



**Natural Resources
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Signup Batching Deadline Announced for Alabama's Natural Resources Conservation Service Landscape Initiatives

AUBURN, Ala., September 19, 2018 – USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist for Alabama Ben Malone announced that October 19, 2018 is the signup batching date for producers for 2019 program funding for the following national landscape initiatives:

- ***Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)*** which includes only 3 national landscape initiatives identified below. These include:

- 1. Gopher Tortoise Habitat Improvement:* includes forestry practices and prescribed burning for pre-commercial thinning.
- 2. Longleaf Pine Initiative:* includes prescribed burning on existing longleaf stands and the establishment of new stands.
- 3. National Water Quality Initiative:* includes practices to assist producers treat water quality-based resource concerns.

Applications are accepted on a continuous basis; however, selecting applications for funding is completed periodically through batching periods with specific cutoff dates. In EQIP programs, eligible producers may receive a payment based on the statewide average cost of the installation of the conservation practice.

Special emphasis participants like socially disadvantaged, limited resource, and beginning farmers and ranchers are eligible for a higher payment rate. In addition, socially disadvantaged, veteran, limited resource, and beginning farmers and ranchers can receive up to 50 percent advanced payment for purchasing materials or contracting.

-More-

For more information about NRCS and its programs, visit your local USDA Service Center to determine eligibility. Individuals are not eligible for USDA programs until they have completed the Farm Bill eligibility requirements. General program information is available on the Alabama NRCS website at www.al.nrcs.usda.gov.

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