



What is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)?

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program that helps farmers and owners of agricultural land, including forest landowners, reduce pollution and improve natural resources. EQIP provides technical and financial assistance to help people plan, install and implement structural, vegetative and management conservation practices on agricultural land and forest land.



EQIP Resource Concern Examples

Soil Erosion

Water Quality

Inadequate Forage

Wildlife Habitat

Air Quality

Soil Health

Water Quantity

Pollinator Habitat

Animal Waste

Energy

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)



Seasonal High Tunnel Requirements

- Maximum area size restrictions have been removed, however, there is a \$10,000/\$12,000 cost cap for this practice.
 FY2017 payment rates:
 \$2.85/sq ft (3,508 sq ft) - General
 \$3.42/ sq ft (3,508 sq ft) – Historically Underserved
 (size is approximately a 30' X 120' tunnel)
- To receive EQIP cost-share assistance for irrigation, the land has to be irrigated 2 of the past 5 years.

Seasonal High Tunnel Requirements

- The practice applies to existing cultivated cropland.
- Crops must be grown in the natural soil. No containers allowed.
- Systems must be built from pre-manufactured kits.
- Tunnel frame must be made of metal, wood, or durable plastic and must be at least 6-ft. in height.

Seasonal High Tunnels



Seasonal High Tunnels



EQIP Irrigation Financial Assistance

Irrigation assistance under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is only available to producers that are **converting EXISTING systems to a more EFFICIENT irrigation method and requires Irrigation History 2 out of the last 5 years.**



Organic Program



Organic Program

Whose eligible:

- Certified organic producers
- Transitioning to organic producers, or
- Producers selling less than \$5000 in organic products annually

Organic payment limitations are:

- \$20,000 per fiscal year/individual/entity
- \$80,000 during a six year period



Special Emphasis Applicants?

Participants meeting one of the four categories of "special emphasis applicants" are eligible for the 90% payment rate. Those are:

1. **New/Beginning Farmer** – must meet BOTH
 - a. Not operated for more than 10 consecutive years
 - b. Must provide the day-to-day operations (labor)

Special Emphasis Applicants?

2. **Socially Disadvantaged** – includes all minority participants
3. **Limited Resource Farmer** – must meet BOTH
 - a. Gross farm sales of not more than the current indexed value in EACH of the previous 2 years
 - b. Total household income AT or BELOW the national poverty level for a family of four

For more information on this designation please go to: <http://www.lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov>

Special Emphasis Applicants?

4. **Veteran Farmer** – a farmer who has served in the Armed Forces and
 - has not operated a farm; or
 - has operated a farm for not more than 10 years.

What are the eligibility requirements for NRCS Programs?

PRODUCER ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

1. Must be an individual or legal entity
2. Must have Signature Authority (for legal entity)
3. Owner or actively engaged in the management of the agricultural or forestry operation being enrolled. Documented by either of the following:
 - a. Records from FSA to identify owner or operator
 - b. Production of \$1,000 in Ag products produced, sold or both. Woodland owners are EXEMPT from this requirement.

What are the eligibility requirements for NRCS Programs?

4. Have control of the land
5. Be in compliance with the provisions for protecting the interests of tenants and sharecroppers
6. Be in compliance with HEL and wetland provisions
7. Be within the appropriate Farm Bill payment limitations (\$450,000 from the period of FY2014 to FY2018)

What are the eligibility requirements for NRCS Programs?

8. Meet Average Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) requirements of \$900,000
9. Meet Special Emphasis Applicant criteria if self-certifying as such to receive the 90% payment rate (New/Beginning Farmer, Limited Resource Producer, Socially Disadvantaged Farmer, or Veteran Farmer)
10. Meet requirements for the Organic Initiative (if applicable)

What are the eligibility requirements for NRCS Programs?

LAND ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

1. Must be agricultural land
2. Must be privately owned land – Documented by deed or lease.
3. Have permission of landowner to install structural practice if leased land
4. Have an identified resource concern
5. Have irrigation history 2 out of the last 5 years (if applying for irrigation)



For more information, visit
www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov or
call your local NRCS
District Conservationist

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