

Conservation Programs and Practices for Energy Conservation



NRCS's national On-Farm Energy Initiative provides funding and technical help for installing cost-effective energy conservation practices through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

These conservation practices reduce on-farm emissions, such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, and ozone precursors and depleters that reduce air quality.

Ground-level ozone has been named by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a harmful pollutant present throughout Massachusetts. Bay State farmers can help reduce emissions that create this harmful pollutant by installing the conservation practices below.

Conservation practices eligible for financial assistance

EQIP offers financial help for the following practices that reduce pollution and greenhouse emissions. An energy audit that meets NRCS standards is required.



Greenhouse Heat Management: Energy/shade screens, root zone heating, horizontal air flow and ventilation, or high efficiency heating systems with automated controls provide energy savings of 30 percent or more for greenhouses.



Maple Syrup Reverse Osmosis, Steam-enhanced Pans, and Evaporators: Farmstead energy improvements to reduce evaporation time includes new or replaced reverse osmosis system, new membrane, steam-enhanced pans, and replacement of inefficient evaporators for energy savings of up to 75 percent.



Pumping Plant: A system that delivers water at a specified flow and rate and includes all of the pumps, energy supply, plumbing and protective structures. Pumping plants can be solar-powered, submerged in water, or mounted on the surface of the ground. They can be powered by line electricity, photovoltaic (PV) panels, a power take off (PTO) or wind or water turbines.

About NRCS

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works with agricultural and forest producers to protect and conserve natural resources on our nation's private lands.

NRCS administers conservation programs funded primarily through the current Farm Bill, and offers financial and technical assistance to landowners to address high priority resource concerns through the implementation of conservation practices. Contact your local NRCS field office for assistance.

Contact us

Massachusetts
USDA Service Centers

- Greenfield: 413-772-0384 ext.3
- Hadley: 413-585-1000 ext. 3
- Holden: 508-829-4477 ext. 3
- Pittsfield: 413-443-1776 ext. 3
- Westford: 978-692-1904 ext. 3
- Wareham: 508-295-5151 ext. 3
- West Yarmouth: 508-771-6476

Massachusetts

Natural Resources Conservation Service

www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov





Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP helps promote farm and forest production by enhancing the environmental quality of soil, water, air, plants and animals.

Who can apply?

Owners of land in agricultural or forest production, or persons who are engaged in livestock, agricultural or forest production, on eligible land that has a natural resource concern may apply.

There is no minimum acreage requirement to apply for EQIP, however, projects that address more significant resource concerns are more likely to receive funding.

How do I apply?

Applications may be submitted anytime. All applications will be evaluated periodically in a competitive ranking process as funding becomes available. Ranking criteria is available on our website.

An Agricultural Energy Management Plan or energy audit is required. The Massachusetts Farm Energy Program (MFEP) provides energy audits and helps to coordinate financial assistance. MFEP is a joint project of the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and The Center for EcoTechnology (CET). Financial assistance for an energy audit is available through EQIP.

→ Contact MFEP: 413-727-3090 or visit www.massfarmenergy.com

To apply, you will need to file the following forms (also on our website):

- Conservation Program Application (CCC-1200)
- Adjusted Gross Income Certification (CCC-926)
- Highly Erodible Land & Wetland Conservation Certification (AD-1026)

If your application is funded, you will be required to install and maintain your conservation practices according to NRCS standards.

Conservation Plans & Conservation Activity Plans

Your program application must be supported by an NRCS approved conservation plan, which provides documentation of the practices that could be used to address your natural resource concerns. We will work with you to develop an approved conservation plan.

You may also apply for financial assistance to hire Technical Service Providers (TSP) to develop a specialty plans called Conservation Activity Plans (CAP) to address certain land use activities or specific resource needs on your land.

Why energy conservation?

Air quality is inherently related to energy because most energy production methods create emissions that negatively impact our air quality.

Poor air quality has a negative impact on our health, our environment and contributes directly to climate change.

Emissions from agriculture and energy include particulate matter, methane, and carbon dioxide.

When two other common agricultural emissions - nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds - are combined, they create another harmful pollutant called ground-level ozone. Ground-level ozone is of particular concern in Massachusetts.

The major sources of harmful agricultural emissions are motor vehicles, electricity, fuel burning, methane, pesticides, propellants, fuels and solvents.

Some natural processes that breakdown manure and fertilizers also produce nitrogen oxides.

