



Agricultural Act of 2014

EQIP

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Virginia Overview

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



USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service offers voluntary Farm Bill conservation programs that benefit agricultural producers and the environment.



Helping People Help the Land

Benefits

Eligible program participants receive financial and technical assistance to implement conservation practices, or activities like conservation planning, that address natural resource concerns on their land. Payments are made to participants after conservation practices and activities identified in an EQIP plan of operations are implemented. Contracts can last up to 10 years in duration.

Eligibility

Agricultural producers and owners of non-industrial private forestland are eligible to apply for EQIP. Eligible land includes cropland, pastureland, non-industrial private forestland, and other farm lands.

Applicants must:

- Be engaged in agriculture or forestry and have a farm number and tract established with the Farm Service Agency
- Control or own eligible land
- Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements
- Develop an EQIP plan of operations to meet their objectives

Additional restrictions and program requirements may apply.

Key Resource Concerns

1. Soil Erosion (Sheet, rill, wind, and excessive bank erosion from streams)
2. Water Quality (*excess quantities of*)

- Nutrients in surface and ground waters
 - Pathogens and chemicals from manure, biosolids or compost applications
 - Sediment in surface waters
3. Livestock Production (*limited or inadequate*)
 - Feed and forage
 - Livestock shelter
 - Water
 4. Degraded Plant Condition
 - Undesirable plant productivity and health
 - Inadequate structure and composition
 5. Inefficient Energy Use
 - Equipment and facilities
 - Farming practices and field operations
 6. Fish/Wildlife Habitat Degradation

How to apply

Visit your local USDA Service Center to apply or visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/getstarted.

NRCS will help eligible producers develop an EQIP plan of operations, which will become the basis of the EQIP contract.

EQIP applications will be ranked based on a number of factors, including the environmental benefits and cost effectiveness of the proposal.

More Information

For more information visit your local USDA Service Center or www.nrcs.usda.gov/farmbill.

Find your local USDA Service Center

<http://offices.usda.gov>

What's New in EQIP

- The former Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program was folded into EQIP.
- Advance payment opportunities now exist for agricultural producers who are veterans.
- Advance payments for socially disadvantaged, beginning and limited resource farmers, and veterans were raised from 30 percent to 50 percent.
- Payment limitations are set at \$450,000 with no ability to waive.



Virginia growers can receive financial assistance through EQIP for soil-health building practices like cover crops, crop rotations, and no-till with erosion control practices.

www.nrcs.usda.gov

Natural Resources Conservation Service