

Irrigation History

Tips to track and report irrigation water use for participation in NRCS programs



Irrigation Assistance

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to help growers improve irrigation water conservation. You may qualify for financial assistance to install a more irrigation system on your operation that can save water and reduce energy costs.

The **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** is the primary program for helping Alaska growers improve their irrigation infrastructure and water management practices. There are multiple eligibility criteria for EQIP including producer eligibility, land eligibility, and resource concern eligibility. To help determine land eligibility, NRCS requires that applicants submit documentation showing their irrigation history on the land.

Why do I need to document my irrigation history?

Land offered for enrollment in EQIP must have been irrigated for at least **two out of the last five years** to qualify for irrigation-related conservation practices and activities that improve water conservation.

Whose responsibility is it?

The applicant is responsible for providing documentation to establish and document land eligibility for EQIP. This includes documentation of irrigation history if the EQIP application includes practices that involve irrigation.

What documentation can I provide NRCS?

Examples of documentation include:

- Written self-certification of the irrigation history by year, crops produced on the land with yields, and indicating irrigation information. See example on next page.

- Aerial photography showing evidence of irrigation history on the property
- Copies of Farm Service Agency (FSA) records such as aerial compliance photography, Farm Acreage Report, Production History Report, and Risk Management Insurance, if available.
- Water rights certificate, water rights maps, and/or well or pumping plant permits issued by a federally-recognized Tribe or a state or federal agency.
- Irrigation water management plans, water use reports, or other evidence of implementation of irrigation-related practices, if available.
- NRCS also requires a map of the operation. Maps can be generated from online map sources or hand-drawn. Maps should include the dimensions of your current crop area and its location in reference to fixed features on your property, such as street, driveway, garage, house, out-buildings, etc.



Example of Irrigation History to Submit to NRCS

TRACT	FIELD	METHOD OF IRRIGATION	TOTAL AREA IRRIGATED (AC/SQ.FT.)	AMOUNT OF WATER APPLIED (ESTIMATE)	CROPS GROWN 2020	CROPS GROWN 2021	CROPS GROWN 2022	CROPS GROWN 2023	CROPS GROWN 2024
Tract 222	1	Sprinkler, occasional hand watering	35ft x 60 ft is 2,100 sq.ft.	Est. 50 gallons per week High Tunnel 400 gallons per week	Potatoes	Potatoes, carrots	Fallow, some cover crop	Brassicas, carrots, onions	High Tunnel squash, cucumbers
Tract 222	2, 3 same management	8 impulse yard sprinklers	1 acre; 0.3 acre field 2 0.7 acre field 3	Irrigated daily, total water use of 2,280 gallons per day.	Not tilled	Cover Crop	Peonies	Peonies	Peonies



NRCS can help producers install irrigation systems to improve water use efficiency for producers growing crops inside of a seasonal high tunnel.



Micro-irrigation drip lines are strategically placed directly on the soil so that water seeps into the root zone.



Depending on the design, tanks may be needed to temporarily store water for irrigation.

Property Map for Irrigation History

Name: _____

Use of this grid sheet is optional and may be used to sketch your operation to assist in documenting irrigation history. Alternatively, you could mark-up an aerial photograph from NRCS or an online source, or provide some other map. Please include dimensions of crop area(s) and their location in reference to fixed features on your property, such as street, driveway, garage, house, out-building, etc. Include irrigation infrastructure items such as a well, known underground pipes, spigot(s)/hose bib(s), sprinkler locations, etc.

