

Program – Agency:

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Landowner Requirements:

Private landowners engaged in livestock or agricultural production can apply for EQIP assistance. Landowners must be in compliance with highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions of the Food Security Act. In addition, the landowner's average adjusted gross income must be < \$2.5 million over last 3 years (unless > 75% of income comes from farming, ranching or forestry).

Lands Eligible:

Any land on which agricultural commodities or livestock are produced, including:

- 1) Cropland
- 2) Rangeland
- 3) Grassland
- 4) Pasture land
- 5) Private, non-industrial forest

Specifically, eligible livestock production for food and fiber includes:

- 1) dairy or beef cattle
- 2) poultry
- 3) swine
- 4) sheep or goats
- 5) horses
- 6) turkeys
- 7) fish
- 8) other animal raised by aquaculture

Agreement Length:

Typically range from 1–10 years. Implementation of the last practice in the contract cannot exceed 10 years.

Benefits:

Typically up to 75% Cost share available for practices. Beginning or limited resource farmers and ranchers can receive up to 90% Cost share.

Additional incentive payments available for some practices

Maximum contract amount is \$450,000 with a maximum payment of \$450,000 per individual for the life of the Farm Bill (May 2002–2007)

Acceptable Practices:

EQIP assistance is available for Management and Structural practices.

Management practices include:

- 1) Cropping systems
- 2) Grazing systems
- 3) Nutrient management
- 4) Integrated pest management
- 5) Irrigation water management
- 6) Residue management
- 7) Wildlife habitat management
- 8) Manure management

Structural practices include:

- 1) Grade stabilization structures
- 2) Irrigation pipelines
- 3) Fencing
- 4) Pasture/hayland planting
- 5) Filter strips
- 6) Riparian forest buffers
- 7) Tree and shrub establishment
- 8) Irrigation land leveling
- 9) Grassland waterways
- 10) Livestock watering facilities

Prohibited Practices:

Landowners must follow all conservation plan guidelines associated with EQIP contract. Conservation plans are site-specific for each farm or ranch and can be developed by producers with help from NRCS or other service providers. All plans are subject to NRCS technical standards adapted for local conditions and are approved by the conservation district.