



EQIP can help producers improve irrigation water efficiency.

water that is lost to the field.

In order to improve the application of water and make it more uniform, sprinkler irrigation systems are cost-shared and installed. These systems apply water to the plant when needed at a rate the soil can manage. There is no deep percolation or runoff with the sprinkler irrigation system. What this means is a better use of the resources; water, power, fertilizer, and chemicals which equals better quality crops.

Irrigation Water Management

With the installation of new irrigation systems, landowners need to learn how and when to apply water. For most of the new systems it is possible to apply water almost anytime it is needed. The uniformity of water application is very high with these systems and so the field is covered with the amount of water desired.

In order to ensure that water is applied when needed, irrigation scheduling is necessary. Irrigation scheduling is a part of irrigation water management and can be done using a number of different methods, including soil moisture probes. Water use rates are compared to water application rates to reduce the possibility of deep percolation below the root zone of the crop.

Get involved with EQIP

The EQIP application process is continuous throughout the year. Information and applications can be obtained at any local NRCS Field Office. To find out if EQIP is a perfect fit for your operation, contact your local NRCS office at a USDA Service Center in your area or click on to www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov.

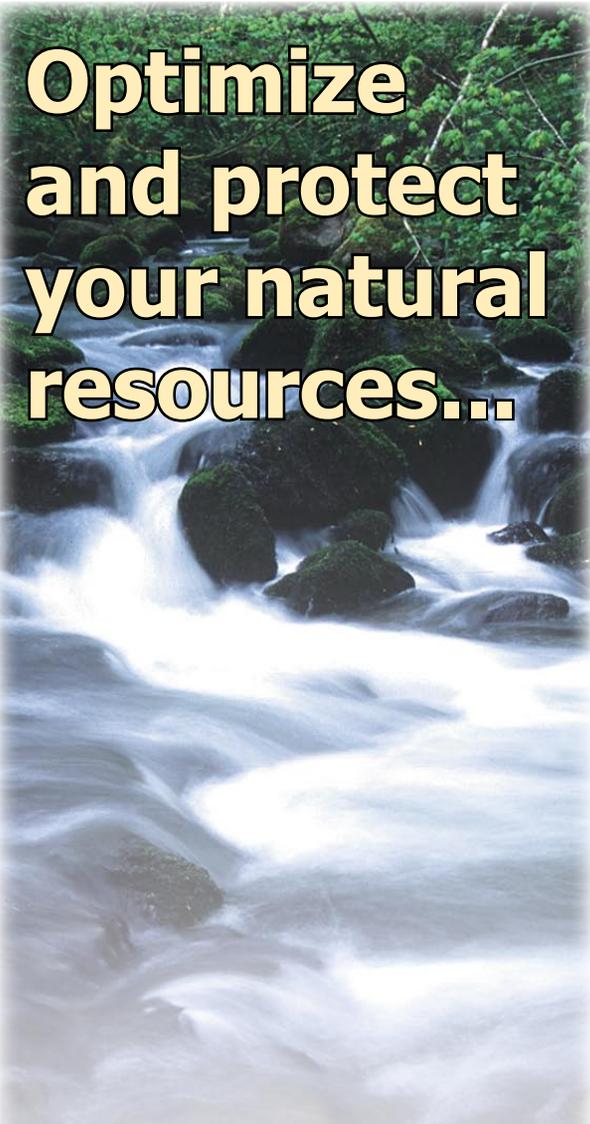
Application Process

The EQIP application process consists of the following five steps:

1. A landowner submits an application to a local USDA Service Center, NRCS office, or conservation district office.
2. NRCS ranks each application using the locally developed natural resources ranking process.
3. When funds are allocated, NRCS commits funds to high ranking applications.
4. NRCS works with the applicant to develop an EQIP conservation plan and contract containing practices which will solve identified resource problems.
5. Following contract signature by NRCS and the selected entity, funds are obligated to the project and the participant may begin to implement the EQIP conservation plan.

 **NRCS** Natural Resources
Conservation Service
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**Optimize
and protect
your natural
resources...**

Environmental Quality
Incentives Program (EQIP)
Program Guide

 **NRCS** Natural Resources
Conservation Service
Washington

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers who face threats to soil, water, air, and other related natural resources on their land.

