



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
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Fact Sheet

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Environmental Quality Incentives Program

What is EQIP?

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary conservation program administered by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, farmers may receive financial and technical help with practices on agricultural land. Conservation practices reduce impacts from agricultural activities on natural resources such as water, air, soil, and wildlife. Some forestry and energy practices may also be eligible. EQIP may pay up to 75% of the costs of eligible practices. Incentive payments may be made to encourage a farmer to adopt land management practices such as nutrient management, waste utilization, integrated pest management, irrigation water management, and wildlife habitat management.

How Does it Work?

- **Sign-Up and Eligibility** Eligible agricultural producers must first complete an application by signing the **CCC-1200 Form and EQIP Appendix**. An eligibility determination is then done by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). *You can sign up for EQIP at any time -- check with your local service center for Fiscal Year deadlines.*
- **EQIP Assessment**
The designated NRCS conservationist will schedule a visit with the applicant to conduct an **Assessment of Resource Concerns**. This assessment is a program requirement and will be the foundation for the development of a conservation plan. Resource management issues covered during an EQIP assessment often include (but are not limited to):
 - Agricultural Waste Management
 - Cropland Erosion Control
 - Forestry Practices
 - Grazing Land Management
 - Storage and Management of Pesticides
 - Nutrient Management
 - Water Use Efficiency
 - Surface and Ground Water Resource Protection
- **Conservation Plan**
The designated conservationist works with the landowner to identify and prioritize conservation and environmental objectives and opportunities. A conservation plan is then finalized. This plan is a schedule of practices to be implemented to address one or more of the identified resource concerns.
- **EQIP Ranking**
Applications are ranked using statewide criteria, which assigns a score to each based on the environmental benefits that would be attained by implementation of the EQIP Plan of Operations. Using estimated costs for the eligible practices, applications are funded (beginning with the highest ranked) until all funds are allocated.

How Does it Work?

(continued)

➤ **EQIP Contract**

Once the application is approved for funding, an EQIP contract is developed, which includes conservation practices that are eligible for cost share or incentive payments (contracts can be up to 10 years in duration). Following are some of the practices* that may be included in an EQIP contract:

Agricultural Waste Management System Practices	Planned Grazing System Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Road • Composting Facility • Waste Water Transfer • Heavy Use Area Protection • Nutrient Management • Waste Utilization • Runoff Management System • Silage Leachate Collection and Transfer • Waste Storage Facility • Waste Treatment Lagoon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brush Management • Fence • Nutrient Management • Pasture and Hayland Planting • Pest Management • Pipeline (Livestock Watering) • Prescribed Grazing • Animal Trails and Walkways • Watering Facility • Water Well or Spring Development

Erosion Control System Practices	Irrigation Water Management System Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Site Planting • Diversion • Fence • Field Border • Filter Strip • Forest Trail and Landings • Waterway Outlet • Pasture and Hayland Planting • Crop Residue Management • Riparian Forest Buffer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Micro-Irrigation • Tail Water Recovery • Irrigation Water Conveyance • Irrigation Water Management • Pond Sealing or Lining • Runoff Management Systems • Water Well • Sprinkler Irrigation • Pumping Plant

Irrigated Crop Management System Practices	Wildlife Habitat System Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover Crop • Nutrient Management • Pest Management • Waste Utilization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brush Management • Forest Stand Improvement • Riparian Forest Buffer • Restoration and Management of Declining Habitats

Conservation Activity Plans (CAPs)	
• Energy Management Plan	• Forest Management Plan

New Pilot Practice for 2010
• High Tunnels <i>(designed to extend the growing season of vegetable and specialty crop production)</i>

*Keep in mind that practices must address one or more of the following program objectives:

- Reduction of non-point source pollution such as sediments, nutrients, and pesticides in surface and ground water resources.

- Reduction of emissions that contribute to air quality impairments.
- Reduction of soil erosion on agricultural land.
- Promotion of at-risk species wildlife habitat conservation.
- Water conservation.

**Where Can I
Get More
Information?**

Brooklyn Service Center - (860) 774-0224

139 Wolf Den Road, Brooklyn, CT 06234

Norwich Service Center - (860) 887-3604

Yantic River Plaza, 238 West Town Street, Norwich, CT 06360

Torrington Service Center- (860) 626-8258

1185 New Litchfield Street, Torrington, CT 06790

Wallingford Service Center - (203) 269-7509

North Farms Executive Park, 900 Northrop Rd., Suite A, Wallingford, CT 06492

Windsor Service Center - (860) 688-7725

100 Northfield Drive – 4th Floor, Windsor, CT 06095

Tolland Office - (860) 871-4028

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