

### Understanding EQIP in Kansas

#### General Information

- The minimum length of the contract is one year past the completion of the last conservation practice; maximum term is 10 years.
- Contracts are limited to \$450,000 in payments. There is no annual pay-out limit and payments are allowed in the first year of the contract.
- Incentive payments are limited to \$50,000 per contract and \$50,000 per participant.
- Limited resource and beginning farmers are eligible for a higher payment rate for structural and vegetative practices.
- Application evaluation criteria consider national and state conservation priorities.
- Contracts with animal feeding operations are required to develop and implement a comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP).

#### How does the Kansas EQIP application process work?

The EQIP application process consists of the following six steps:

1. A person(s) submits an application to a local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Service Center, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or conservation district office.
2. Kansas EQIP: The appropriate Self-Assessment Worksheet for Fiscal Year 2008 must be completed and returned to the NRCS office by application period cutoff date. The Self-Assessment

Worksheet is available from your local NRCS office or on the Web site at <http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/2008>.

3. NRCS works with the applicant to develop a conservation plan.
4. NRCS ranks each application using the application evaluation criteria.
5. The designated conservationist commits allocated funds according to ranking order, and NRCS develops contracts with those applicants.
6. Following contract signature by NRCS and the selected participant, funds are obligated for the contract, and the participant may begin to implement the EQIP contract.

#### How does the ranking system work in Kansas?

The EQIP is what NRCS calls "a locally led effort." States identify priority resource concerns that support national, state, and local conservation priorities and develop a ranking system based on those concerns.

In Kansas, the natural resource concerns to be addressed by EQIP are:

- Forestland Health—Productivity, Health, and Vigor
- Grazing Lands Health—Productivity, Health, Vigor; Noxious or Invasive Plants; and Inadequate Stockwater
- Soil Condition—Organic Matter Depletion

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- Livestock Waste—Water Quality and Air Quality
- Water Quality—Nutrients/Pesticides/Suspended Sediment
- Water Quantity—Inefficient Water Use on Irrigated Land; Aquifer Overdraft; Insufficient Water Flows in Water Courses

### **How are funds distributed?**

Allocations are made to the NRCS administrative areas for the following:

- Water Quality—Animal Waste
- Water Quantity
- Forestland Health

Allocations are made to the county level for the following:

- Grazing Lands Health
- Soil Condition—Organic Matter Depletion
- Water Quality—Nutrients, Pesticides, and Suspended Sediment

All allocations are based on the extent of the resource concern. Funds are allocated to the highest ranking applications within the area/county for the resource concern.

### **What should Kansas producers do if their previous EQIP applications have not been funded?**

#### **Don't be discouraged. Apply again.**

Applications are accepted continuously. Earlier applications may not have ranked high in priority, but that does not mean they did not have valid resource concerns. Applications will be ranked to optimize environmental benefits, and because of the increased funding level, more applications will be approved.

Kansas received over \$23.9 million in Fiscal Year 2007, and over 1,600 contracts were funded. More than 2,900 applications were received. Producers who applied and did not receive funding should stop by the local NRCS or conservation district office, update

their application, and have it ready for the next application evaluation period.

### **The Kansas EQIP Self-Assessment Worksheet for Fiscal Year 2008 will be required for applications to be considered.**

#### **Where can producers access information about the EQIP?**

Additional information can be found at <http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/2008>. Again, the best thing for producers to do is visit their local USDA Service Center and talk to the NRCS or conservation district office staff. They will be able to assist producers wanting to address local natural resource concerns.

The NRCS is listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture.