

# 2014 Farm Bill

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service



### NRCS AQAC Team Update

#### NRCS/ARS Livestock GRACEnet webinars

- 3 complete, 2 to go
  - May 21 Acid Scrubbers for Ammonia from Poultry Houses
- www.ConservationWebinars.net

#### USDA Methane Strategy

- NRCS helping develop Biogas Roadmap



#### Farm Bill Overview

#### What's New?

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

#### What's Not?

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
  - Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)
  - Air Quality Initiative (AQI)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP)
- Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP)

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

Differences from 2008 Farm Bill:

- Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program rolled into EQIP
- Funding authorization:
  - \$1.35 billion for 2014
  - \$1.60 billion for 2015
  - \$1.65 billion for 2016 and 2017
  - \$1.75 billion for 2018

# Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

No major differences from 2008 Farm Bill

Funding from EQIP

FY14 pre-proposals were due March 7, 2014

- Full proposals due on May 5, 2014
- Air Quality and Atmospheric Change included as part of the National Component priorities in FY14

## Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

#### State-level CIG for FY14:

- Arkansas closes 4/30/14
- Connecticut closed 4/25/14
- Georgia closes 4/30/14
- Idaho closed 4/25/14
- Iowa closes 4/30/14
- Kansas closes 5/16/14
- Kentucky closed 4/25/14
- New Hampshire closes 5/2/14

- New Jersey closes 6/30/14
- New Mexico closes 5/30/14
- Oregon closes 5/16/14
- Pacific Islands Area closes 4/30/14
- South Carolina closes 5/5/14
- Vermont closes 5/9/14
- Virginia closes 5/2/14
- Wyoming closes 5/1/14



### Air Quality Initiative (AQI)

No major differences from 2008 Farm Bill

- Funding authorization:
  - \$25 million/year through 2018

FY14 program substantively similar to FY13

#### FY14 states:

Arizona

Oregon

- California
- Pennsylvania

Colorado

Texas

• Ohio

Washington



# Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP) and Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP)

No major differences from 2008 Farm Bill

- CStP cap of 10 million acres per year
- HFRP authorized at \$12 million per year

### Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

Combines and replaces the purposes and functions of:

- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
- Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)
- Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRLPP)

# Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Combines and replaces the purposes and functions of:

- Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)
- Chesapeake Bay Watershed Program (CBWP)
- Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI)
- Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control



#### New regional program that:

- Furthers the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of soil, water, wildlife on a regional scale
- Encourages partners to cooperate with producers and landowners in:
  - Meeting or avoiding the need for national, State, and local natural resource regulatory requirements related to production on eligible land; and
  - Implementing projects that will result in the installation and maintenance of eligible activities that affect multiple agricultural or nonindustrial private forest operations on a local, regional, State, or multistate basis



Implement eligible activities on eligible land through:

- Partnership agreements under which NRCS enters contracts and easement agreements with producers and landowners participating in a project with a selected partner; and
- Direct Conservation Program Contracts (CPCs) or easement agreements in
  - Critical conservation areas; or
  - In a selected partner project area but who are seeking to implement an eligible activity independent of a partner



#### Critical conservation areas

- Secretary will select up to 8 critical conservation areas
- Priority consideration given to geographical areas which:
  - Include multiple States with significant ag production
  - Have an existing agreement or work plans
  - Benefit water quality improvement
  - Benefit water quantity improvement
  - Assist producers to meet natural resource regulatory requirements



#### Partners are responsible for:

- Contributing a significant portion of the overall costs
- Conducting outreach and education to eligible producers for potential participation in the project
- Acting on a landowner's or producer's behalf, if requested by the landowners or producer in applying for assistance
- Leveraging financial or technical assistance provided by NRCS with additional funds to help achieve the project objectives.
- Conducting and providing an assessment of the project costs and conservation effects

In the selected partner project areas, RCPP program assistance is delivered to producers through conservation program contracts and easement agreements under the covered programs.



#### Covered programs:

- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CStP)
- Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP)

In addition to the covered programs, the authorities under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (PL-566), other than Watershed Rehabilitation provisions, may be used in CCAs.

### RCPP Funding

#### Available funding:

- \$100 million of direct RCPP funding each year
- 7% of funds from the four covered programs (ACEP,
   EQIP, CStP, HFRP) reserved annually through April 1



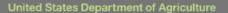
#### Funding Allocation

- 25% for State Projects
- 40% for National Projects
- 35% for Projects in Critical Conservation Areas



#### Additional Program Provisions

- Allows the Secretary to waive AGI if needed to fulfill purposes of the program
- Allows adjustments to discretionary rules of covered program with Secretary's approval, if requested by partner
- No funding may be used to cover partner administrative costs





#### FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT

## www.nrcs.usda.gov/FarmBill

Questions may be submitted via Email to:

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