Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary, conservation program administered by NRCS that can provide financial and technical assistance to install conservation practices that address natural resource concerns. The purpose of EQIP is to promote agricultural production, forest management, and environmental quality as compatible goals; to optimize environmental benefits; and to help farmers and ranchers meet Federal, State, Tribal, and local environmental regulations.

EQIP Application Sign-up and Cut-off Dates

NRCS accepts EQIP applications year-round, but establishes cutoff dates to make funding selections for eligible, screened, and ranked applications.

To be ready for EQIP funding consideration, interested applicants will need to: (1) Develop a conservation plan, (2) Submit an application, (3) Meet program eligibility requirements, and (4) Approve their 'EQIP schedule of operations'.

The time needed to complete a conservation plan and process eligibility can vary, from a few weeks to more than a month, depending on the complexity of the farming operation.

Develop a Conservation Plan

A conservation plan includes all practices, regardless of the program's financial assistance, that a producer or landowner has agreed to adopt for the agricultural operation and/or associated agricultural lands. Interested applicants are encouraged to request conservation planning and technical assistance from a local NRCS field office to help with the development of a conservation plan.

Submitting an Application

Interested applicants may apply for EQIP by completing and submitting the application, Form NRCS-CPA-1200, Conservation Program Application, to the NRCS field office in person, by phone, email, or fax in the county which you own land or where you have an agricultural operation or non-industrial private forest land.

Program Eligibility Requirements

In order to be considered eligible for EQIP the applicant must have a vested interest in production agricultural or non-industrial private forest land and meet other program eligibility requirements.

'EQIP schedule of operations'

The basis for an application is the 'EQIP schedule of operations' and is derived from the applicant's conservation plan. The EQIP 'schedule of operations' identifies the conservation practices to be implemented, timing of the implementation, practice location, and payment rates.

EQIP Screening, Ranking and Funding

EQIP funding decisions are based on an application evaluation process that includes screening tools and ranking criteria. Screening tools are worksheets used is to prioritize an application based on factors such as: a completed conservation plan; readiness to implement practices; history of contract compliance; and resource priorities addressed in the 'EQIP schedule of operations'. Ranking criteria considers the anticipated benefit of a conservation system, or practice, in the 'EQIP schedule of operations' to a natural resource concern.

About the EQIP Fund Pool

The purpose of the Sacramento Valley Animal Feeding Operation (AFO) EQIP Fund Pool is to minimize impacts to water quality, improve irrigation efficiency and promote energy conservation on dairies and other animal feeding operations.

Conservation treatments associated with confined or unconfined animal feeding operations include manure-handling systems, manure transfer pipelines, groundwater protection barriers, surface water protection measures and whole-farm nutrient management. Common conservation practices on AFO facilities include: roof runoff structures, manure transfer pipelines, heavy use area protection measures, tail water return systems, waste transfer systems and components, practices to minimize odors, nutrient management and irrigation water management practices.

Interested applicants are encouraged to request conservation planning and technical assistance from a local NRCS field office or certified Technical Service Provider to help with the development of a farm-wide Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) which will serve as the basis and justification for practices in the 'EQIP schedule of operations'.

Some of the benefits of developing a customized CNMP include: identifying immediate or potential resource problems that could negatively impact production, analyzing existing storage capacity of waste facilities, developing a nutrient budget and guiding the decision making process for future farm improvements, all while preparing you for various conservation program opportunities.

A CNMP promotes agricultural production and profit, environmental quality, and regulatory compliance as compatible goals. The CNMP is a wise business tool, helping producers look at their options and identify the best mix of practices and actions before making manure management investments. A CNMP also provides the basis for a successful nutrient management strategy.

Interested owners and/or operators of land managed for agricultural production in ***Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Placer, Sacramento, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Yolo and Yuba*** counties may be eligible for the Sacramento Valley AFO EQIP Fund Pool; please refer to the map at the end of this document for the boundaries of this EQIP Fund Pool.

Land Uses for the EQIP Fund Pool

Only applications for agricultural operations that address resource concerns on at least one land use type listed below will be considered for financial assistance from this EQIP Fund Pool. The descriptions below are the general NRCS land use definitions - applications should fit within, but do not need to exactly match, these descriptions.

- Crop: Land used primarily for the production and harvest of annual or perennial field, forage, food, fiber, horticultural, orchard, vineyard, or energy crops.
- Pasture: Land composed of introduced or domesticated native forage species that is used primarily for the production of livestock. Pastures receive periodic renovation and cultural treatments, such as tillage, fertilization, mowing, weed control, and may be irrigated. Pastures are not in rotation with crops.

- Farmstead: Land used for facilities and supporting infrastructure where farming, forestry, animal husbandry, and ranching activities are often initiated. This may include dwellings, equipment storage, plus farm input and output storage and handling facilities.
- Associated Agricultural Lands: Land associated with farms and ranches that are not purposefully managed for food, forage, or fiber and are typically associated with nearby production or conservation lands. This could include incidental areas, such as odd areas, ditches and watercourses, riparian areas, field edges, seasonal and permanent wetlands, and other similar areas.
- Irrigated: Where an operational irrigation system is present and managed to supply irrigation water.
- Grazed: Where grazing animals impact how land is managed.

