



United States Department of Agriculture



# Iowa Soil Health EQIP Initiative Fact Sheet



Iowa

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service

[ia.nrcs.usda.gov/](http://ia.nrcs.usda.gov/)

## What is EQIP?

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is one of USDA's most popular conservation programs. Through EQIP, NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural and forestry producers 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, and improved or created wildlife habitat.

NRCS provides agricultural producers with financial resources and one-on-one help to plan and implement conservation practices to NRCS standards and specifications. Using these practices can lead to cleaner water and air, healthier soil and better wildlife habitat, all while improving agricultural operations.

To get started, NRCS first works one-on-one with you to develop a conservation plan that meets your goals and vision for the land. This becomes a roadmap for which conservation practices best meet your needs. Financial assistance covers part of the costs from implementing conservation practices. NRCS offers about 200 practices depending on where your land is located. These practices are geared towards working farms, ranches and forests and provide producers with many options for conservation.

## EQIP Soil Health Initiative

The EQIP Soil Health Initiative is a special conservation funding opportunity for Iowa farmers that targets improving soil health on row cropland. The initiative encourages the adoption of management practices on Iowa's annual crop production fields that will have the greatest impact on our natural resources. The initiative creates incentives for adopting a suite of practices – or a system – rather than just a standalone practice. This initiative will address the following Resource Concerns:

- » Soil Quality
- » Water Quality
- » Carbon Sequestration
- » Plant Health (help with resistant weeds)

### Eligibility

To be eligible for the initiative, the producer must implement a minimum of 3 of the following practices. All practices will be offered at higher than normal EQIP payment rates.

- » Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till (329)
- » Cover Crops (340)
- » Nutrient Management (590)
- » Conservation Crop Rotation (328) - adding a small grain crop to the rotation

Prescribed (strip) grazing (528) cover crops is also an eligible practice with this initiative, but it does not apply toward the minimum.



A Delaware County farmer interseeds a cover crop mix as part of his conservation crop rotation.



## Payments Available for Each Practice

PRACTICE NAME	FISCAL YEAR 2021 PAYMENT RATE
<b>1. *No-Till/Strip-Till (329-1)</b>	<b>\$16.01/acre</b>
<i>* Must start following the first cover crop and be continuous.</i>	
<b>2. *Cover Crop (340)</b>	
<b>340-1 (Single Species Winter Hardy Cover Crop)</b>	<b>\$51.60/acre</b>
<b>340-11 (Multi Species Winter Hardy Cover Crop)</b>	<b>\$63.13/acre</b>
<b>340-20 (Winter Kill Species Cover Crop)</b>	<b>\$35.07/acre</b>
<i>* Producer can choose specific cover crop for each year. If small grain is added to the rotation, a cover crop is not required before the small grain. No mechanical harvesting of the cover crop is allowed.</i>	
<b>3. *Conservation Crop Rotation (328)</b>	
<b>328-1 (Adding a small grain or other high residue crop)</b>	<b>\$9.44/acre</b>
<i>* Producer develops a crop rotation they will continue to follow, such as corn-soybeans-small grain-corn-soybeans. Participants will receive incentive payments for the length of the contract, not just for the year the small grain is in place. The small grain can be harvested for grain, straw, or as a silage product.</i>	
<b>4. *Nutrient Management (590)</b>	
<b>590-1 (No Manure)</b>	<b>\$6.34/acre</b>
<b>590-4 (With Manure)</b>	<b>\$13.44/acre</b>
<b>590-2 (With Injected Manure or Applied on Cover Crop)</b>	<b>\$25.30/acre</b>
<b>590-5 (Precision)</b>	<b>\$37.87/acre</b>
<p><i>* In all scenarios, the 590 standard must be met. This includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Nitrogen rates (contact your local NRCS office for recommended rates)</li> <li>» No P and K application on VH testing soils, 50% of maintenance on H testing soils.</li> <li>» The first 590 payment must meet the 590 standard for that year, which usually requires soil sampling in year 1. The first incentive payment will be made in the second year of the contract.</li> <li>» Producers will receive the 590 incentive each year of the contract, not just for years the fertilizer is applied.</li> </ul> <p>The participant must also complete two of the following if using 590-5, and is recommended for the other scenarios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Apply N in-season (split application) - according to ISU CROP 3073.</li> <li>» Complete end of season Corn Stalk Nitrate Test (ISU CROP 3154), maximum of 50 acres/sample.</li> <li>» Late Spring Soil Nitrate Soil Test (ISU CROP 3140), maximum of 50 acres/sample.</li> <li>» Apply manure at P-based rates, according to PM-1688.</li> <li>» Variable rate N, based on MAP or DAP application.</li> <li>» Use a slow release N such as a polymer coated urea (ex. ESN).</li> <li>» Use nitrapyrin (only N stabilizer approved) with fall applied anhydrous ammonia.</li> <li>» Apply manure in the spring, or in the fall with a low disturbance method in a strip less than 6" wide, a minimum of 30-inch spacing when following with a No-Till crop.</li> <li>» Apply commercial nitrogen below ground with low disturbance method (coulter) when following with a No-Till crop.</li> </ul>	



PRACTICE NAME	FISCAL YEAR 2021 PAYMENT RATE
5. *Prescribed Grazing (528)	
528-4 (Strip Grazing)	<b>\$54.54/acre</b>
<p>* Strip grazing the cover crop/corn stover maximizes feed utilization and manure uniformity across the field.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» NRCS-developed grazing plan is required, which includes a livestock forage balance worksheet.</li> <li>» The goal is to have a minimum of 1 ton of cover crop biomass/acre (i.e. 12" tall cereal rye).</li> <li>» Move grazing animals a minimum of every 3 days; daily moves are preferred.</li> <li>» Strip grazing does not require a back fence.</li> <li>» Typically, plan this practice after corn and before soybeans.</li> <li>» This practice must be completed every year the land is grazed. Up to three years of payments can be made.</li> </ul>	

## For More Information

EQIP applications go through a competitive selection process to be funded. NRCS accepts EQIP applications on a continuous basis, but sets application cutoff dates as funding allows. Contact your local NRCS office to apply and for more information about the Iowa Soil Health EQIP Initiative.



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