

Financial Assistance Programs Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
1400 Independence Avenue, SW.
Room 5237S
Washington, DC 20250-2890

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4/20/09

**Re: Docket Number NRCS- IFR-08005" Environmental Quality Incentives Pro
Final Rules**

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

In these hard economic times and with concerns over food safety, water quality are at an all-time high, it's important to not only stand up for family farmers but to encourage agricultural practices.

As a result of these factors, I think it's important that the USDA stop using taxpayer money to support factory farms and help support sustainable and organic farmers that protect the environment and build strong rural communities.

The USDA needs to ensure that the EQIP rule be clarified, in accordance with the law, and that EQIP assistance is available to all farmers and ranchers for comprehensive conservation planning.

The final EQIP rule must also require NRCS State Conservationists to rank and prioritize applications for organic conversion assistance in a separate funding pool that make a limit of \$80,000 over a 4-year period applies only to organic conversion payments and not payments made to organic farmers and ranchers.

I recommend that the NRCS amend the EQIP rule to prohibit the use of EQIP funds for waste storage, treatment or transportation for new or expanding CAFOs and that the rule does not allow waivers to increase assistance to CAFOs above the \$300,000 payment limit.

Numerous studies have proven conclusively that corporate CAFOs have negative impacts on water quality, decrease the value of their neighbor's property, and harbor antibiotic-resistant bacteria that threatens human health.

It's time that organic farmers and ranchers stand on an equal footing with conventional farming. The funding amounts they receive from EQIP. This can easily be done if the USDA folks are protecting the people and our collective resources over the interests of giant corporate agribusinesses.

Please stand up for independent family farmers and ranchers and swiftly enact these recommendations.

Sincerely,

Betsy Broome