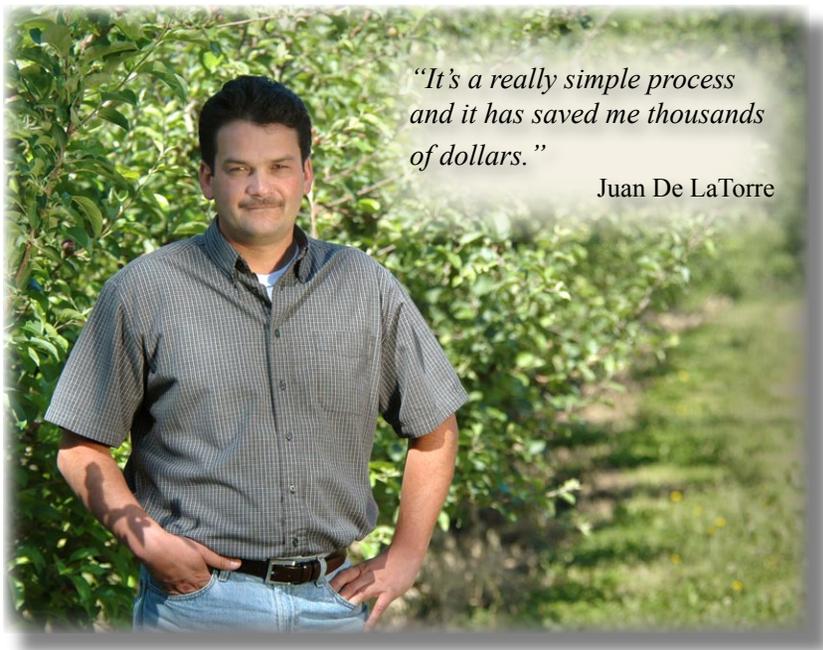
The USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the EQIP program with help from Local Work Groups (LWG) which are chaired by the conservation districts. The LWGs lead a process to adapt national, state, and local priorities to address local natural resource concerns.

In Washington, EQIP is focused on improving water quality and quantity, (conserving both ground and surface water), and reducing soil erosion on cropland, pastureland, and forestland. EQIP can also be used to treat resource concerns in riparian and aquatic areas, improving air quality, and wildlife issues.

Washington's goals and objectives for EQIP are assisting eligible applicants in complying with federal, state; local and tribal environmental regulations in an environmentally safe and cost-effective manner through a locally led process.

Washington's agricultural producers have a strong tradition in actively utilizing the EQIP

program to meet these regulations. EQIP achieves a producer's natural resource objectives by the implementation of a conservation plan. The EQIP contract and conservation plan may include



"It's a really simple process and it has saved me thousands of dollars."

Juan De LaTorre

structural, vegetative, and land management practices on eligible land.

What EQIP can do for you

Washington's landscapes range from old-growth forests to ocean beaches, arid scablands to snow-capped peaks. EQIP provides local work groups with the flexibility to address the varied resource issues associated with Washington's diverse landscape and agricultural operations.

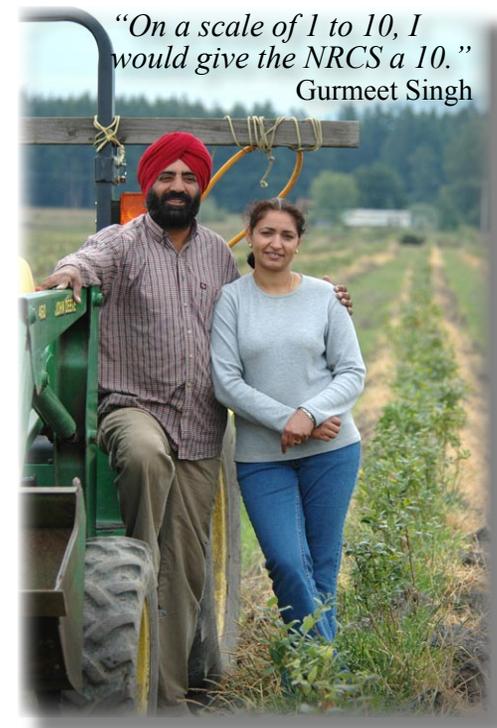
NRCS may pay up to 75 percent of the costs of certain conservation practices such as grassed waterways, filter strips, manure management facilities, livestock water development, livestock fencing, fish passageways (culvert replacement), and other practices important to improving and maintaining the health of natural resources in the area. The EQIP cost-share rates for limited resource producers and beginning farmers and ranchers may be up to 90 percent.

Incentive payments may be made to encourage a producer to perform land management

practices such as direct seeding and reduced tillage, prescribed grazing, nutrient, manure, irrigation water, wildlife habitat, livestock, and integrated pest management. These payments may be provided for up to three years to encourage producers to adopt best management practices. NRCS can help determine your best options in addressing your resource concerns.

Improving Irrigation Systems

Irrigation water is required for most crops grown in Central Washington. Many different irrigation systems are used to apply water. In the early years, the primary method of irrigation was surface. The surface system used was rill irrigation which is the application of water into a furrow for the length of the field. This system has a tendency to over irrigate the upper end, under irrigate the lower end of the field, and produce runoff



"On a scale of 1 to 10, I would give the NRCS a 10."
Gurmeet Singh