

**State of Maine**  
**Environmental Quality Incentives Program**  
**Irrigation Water Efficiency**  
**FY 2009 Signup**

The Maine Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is presenting to all producers new opportunities for technical and financial assistance for irrigation water efficiency under the 2008 Farm Bill. Under EQIP provisions and Maine's new water efficiency regulations, NRCS Maine is offering **continuous signup** for:

- 1) **Irrigation Water Management Plans.** NRCS offers technical support to develop plans, and will pilot new provisions of the Farm Bill, offering "Irrigation Management Activity Plans" developed by producer-chosen Technical Service Providers.
- 2) **Efficiencies and Improvements of Existing Irrigation Systems.** NRCS offers financial assistance for conservation practices, including changes to physical infrastructure (e.g. sprinkler systems) and/or land management changes (e.g. longer crop rotations, cover crops) to improve irrigation efficiencies.
- 3) **Alternative Water Sources.** NRCS offers technical and financial assistance for producers to develop alternative water sources (e.g. wells) in order to comply with the State of Maine's new instream flow regulations.

At the local level, with the advice of Local Work Groups, funding pools will be established. Where established, all irrigation efficiency/water conservation projects will compete against like projects in that pool.

Another opportunity for these types of projects would be through the Agriculture Water Enhancement Program or the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative. We encourage interested parties to submit proposals for this purpose.

Maine NRCS has invited comment and input from the State Technical Committee (February 24, 2009) and the State Technical Irrigation Subcommittee (March 10, 2009) on the signup process and eligible practices, and will be taking further comment from the State Technical Committee on April 8, 2009. We plan to close the first EQIP ranking and evaluation period on May 20, 2009. We are preparing to obligate 90% of EQIP funds by June 10, 2009 in order to request additional regional equity funds for Maine.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Terrell Ann Erickson, Acting State Conservationist in Maine at (207) 907-1822.