

Fact Sheet - January 2012

## **EQIP**

EQIP is a continuous sign-up program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that allows landowners or operators to apply for financial and technical assistance for approved conservation practices based on a current conservation plan. Contact the service center in the county in which you own land. Before applying, interested persons need to read the details of the EQIP Program.

### **Eligibility: Participant's Responsibility**

1. In order to be eligible for EQIP, the applicant and the land must be determined eligible by NRCS.
2. If the applicant is an entity or joint operation, form CCC-901A Member's Information will be required.
3. You must be able to provide proof that you have control of the land for the proposed contract period.
4. A CCC-931 Average Adjusted Gross Income Form must be completed and submitted to FSA.
5. Sign and submit to FSA form AD-1026 – Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification.
6. In order to be considered an agricultural producer eligible for EQIP, the applicant must have a vested interest in production agricultural or non-industrial private forest land.
7. An applicant must provide correct name, address and social security number or tax identification number.
8. Beginning Farmer or Rancher: After the information is verified, a producer will be entered in the Service Center Information Management System (SCIMS) in the county matching the deed.
9. Applicants must be determined eligible by NRCS prior to the start of ranking cut-off periods in order to be considered for funding. Ranking cut-off periods are announced throughout each fiscal year at the local, State, and National levels and vary from year to year.
10. If approved for funding, the participant must begin implementation of at least one approved conservation practice within the first 12 months of the contract, and continue practice implementation according to the contract schedule.

## **Application Process**

1. Apply by completing form NRCS-CPA-1200, Conservation Program Application that is provided by your local field office.
2. Since sign-up is continuous, there may be more than one window of opportunity for funding your application based on available funding each fiscal year.
3. If a person applies after close of a ranking cut-off period, the application will automatically be deferred to the next cut-off period.
4. A certified conservation planner will develop a conservation plan and determine if the land offered for EQIP has an eligible resource concern that can be addressed through implementation of approved EQIP conservation practices.
5. NRCS ranks the application using criteria developed for the appropriate funding pool.
6. If approved, the applicant will work with NRCS to make an appointment finalizing the contract and schedule of operations prior to signing the contract for fund obligations. Both NRCS and the participant must sign the contract before it can be obligated.
7. The participant will now begin installing the conservation practices based on NRCS standards and specifications provided by the local field office or an approved technical service provider.
8. When the practices are completed, contact NRCS to make an appointment to certify the practices on the land.
9. After NRCS certifies the practices, the application for payment will be signed by the participant and NRCS then submitted electronically to the NRCS National Finance Center for payment.

## **More Information**

Form SF-1199a, Direct Deposit must be filled out to receive electronic payment. Please visit the NRCS website at [www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/programs](http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/programs) to read more about EQIP. You may contact your local USDA Service Center with links provided on the website to ask for more information.