



2001 Environmental Quality Incentives Program



Customer Focus

Rotational grazing systems are one of many conservation practices funded throughout Maryland under the Farm Bill's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Farmers using divided pastures planted with either warm-season grasses or cool-season grasses and rotational grazing methods can manage their herds economically and sustainably and increase production.

Last year (FY2001), NRCS Maryland received 509 EQIP applications for the approximately \$1.7 million in available cost-share assistance funds. Historically, NRCS Maryland has been able to fund about 50 percent of all requests for conservation assistance sought through EQIP to carry out locally led conservation practices.

Since EQIP was created four years ago, Maryland farmers have received approximately \$8 million in conservation funds.

Maryland Summary

Overview

Maryland producers' high level of interest in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) continued in FY 2001. More than 500 applications were received, far exceeding the previous year's 326. The total funds applied for (\$1,734,711) again exceeded the total EQIP dollars allocated to Maryland, indicating a healthy demand for EQIP assistance. NRCS and our partners developed and approved 505 EQIP conservation plans and contracts in 13 Geographic priority Areas (GPA) and a statewide Natural Resource Priority Concern Area. Over 99 percent of the allocated funds were committed to 5 or 10-year contracts.

Accomplishments

Maryland producers, NRCS and conservation partners have continued to show versatility in capturing the spirit of EQIP. From the Appalachians in the west to the intensely agricultural Eastern Shore, local work groups have encouraged the implementation of a wide variety of innovative and effective conservation practices. EQIP financial assistance has been distributed in Maryland through 13 Geographic Priority Areas (GPA) and 1 statewide Natural Resource Concern (NRC) projects. About \$986,950 in EQIP Federal cost-share dollars were obligated in GPAs and \$655,411 obligated in NRC projects.

Outlook

With EQIP applications exceeding funding levels yet again, the outlook for EQIP participation is very good. Non-point source resource concerns in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed continue to demand the attention of NRCS and our partners. The Maryland Department of Agriculture, with a mandate from State Legislators, continues to have a strong commitment to implementing Water Quality Best Management Practices, complementing EQIP with the Maryland Agricultural Cost Share (MACS) Program. EQIP continues to have excellent potential to help agricultural producers in Maryland improve their operations and help them to achieve environmental goals.

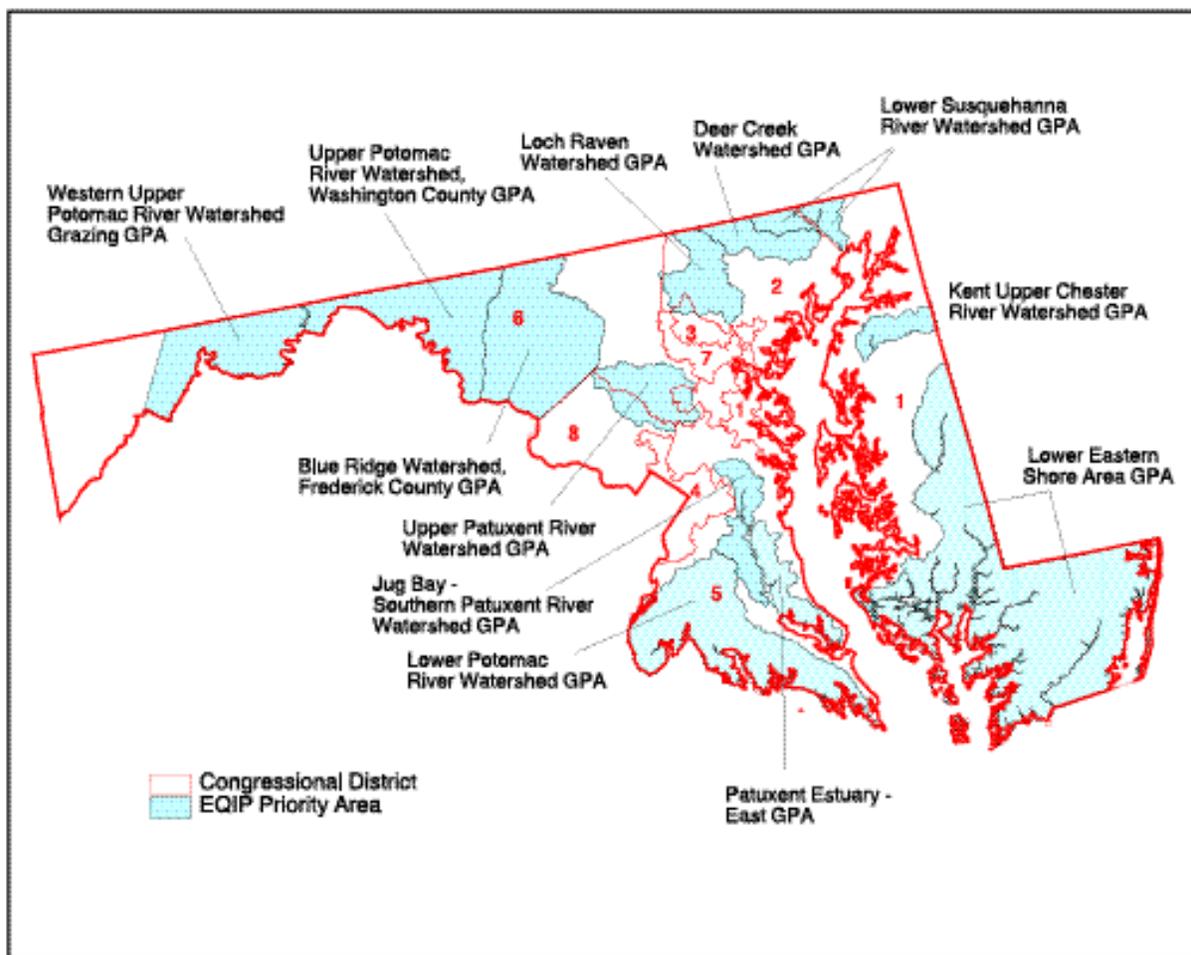
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Maryland farmers can use EQIP financial assistance to install solar power panels to pump water to livestock or charge an electric fence.

Maryland EQIP Priority Areas Within Congressional Districts



Maryland EQIP Dollars and Contracts by Congressional Districts

Congressional Districts	Fiscal Year 2001		Cumulative Total (97-01)	
	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts
District 1	\$867,075	263	\$3,478,275	1033
District 2	278,767	65	1,414,325	177
District 3	8,695	11	225,247	164
District 4	3,099	5	210,541	191
District 5	154,278	33	688,663	147
District 6	265,407	16	1,325,726	102
District 7	81,528	80	298,272	129
District 8	0	0	148,590	13
State Totals	\$1,658,849	473	\$7,789,639	1956

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