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News Release

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Conservation Opportunities for New Farmers

Application Deadline is January 15, 2021

COLUMBUS, OH, Dec. 14, 2020 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced Friday, January 15, 2021, as the deadline to submit applications for Ohio's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for beginning farmers.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program which helps beginning farmers make conservation work for them. Beginning farmers can receive enhanced or higher level EQIP incentive payments for conservation practices to help reduce the risk and financial burden of implementing new conservation practices.

Ohio dedicates a portion of its total EQIP allocation specifically to beginning farmers. EQIP gives no preference to the size of the operation; small agriculture operations compete equally with larger ones.

NRCS offers a wide variety of practices for beginning farmers interested in livestock, forestry, pasture/grazing operations and specialty, organic and row crop production. These practices help beginning farmers meet their goals to improve their operations, commodity production and environmental improvement.

Beginning farmers are those who have not previously farmed or have not operated a farm for more than 10 years. Applicants should be farmers, or farm or forest landowners and meet eligibility criteria. To participate in USDA conservation programs, contact your [local NRCS conservationist](#) as soon as possible. Be sure to check the status of your Service Center when you reach out to us. For offices with restrictions on in-person appointments, we are still available by phone, email, and through other digital tools. Your Service Center's status is available at <https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus/service-center-status>.

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Applications signed and submitted to NRCS by the January 15 deadline will be evaluated for fiscal year 2021 funding. Visit Ohio NRCS website under "[EQIP Funding Categories](#)" for more details. To learn more about EQIP or other technical and financial assistance available through NRCS conservation programs, visit [Get Started with NRCS](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

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