



**New Hampshire State Office**

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# NEWS RELEASE

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**Federal Financial Assistance Available to  
New Hampshire Farmers and Forest Landowners  
Under the Food, Conservation, and  
Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill)**

*Article announces continuous program sign-up and application evaluation dates for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP), and Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA); explains programs, offers next steps for interested reader*

DURHAM, NH (June 24, 2010) – Agriculture or forest landowners in New Hampshire interested in protecting, conserving, or restoring the natural resources on their property through technical or financial assistance, should contact their local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field office to begin the conservation planning process. Applications for Farm Bill programs may be submitted at any time year-round; however, there is an annual application evaluation cut-off date in October of each year. Sometimes, as funding becomes available, there might be additional evaluation cut-off dates. If you miss an evaluation cut-off date, your application may be retained, at your request, and reviewed for the next cut-off date. **In order for your application to be reviewed, landowners/operators must submit a complete application packet and eligibility paperwork by October 3, 2011.**

“NRCS conservation programs help farmers and forest landowners promote stewardship and environmental quality on farm and forest land, address water quality and quantity challenges, and protect valuable wetland ecosystems, agricultural lands, and wildlife habitat,” said Rick Ellsmore, NRCS State Conservationist for New Hampshire. “NRCS conservation professionals will discuss with you your conservation objectives, help you identify resource concerns, and suggest options and alternatives for treatment. We will also identify conservation programs that may provide you with financial assistance for the implementation of many conservation practices.”

Examples of eligible lands in New Hampshire include privately owned:

- Agricultural land
- Grasslands
- Non-industrial forest lands
- Freshwater wetlands and salt marshes
- Coastal habitats, and rivers and streams

Emphasis areas in New Hampshire are:

- Livestock and grazing issues
- Cropland – including orchards, specialty crops, high tunnel and greenhouse operations
- Forestry
- Organic Agriculture
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat – including native pollinator habitat
- Energy Conservation

The 2008 Farm Bill provides higher payments for land owners who qualify as beginning farmers, limited resource producers, or who are “socially disadvantaged” because they belong to racial or ethnic groups that have historically been subjected to prejudice. Such landowners can receive up to 90 percent of the estimated incurred costs associated with planning and implementing conservation measures. Up to 30 percent of expected costs may be provided in advance on some practices.

**Financial Assistance Programs – Next application evaluation cut-off date is October 3, 2011:**

**If your landowner eligibility has not yet been cleared by USDA, you are strongly advised to get your landowner eligibility documentation submitted to your USDA Service Center as soon as possible (ASAP), because it may take several weeks to clear eligibility in order for your application to be funded. Do not wait until October 3<sup>rd</sup> to begin the eligibility clearing process.**

- [Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program](#) (WHIP) – This program provides assistance to landowners who want to improve fish and wildlife habitat or restore natural ecosystems on their land. NRCS provides compensation for part of the cost of establishing and maintaining conservation practices that are necessary for enhancing and improving wildlife habitat and restoring natural ecosystems.
- [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#) (EQIP) – Through EQIP, farmers may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices on agricultural and forest land. EQIP in New Hampshire offers financial assistance to help off-set the costs of eligible conservation practices. Payments may also be made to encourage a farmer to adopt land management practices, such as nutrient management, manure management, integrated pest management, or wildlife habitat management.
- [Agricultural Management Assistance Program](#) (AMA) – This program provides assistance to agricultural producers to voluntarily address issues such as water management, water quality, and erosion control by incorporating conservation into their farming operations.

“Hot” practice:

NH is currently in its second year of a pilot program providing financial assistance for seasonal high tunnels. Last year, 79 seasonal high tunnels were built with \$707,263.09 of NRCS financial assistance in NH. This year 77 high tunnels have been funded for \$865,113. Seasonal high tunnels can extend the growing season, help with pest management, reduce energy costs, and increase the availability of locally grown produce and other specialty crops.

NRCS has [offices](#) in Concord, Conway, Epping, Lancaster, Milford, Orford, and Walpole, which work with local conservation districts and other partners to serve farmers and landowners throughout the state. Office telephone numbers are:

Concord:	603-223-6023
Conway:	603-447-2771
Epping:	603-679-1587
Lancaster:	603-788-4651
Milford:	603-673-2409
Orford:	603-353-4651
Walpole:	603-756-2988

Contact your local office for more information. General program information is available on the NRCS New Hampshire website at [www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nh.nrcs.usda.gov).