutrients, pests, residue, and irrigation water.

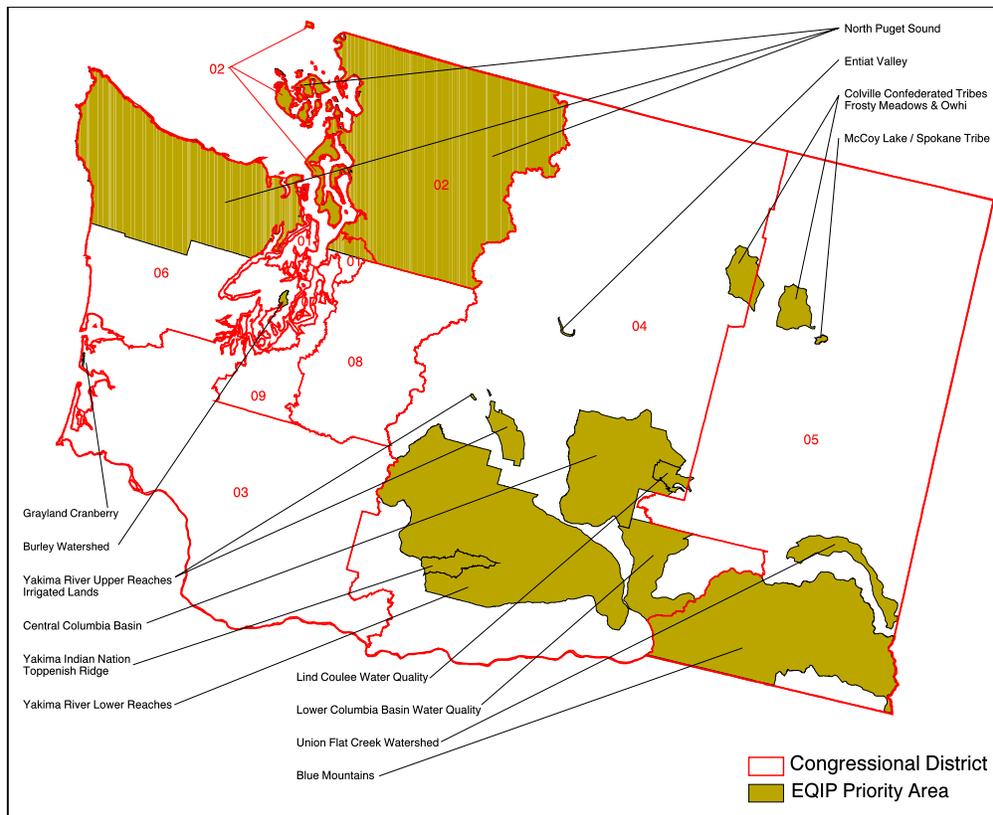
Outlook

Water quality concerns and issues related to the Endangered Species Act remain critically important in Washington. Our outlook is for the interest as well as the need for EQIP to remain high. Based on the number of EQIP bids received and the average cost share requested per bid, an additional \$4 million could have been obligated in FY 2000 had funding been available. Currently, only about a third of the financial assistance needed by the existing GPAs can be allocated to address their identified priority resource concerns. If fully funded, the GPAs could have developed at least 150 contracts on an estimated 44,000 acres in FY 2000. Because of this funding dilemma, the State Technical Advisory Committee has recommended to the state conservationist that no new GPA proposals be considered for funding in FY 2001 so that the existing GPAs can at least be funded at a maintenance level. This leaves some new, good proposals that cannot even be considered for funding at this time. Additional funding would allow existing GPAs the ability to accomplish their goals and objectives as well as allow for funding of new, highly ranked proposals to address the state's priority issues.

State Contact

Ross Lahren, Natural Sciences Team Leader, (509) 323-2971

Washington EQIP Priority Areas Within Congressional Districts



Washington 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		0		0
District 2	\$576,871	28	\$2,570,998	122
District 3	195,150	12	920,792	33
District 4	1,294,565	66	5,625,981	258
District 5	703,979	42	3,486,441	217
District 6	58,998	5	371,122	20
District 7		0		0
District 8	79,271	7	383,206	25
District 9	17,339	1	86,270	6
State Totals	\$2,926,173	161	\$13,444,810	681

Note: EQIP contracts for each Congressional District are estimated from Conservation Priority Areas, which may include more than one district.

Congressional District 0 = EQIP Contracts for Statewide Natural Resource Concerns, which can be in any Congressional District in the state.

Source: FSA Recordset type01, data through 4th quarter FY2000

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