Resource Concerns for the EQIP Fund Pool

Only applications for agricultural operations that address at least one resource concern listed below will be considered for financial assistance through this EQIP Fund Pool. The descriptions below are general NRCS natural resource definitions, applications should fit within, but do not need to exactly match, these descriptions.

❖ INSUFFICIENT WATER – Water resources are not optimally managed to support ecological processes, land use objectives and/or water conservation goals.

- Inefficient Use of Irrigation Water: Irrigation water is not stored, delivered, scheduled and/or applied efficiently. Aquifer or surface water withdrawals threaten sustained availability of ground or surface water. Available irrigation water supplies have been reduced due to aquifer depletion, competition, regulation and/or drought.

❖ WATER QUALITY DEGRADATION – Water quality degradation impacts the beneficial use of the receiving waters.

- Excess Nutrients in Surface Water: Nutrients, organic and inorganic, are transported to receiving surface waters through runoff in quantities that degrade water quality. Increased nitrogen and phosphorus levels in water can produce excessive aquatic vegetation and algal blooms resulting in reduced dissolved oxygen, harmful toxins, and increased water temperature.
- Excess Nutrients in Groundwater: Nutrients, organic and inorganic, are leached into groundwater in quantities that degrade water quality and limit uses for other purposes, for example, public drinking water systems from shallow domestic wells.

❖ DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION – Plant condition degradation can result in stress, disease, insect damage and result in changes to the structure and composition of plant communities.

- Undesirable Plant Productivity and Health: Plants must be adapted to the site and provided with appropriate amounts of nutrients, water, and sunshine, and protected from unchecked animal, weed, insect, and disease pests. Plants established in the wrong climate or soil may be under stress and may never thrive, no matter how much fertilizer or water supplied. Natural events, such as drought, or mismanagement can cause plant stress. Plants under stress are more susceptible to disease and insect damage.

- INEFFICIENT ENERGY USE – The inefficient use of energy increases costs and dependence on non-renewable energy sources.
  - Equipment and Facilities: Inefficient energy use occurs whenever facilities, equipment, or machinery operate more hours than needed to meet management goals. It may also occur when facilities, equipment, or machinery become worn out, outdated, or are poorly controlled or maintained.
  - Farming/Ranching Practices and Field Operations: Inefficient energy use occurs whenever equipment or machinery operates more hours than needed to meet management goals. It may also occur when equipment or machinery becomes worn out, outdated, or poorly controlled.

Eligible NRCS Conservation Activity Plans

Only applications for NRCS conservation activity plans listed in the table below are eligible for financial assistance through this EQIP Fund Pool. A Conservation Activity Plan (CAP) can be developed for an applicant to identify conservation practices needed to address a specific natural resource need.

Information about CAP services from Technical Service Providers (TSP), including how to find a certified TSP in your State, can be found on the NRCS national TSP website:
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/technical/tsp/?cid=stelprdb1042981

Table 1. Eligible Conservation Activity Plans

Practice Code	Conservation Activity Plan Name	Practice Units	Lifespan (Years)
102	Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan - Written	no	1

Eligible NRCS Conservation Practices

All conservation practices planned for financial assistance must be included in the 'EQIP schedule of operations' and address a resource concern identified in this EQIP Fund Pool. NRCS conservation practices eligible for financial assistance through this EQIP Fund Pool are listed in the below table.

For more information about NRCS conservation practices visit the following website link for NRCS conservation practice standards:
http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/technical/?cid=NRCSDEV11_001020

Table 2. Eligible Conservation Practices

Practice Code	Conservation Practice Name	Practice Units	Lifespan (Years)
309	Agrichemical Handling Facility	No	15
313	Waste Storage Facility	no	15
314	Brush Management	ac	10
315	Herbaceous Weed Control	ac	5
316	Animal Mortality Facility	no	15
317	Composting Facility	no	15
340	Cover Crop	ac	1
342	Critical Area Planting	ac	10

