

Delivering Conservation in Tennessee

Fiscal Year 2023



Fiscal year 2023 was truly groundbreaking. The dedicated team at USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) along with our conservation partners successfully implemented conservation practices on America's working lands while rolling out the largest conservation funding opportunity the agency has ever received through the Inflation Reduction Act, part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda.

NRCS made \$850 million available from the Inflation Reduction Act for climate-smart agriculture and forestry mitigation activities through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP), and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). The agency obligated 99.8 percent of all available FY 2023 Inflation Reduction Act financial assistance funds to farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners across America. In addition to conservation program enrollments, NRCS provided Conservation Technical Assistance to producers interested in better understanding the implementation of conservation practices.

In addition, NRCS obligated nearly \$2.5 billion in Farm Bill funds for all types of conservation practices in over 40,000 contracts covering over 20 million acres of land through those same conservation programs.

Demand for NRCS conservation assistance is strong. Despite the additional Inflation Reduction Act funding, NRCS had significant unmet producer demand for EQIP, CSP, and ACEP applications. NRCS received \$2.2 billion in Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) proposals but was only able to fund half of the projects. The total demand for climate-smart agriculture and forestry practices and projects was millions of dollars higher than available funding.

NRCS also invested in communities to help them prepare for or recover from natural disasters. In Tennessee, NRCS invested \$2.5 million in the Emergency Watershed Protection Program, \$1.5 million in the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program and \$59,718 in the Watershed Rehabilitation Program. Tennessee received \$3 million in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Nationally, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided \$918 million for NRCS watershed programs; and we invested \$846 million of those funds.

Organic farmer helps community combat food insecurity



Marlon Foster founded the non-profit organization Knowledge Quest to teach families in South Memphis how to maximize their potential. One year later, he began agricultural efforts by installing the organization's first community garden in a nearby public housing community to promote healthy eating and nutrition.

"My vision was to grow food in ways that built community and promoted wellness," Foster said.

Foster began operating Green Leaf Learning Farm as an expansion of Knowledge Quest to support the nutritional needs of the community. He transformed 30 vacant lots and four abandoned buildings into the only USDA-certified organic micro farm operation in South Memphis.

Green Leaf Learning Farm sits on three acres and focuses its efforts on education, community and economic development, and food security.

Foster continues to seek ways to expand his growing operation and was recently selected for an urban farming and education/outreach grant partnership with NRCS in Tennessee. He currently serves on the Tennessee State Technical Committee for Urban Agriculture.

Through his participation in USDA programs, Foster promotes water conservation through irrigation upgrades; partners with other federal and non-federal agencies on education and outreach efforts; and hosts several informational sessions for regional growers in minority communities.

Tennessee Contact:

Sheldon Hightower, State Conservationist – 615-277-2531, sheldon.hightower@usda.gov

TOP FIVE EQIP CONSERVATION PRACTICES IN TENNESSEE FY 2023	
INFLATION REDUCTION ACT	FARM BILL
1. Forest Stand Improvement	1. Cover Crop
2. Fence	2. Streambank and Shoreline Protection
3. Cover Crop	3. Fence
4. Streambank and Shoreline Protection	4. High Tunnel System
5. Livestock Pipeline	5. Grade Stabilization Structure

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE, USDA — FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, TENNESSEE FY 2023								
PROGRAM	FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE							TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
	Allocation	Obligations				Funded Applications	Unfunded Applications	Expenditures
		\$	%	Underserved	Acres			
ACEP Inflation Reduction Act	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	Data not available	\$21,404
CSP Inflation Reduction Act	\$5,325,656	\$5,311,553	99.7%	18.2%	71,776.2	166	2	\$404,688
EQIP Inflation Reduction Act	\$3,387,727	\$3,387,727	100%	43.4%	6,774.5	86	74	\$756,887
Inflation Reduction Act Total	\$8,713,383	\$8,669,280	99.8%	Data not available	78,550.7	252	76	1,282,980
ACEP Farm Bill	\$3,908,208	\$3,907,819	100%	4%	1,004	8	53	Data not available
CSP Farm Bill	\$14,388,227	\$13,921,231	96.8%	12.6%	148,471.1	301	164	
EQIP Farm Bill	\$38,437,803	\$38,346,042	99.8%	54.4%	98,547.1	994	2,081	
Farm Bill Total	\$56,734,238	\$56,175,091	99%		248,022.2	1,303	2,298	
Grand Total	\$65,447,621	\$64,874,371	99.1%	Data not available	326,572.9	1,555	2,374	Data not available

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE, USDA — TENNESSEE OBLIGATIONS BY CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT FY 2023						
	INFLATION REDUCTION ACT			FARM BILL		
	ACEP	CSP	EQIP	ACEP	CSP	EQIP
District 1	Data not available	\$503,908	\$202,336	Data not available	\$756,579	\$6,687,208
District 2		\$177,355	\$427,621		\$618,035	\$3,110,278
District 3		Data not available	\$198,442		\$153,641	\$2,159,656
District 4		\$549,673	\$191,813		\$2,234,746	\$4,271,852
District 5		\$112,759	\$207,771		\$208,584	\$1,820,917
District 6		\$776,203	\$608,650		\$1,220,655	\$4,883,843
District 7		\$579,506	\$761,846		\$668,636	\$4,324,803
District 8		\$2,595,387	\$777,470		\$7,452,279	\$10,083,503
District 9		\$16,574	Data not available		\$582,708	\$388,690
Grand Total			\$5,311,365		\$3,375,889	