



United States Department of Agriculture



Environmental Quality Incentives Program

June 4, 2020

Programs Staff

USDA-NRCS - Connecticut

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, increased soil health and reduced soil erosion and sedimentation, improved or created wildlife habitat, and mitigation against increasing

Voluntary Conservation

Conservation Plan is the basis for Technical and Financial Assistance

Developed in partnership with the landowner/operator

Assessment of Resource Concerns on the operation

Soil: Erosion, Quality

Water: Quality, Quantity

Air: GHG's, Odor, Particulates

Plants: Plant Health, Plant Pests

Animals: Livestock limitations, (invasives, insects)

Wildlife habitat

Energy: Efficiency, Pollutant Reduction

Provides alternatives for implementing practices to address identified resource concerns. The operator/owner decides the final scope

Can be used as basis for application to NRCS for financial assistance through a variety of programs

Connecticut NRCS EQIP Priorities

SOIL QUALITY — GOAL: IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND FUNCTION OF SOIL TO INCREASE PRODUCTION, SEQUESTER MORE CARBON, IMPROVE WATER INFILTRATION, REDUCE EROSION, AND IMPROVE WILDLIFE HABITAT

Conservation Crop Rotation: Growing a diverse number of crops in a planned sequence in order to increase soil organic matter and biodiversity in the soil.

Cover Crop: An un-harvested crop grown as part of planned rotation to provide conservation benefits to the soil

No-Till: A way of growing crops without disturbing the soil through tillage

Mulching: Applying plant residues or other suitable materials to the soil surface to compensate for loss of residue due to excessive tillage.

Nutrient Management: Managing soil nutrients to meet crop needs while minimizing the impact on the environment and the soil.

Connecticut NRCS EQIP Priorities

WATER QUALITY — GOAL: IMPROVING WATER QUALITY THROUGH IMPLEMENTATION OF PRACTICES ON FARMSTEADS AND FIELDS TO REDUCE SEDIMENT, NUTRIENT AND PATHOGEN RUNOFF TO SURFACE WATER AND INFILTRATION TO GROUND WATER

Farmstead Activities

- Waste Storage Facility
- Covered Heavy Use Areas
- Compost Facility

Connecticut NRCS EQIP Priorities

WATER QUANTITY — GOAL: IMPROVING MOISTURE MANAGEMENT AND
IMPROVE EFFICIENCY OF WATER USE:

- Cover Crops
- Mulching
- Irrigation Pipeline
- Micro-irrigation
- Structure for Water Control (water meters)
- Irrigation Water Management Plans

Connecticut NRCS EQIP Priorities

AIR QUALITY — GOAL: IMPROVING AIR QUALITY BY ADDRESSING PARTICULATE MATTER, OZONE PRECURSORS, ODOR, GREENHOUSE GASES, AND CARBON SEQUESTRATION

- Anaerobic Digester
- Composting Facility
- Conservation Cover
- Field Border & Hedgerow Planting
- Integrated Pest Management
- Nutrient Management
- Prescribed Grazing
- Residue and Tillage Management

Connecticut NRCS EQIP Priorities

DEGRADED PLANT CONDITION — GOAL: IMPROVING PLANT PRODUCTIVITY AND HEALTH, PLANT COMPOSITION AND REDUCING PLANT PEST PRESSURE

- Integrated Pest Management
- High Tunnel Systems
- Nutrient Management
- Prescribed Grazing
- Crop Rotation
- Cover Crop
- Mulching
- Brush Management
- Herbaceous Weed Treatment

Connecticut NRCS EQIP Priorities

ANIMAL CONCERNS — GOAL: IMPROVING CONDITIONS FOR LIVESTOCK AND WILDLIFE BY ADDRESSING LIMITATIONS ON FEED, FORAGE, AND WATER, AS WELL AS HABITAT

Livestock:

- Forage and biomass planting
- Livestock watering systems – wells, pipeline, watering facility
- Fencing
- Prescribed grazing plans

Wildlife:

- Early successional habitat
- Pollinator plantings
- Invasive plant control
- Structures for wildlife (birdhouses/brush piles)
- Wetland creation, enhancement, restoration

Connecticut NRCS EQIP Priorities

INEFFICIENT ENERGY USE — GOAL: INCREASE ON-FARM ENERGY EFFICIENCY — IN FACILITIES AND FIELDS

Facility Energy Conservation

- Lighting
- Plate coolers
- Ventilation and fans
- Irrigation pumps
- Grain dryers
- Greenhouse improvements

Field Energy Conservation

- ~~No till planting – evaporators~~
- ~~Maple syrup evaporators~~
- ~~Cover crops – incorporate legumes~~
- Heating and refrigeration units; decrease fertilizer
- ~~Insulation and building envelope sealing~~
- ~~Nutrient management – application of appropriate nutrients; use of manure rather than fertilizer~~
- Motor controls and variable frequency drive (VFD)
- Improve irrigation – efficient pumps, VFDs

Program Eligibility – Three Parts

Person Eligibility - A person, legal entity, Indian Tribe, Alaska Native corporation, or joint operation with signature authority who:

- Is an agricultural producer (includes forest owners)
- Has control of land (owned or leased)
- Is compliant with HELC/WC and AGI, according to FSA

Land Eligibility

- Agricultural land
- Non-industrial Private Forestland
- Privately owned
- Tribal land
- Public land, if meeting additional criteria and applicant is not public entity

Resource Eligibility

- Eligible resource concern exists – can be addressed by an Eligible EQIP practice

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- Applications are accepted continuously
- Applications are batched into signup periods
- All eligible applications in a signup are assessed – ranked using a standard ranking tool – and selected for funding based on priority and ranking score
- Once selected for funding, a final conservation plan and schedule of operations will be signed by producer and NRCS which outlines the practices to be installed, the timeline for implementation, and payments amounts
- Payments are made after practices are installed and NRCS

Opportunities for Leveraging Partner Contributions Under EQIP

- Technical Assistance
 - is available from NRCS on Public Lands, regardless of the operator (could be private or public partner)
 - Partner Technical Assistance has been used under programs like Working Lands for Wildlife to share expertise of partner and NRCS with private landowners
- Financial Assistance may only be made to private individuals – could be on public land if the land is part of their operation
- Matching Funds – EQIP funds can be matched against other fund sources EXCEPT for other USDA Funds
 - 319 Funds – have been used to assist with large Animal Waste projects

Conservation Stewardship

Program – The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns.

Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance—the higher the performance, the higher the payment.

Healthy Forests Reserve Program –

The Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) helps landowners restore, enhance and protect forestland resources on private and tribal lands through easements and financial assistance.

Through HFRP, landowners promote the recovery of endangered or threatened species, improve plant and animal biodiversity and enhance carbon sequestration

Questions





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