Practice Code	Conservation Practice Name	Practice Units	Lifespan (Years)
348	Dam, Diversion	no	15
350	Sediment Basin	no	20
351	Water Well Decommissioning	no	20
356	Dike	ft	20
359	Waste Treatment Lagoon	no	15
360	Waste Facility Closure	no	15
362	Diversion	ft	10
366	Anaerobic Digestor	no	25
367	Roofs and Covers	no	10
374	Farmstead Energy Improvement	no	10
378	Pond	no	20
381	Silvopasture Establishment	ac	15
382	Fence	ft	20
386	Field Border	ac	10
390	Riparian Herbaceous Cover	ac	5
391	Riparian Forest Buffer	ac	15
393	Filter Strip	ac	10
410	Grade Stabilization Structure	no	15
412	Grassed Waterway	ac	10
422	Hedgerow Planting	ft	15
430	Irrigation Pipeline	ft	20
436	Irrigation Reservoir	ac-ft	15
441	Irrigation System, Microirrigation	ac	15
442	Sprinkler System	ac	15
443	Irrigation System, Surface and Subsurface	ac	15
447	Irrigation System, Tailwater Recovery[1]	ac	15
449	Irrigation Water Management	ac	1
450	Anionic Polyacrylamide (PAM) Application	ac	1
462	Precision Land Forming	ac	10
464	Irrigation Land Leveling	ac	15
466	Land Smoothing	ac	10
468	Lined Waterway or Outlet	ft	15
472	Access Control	ac	10
484	Mulching	ac	1
490	Tree/Shrub Site Preparation	ac	1
500	Obstruction Removal	ac	10
512	Forage and Biomass Planting	ac	5
516	Livestock Pipeline	ft	20
520	Pond Sealing or Lining, Compacted Soil	no	15
521A	Pond Sealing or Lining, Flexible Membrane	no	20

Practice Code	Conservation Practice Name	Practice Units	Lifespan (Years)
528	Prescribed Grazing	ac	1
533	Pumping Plant	no	15
548	Grazing Land Mechanical Treatment	ac	1
558	Roof Runoff Structure	no	15
560	Access Road	ft	10
561	Heavy Use Area Protection	ac	10
570	Stormwater Runoff Control	no	15
574	Spring Development	no	20
575	Trails and Walkways	ft	10
578	Stream Crossing	no	10
580	Streambank and Shoreline Protection	ft	20
582	Open Channel	ft	15
584	Channel Bed Stabilization	ft	10
587	Structure for Water Control	no	20
590	Nutrient Management	ac	1
591	Amendments for the Treatment of Agricultural Waste	au	1
592	Feed Management	au	1
601	Vegetative Barrier	ft	5
606	Subsurface Drain	ft	20
607	Surface Drain, Field Ditch	ft	15
608	Surface Drain, Main or Lateral	ft	15
610	Salinity and Sodic Soil Management	ac	1
612	Tree/Shrub Establishment	ac	15
614	Watering Facility	no	20
620	Underground Outlet	ft	20
629	Waste Treatment	no	10
632	Solid/Liquid Waste Separation Facility	no	15
634	Waste Transfer	no	15
635	Vegetated Treatment Area	ac	10
638	Water and Sediment Control Basin	no	10
670	Lighting System Improvement	no	10
672	Building Envelope Improvement	no	10
740	Pond Sealing and Lining, Soil Cement	no	20

[1]Conservation practice, 447 – Irrigation System, Tailwater Recovery, is an irrigation tailwater recovery system and practice payment rates will be based on eligible conservation practices included in the system.

NRCS Field Office Contact Information

For more information about EQIP, how to apply and program eligibility, interested applicants should contact a NRCS field office in the county which you own land or where you have an agricultural operation.

USDA-NRCS, Butte County
Oroville Service Center
(530) 534-0112
Daniel Taverner, District Conservationist

USDA-NRCS, Colusa County
Colusa Service Center
(530) 458-2931
Andrea Casey, District Conservationist

USDA-NRCS, Glenn County
Willows Service Center
(530) 934-4601
Robert Vlach, District Conservationist

USDA-NRCS, Placer County
Auburn Service Center
(530) 885-6505
Jennifer Johnson, District Conservationist

USDA-NRCS, Sacramento County
Elk Grove Service Center
(916) 714-1104
Dwane Coffey, District Conservationist

USDA-NRCS, Shasta County
Redding Service Center
(530) 226-2560
Melinda Graves, District Conservationist

USDA-NRCS, Siskiyou County
Yreka Service Center
(530) 842-6123
James Patterson, District Conservationist

USDA-NRCS, Sutter County
Yuba City Service Center
(530) 674-1480
RaeAnn Dubay, District Conservationist

USDA-NRCS, Tehama County
Red Bluff Service Center
(530) 527-3013
Larry Branham, District Conservationist

USDA-NRCS, Yolo County
Woodland Service Center
(530) 662-2037
Phil Hogan, District Conservationist

USDA-NRCS, Yuba County
Yuba City Service Center
(530) 674-1480
RaeAnn Dubay, District Conservationist


Sacramento Valley AFO/CAFO EQIP
Fund Pool Counties
Tulelake
Yreka
Alturas
Hoopa
McArthur LPO
Weaverville
Redding
Susanville
Red Bluff
Quincy
Chico
Oroville
Willows
Colusa
Yuba City
Ukiah
Lakeport
Woodland
Auburn
Placerville
Davis
Dixon
Petaluma
Napa
Jackson
Lockeford
Stockton
Sonora
Legend
County Boundaries
Fund Pool Counties
Location Map
CALIFORNIA
Miles
0 10 20 40 60 80