



United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

[www.or.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov)



*Funding is available to  
protect air quality with practices  
on orchards and forest lands  
in Lane County.*

*Sign up between  
**April 13 and May 15, 2009.***

## **2009 Air Quality Initiative**

### **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

OREGON NRCS - March 2009

#### **Overview**

Program funding is available to Lane County orchardists and private, non-industrial forest landowners for practices targeted at improving air quality.

Voluntary financial and technical assistance is available through the 2009 Air Quality Initiative of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

The initiative is designed to help Lane County landowners and growers reduce air particulates generated by the use of fire as a management tool on orchards and working forest lands. The program also emphasizes activities that reduce wildfire hazards.

#### **About EQIP**

EQIP is a voluntary program that provides assistance to growers and landowners who want to plan and install measures to protect natural resources on their working land.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers EQIP.

Through the program, NRCS provides funding and professional expertise for measures that protect natural resources while ensuring sustainable production on agricultural and working forest lands.

More information about EQIP can be found on the Oregon NRCS Web site at: [www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EQIP](http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EQIP).

#### **2009 Air Quality Initiative**

The Air Quality Initiative is a special EQIP sign-up only available in Lane County. The program offers technical and financial assistance to help landowners and growers protect air quality from the impacts of burning orchard clippings and forest debris.

For Fiscal Year 2009, approximately \$140,000 is dedicated to the Air Quality Initiative.

To participate, landowners must submit an EQIP application to NRCS to request funding and planning assistance to:

- Plan and carry out forest management practices, or
- Reduce or manage the use of fire to remove orchard prunings.

Practices funded through the 2009 Air Quality Initiative are:

- Slash treatment to remove, chip or otherwise treat woody debris on orchards and forest lands,
- Forest stand improvement,
- Fuel breaks,
- Fire breaks, and
- Tree and shrub pruning (only on forest lands).

To view a list of practice payment rates, visit the Oregon EQIP Web site at: [www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/air](http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/air).

*more on the next page...*

### Historically Underserved Clients

In Oregon, EQIP provides a higher payment rate to historically underserved participants. Historically underserved refers to groups that have not participated in or have received limited benefits from USDA programs. These are:

- Beginning farmers or ranchers who have been agricultural operators for 10 or fewer years
- Limited resource farmers or ranchers who have:
  1. Direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than the current indexed value in each of the previous two years, AND
  2. Total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous two years
- Applicants who are American Indian, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander or Hispanic

For more information about the definitions above or related program benefits, contact your NRCS office or go to: [www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/SLB\\_Farmer](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/SLB_Farmer).

### Land Eligibility

Eligible land includes privately owned orchard land and non-industrial forest land in Lane County.

### Applicant Eligibility

The applicant may be an individual or an entity. In the case of contract farmers, either the landowner or lessee may enter into an EQIP contract, provided the applicant meets all eligibility criteria.

To be eligible, applicants must own or manage the working land offered for EQIP enrollment. This will be either:

- a. An agricultural producer engaged in agricultural production; or
- b. A private non-industrial forest landowner.

In addition, eligible applicants will also:

- Have ownership or control of the land for the duration of the proposed EQIP contract;
- Have a financial interest in the operation associated with the land;
- Be in compliance with highly erodible land and wetland provisions of the Farm Bill;
- Provide a tax identification number (TIN) or social security number, as well as a listing of the percentage of interest for each individual and entity listed on a jointly owned business;
- Have an adjusted gross income (AGI) of \$1 million or less, unless two-thirds of that is derived from agriculture, ranching or forestry;
- Be within appropriate payment limitation requirements. (The overall payment limitation for EQIP is \$300,000 per person or legal entity over a 6-year period.)

Contact the local NRCS office for more details about EQIP eligibility.

### When to Apply

The signup period for the 2009 Lane County Air Quality EQIP runs from **April 13** until **May 15, 2009**.

NOTE: *Applications for the regular EQIP program are accepted on an ongoing basis.*

### How to Apply

To apply for the Air Quality Initiative, you will need to submit certain application materials. NRCS personnel at the USDA Service Center in Eugene will help you find and complete your application materials.

### Application Selection

Once the program cutoff date has passed, NRCS will evaluate and rank applications for funding. A Local Work Group convened by the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) provides feedback to

NRCS about natural resource concerns and priorities within their counties. EQIP applications will be evaluated based on these local priorities. Applications that best address natural resources as described in the ranking criteria for their area will be ranked highest and funded first.

Local resource concerns are identified through a process of community and stakeholder input. To find a listing of priorities and ranking questions for the 2009 Lane County Air Quality sign-up, contact the Eugene NRCS office or visit the Oregon EQIP page at: [www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/air](http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/air).

### Program Requirements

After an application is selected for funding, the applicant enters into a program contract with the USDA. The contract is based on practices outlined in a management plan. The contract will specify a period of time, one or more years, during which the participant must complete specified activities in order to receive program payments. Program participants are expected to maintain any EQIP practice throughout its useful life, even after the contract is completed.

In most cases, EQIP payments are made after practices have been completed.

### More Information

Visit the Oregon NRCS Web site at: [www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/air](http://www.or.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/air) or contact NRCS in Lane County:

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