

utilization. Total cost-share and incentive payments are limited to \$450,000 per person over the life of the Farm Bill.

EQIP Program Funding to Date

Year	Apps Received	Total \$ Apps Requested	Number Apps Funded	Total \$ of Financial Assistance
1997	3,600	\$31 million	945	4.5 million
1998	2,700	\$17 million	835	4.1 million
1999	1,871	\$7.7 million	696	3.5 million
2000	1,918	\$8.3 million	587	3.4 million
2001	1,776	\$8.4 million	570	3.5 million
2002	3390	\$32.2 million	856	7.5 million

In Oklahoma, the funding for EQIP at the state level has not kept pace with the demand (requests) for cost-share assistance. Through the 2002 Farm Bill, EQIP was reauthorized with a significant increase in funding each year through 2007. Oklahoma received over \$7.5 million dollars in 2002. Still over 3,300 applicants with conservation needs in excess of \$24 million remain unfunded.

Since the beginning of the EQIP, approximately \$500,000 has been cost-shared with participants implementing animal waste management practices; over \$400,000 in completing soil erosion and sediment control practices; and over \$690,000 in grazing land related practices.

Significant conservation practices remain to be completed in these EQIP contracts. NRCS and local conservation districts are continuing with technical assistance to meet these needs.

Special Outreach Initiatives Continued In 2002

NRCS received a supplemental EQIP allocation in fiscal year 2001 through the Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations Act. NRCS in consultation with the Farm Service Agency, made a decision to use this money to develop opportunities and make in-roads into communities and Tribes where we have been previously unsuccessful. Two separate initiatives were established.

One initiative was to provide some of this funding for each NRCS Tribal liaison and Tribal resource conservationist to work with each Tribe, on land owned by them, to develop a conservation plan and provide EQIP cost-shares to implement the plan. Seven EQIP contracts were developed with six Tribes through this effort. Over \$232,000 was obligated for installation of conservation measures on these lands. The goal is to work directly with Tribal officials in assessing, making decisions, and implementing plans involving natural

resource conservation. The experience and relationships gained through this process can be used to extend conservation efforts to other Tribal lands and the lands held by the members of the Tribes.

The other initiative was an effort was to use these funds to integrate USDA cost-share programs into communities that have been historically low in cost-share program participation. Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and 2501 small farmer outreach personnel were asked to identify five historically black communities that could benefit from EQIP assistance in implementing conservation measures. Within these communities, they were asked to further identify two to three producers that:

- ☒ had natural resource problems that could be addressed with EQIP,
- ☒ were willing to develop and implement a conservation plan treating these needs,
- ☒ had the physical means or financial resources to complete their plan,
- ☒ willingness to enter into a cost share agreement with USDA, and
- ☒ willing to share their experiences and help neighbors in accessing future USDA conservation programs for their farming and ranching operations.

Through the process of working with the CBOs, 11 contracts for over \$95,000 were approved. These contracts will be implemented over the next one to five years and will provide the foundation for NRCS and local conservation districts to build relationships within these communities for broader conservation efforts.

Landowners Doing Their Part To Protect Soil

Freda Campbell and Don Jones are doing their part in protecting soil and water resources in southern Noble County. Through EQIP, they were able to use cost share assistance to install grade stabilization structures.

Grade stabilization structures are used to stop gullies that have formed over time. Once these structures are installed, they stabilize any gully progression and trap sediment, keeping it out of creeks and lakes.

Jones and Campbell worked hand in hand with the Natural Resources Conservation Service that provided technical assistance for installing the grade stabilization structures.

For More Information

For more information on this program or other USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs, contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service office or USDA Service Center, or check out the website: www.ok.usda.gov.

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