

New Jersey Aquaculture Initiative

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)



Assistance Available for Aquaculture Producers

Assistance is available for conservation practices related to shellfish aquaculture, oyster reef habitat restoration, and finfish aquaculture

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits, such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground water and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation or improved or created wildlife habitat.

All conservation practices available through EQIP are approved for the Aquaculture Initiative.



A barge full of shells is ready to be deployed to create new oyster beds at Parsons Seafood.



Benefits

Eligible program participants receive financial and technical assistance to implement conservation practices or activities like conservation planning that address natural resource concerns. Payments are made after practices and activities are implemented.

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Control (lease or own) eligible land
- Comply with adjusted gross income limitations (AGI) provisions
- Be in compliance with highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements.

How to Apply

- Visit NRCS at your local USDA Service Center to apply for the EQIP Aquaculture Initiative
- Applications may be submitted anytime
- Application periods are set periodically so that applications can be ranked and funding awarded
- “Current Funding Opportunities” are posted on the New Jersey NRCS website. Applications are funded as long as funding is available
- NRCS will help eligible producers develop a conservation plan
- EQIP applications are ranked based on several factors, including the environmental benefits and cost effectiveness of the proposal





Support Practices

Primary practices supported through the EQIP Aquaculture Initiative include:

Gear Cycling — This practice is used to reduce, clean, or remove biofouling organisms and other waste from bivalve production areas. Fouled gear is brought on shore, air dried, and cleaned at an approved off-site location.

Rack Replacement — Wildlife movement can be inhibited by the oyster production racks. Wildlife (especially horseshoe crabs) may be trapped beneath the racks during low tide and unable to reach nesting habitat on shore. NRCS can aid replacement of existing oyster racks with new racks built and installed to the appropriate height (minimum 12 inches) and spacing to allow for wildlife movement under and around racks.

Oyster Bed Restoration or Enhancement/Replenishment — Successful oyster growth occurs on beds that have a firm substrate. Land used for aquaculture production that needs improvement to the bottom for spat on shell and wild oyster production may qualify for oyster bed restoration assistance.

Shoreline Protection — Prevent the loss of land or damage to banks of streams, lakes, reservoirs, or estuaries (does not apply to ocean fronts). Vegetation and bioengineering treatments are used to stabilize low risk areas.

Other available practices include:

- Agricultural Energy management Plan
- Constructed Wetland Farmstead
- Energy Improvement Heavy Use
- Area Protection Lighting System
- Improvement Waste Storage Facility
- and more!

Getting Started

Visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/gettingassistance/get-started-with-nrcs for more information or contact your [local service center](#).

NRCS New Jersey Locations

Hackettstown (908) 852-2576, 101 Bilby Road, Building 1-H, Hackettstown, NJ 07840 (Sussex, Warren, Hudson, Essex, Passaic, Morris, Bergen)

Frenchtown (908) 782-4614, 687 Pittstown Road, Suite 2, Frenchtown, NJ 08825 (Hunterdon, Somerset, Union)

Freehold (732) 462-0075, 4000 Kozloski Road, Suite D, PO Box 5033 Freehold, NJ 07728 (Monmouth, Middlesex, Mercer)

Columbus (609) 267-1639, 1971 Jacksonville-Jobstown Rd., Columbus, NJ 08022 (Burlington, Camden, Ocean)

Woodstown (856) 769-1126, 51 Cheney Road, Suite 2, Woodstown, NJ 08098 (Salem, Gloucester)

Vineland (856) 205-1225, 1318 So. Main Rd, BLDG 5 Suite A, Vineland, NJ 08360 (Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland)

