

What is EQIP?

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) offers technical expertise for planning and designing conservation practices that protect our water and air, increase soil productivity, enable you to care for farm animals, manage animal waste and sustain agricultural land. The EQIP Program offers cost-share funds to make these practices affordable.

Who can participate?

All landowners and operators who are engaged in crop or livestock production on eligible land may participate in the EQIP program. Participation is voluntary.

What land is eligible?

Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pasture, hayland, forestland or other lands on which crops or livestock are produced. All of these lands are equally eligible; there are no priority areas. Land under a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) contract is not eligible during the term of the CRP contract.

Is there money available through this program?

EQIP offers federal cost-share dollars at variable rates of 25 to 75 percent of the average cost of an approved conservation practice. Approved practices for Massachusetts are listed in this brochure.



What are incentive payments?

Incentive payments may be available to encourage producers to adopt land management practices that are not already being applied. These include: nutrient management, pest management, irrigation water management, prescribed grazing, contour farming, strip cropping and waste utilization.

Is there a limit on the amount of money I can receive?

Yes. The total limitation on EQIP payments, which includes both cost-share and incentive payments, has been increased to \$450,000 per individual or entity over the life of the 2002 Farm Bill, regardless of the number of farms or contracts. Starting in 2005, there can only be one EQIP contract per tract of land.

Where does the money come from?

Funds for EQIP come from the federal government's 2002 Farm Bill appropriations, and are administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

How do I get started?

You should visit a nearby NRCS office to sign up for EQIP. Next, a visit to your property will be scheduled. You will work with a conservation planner to inventory your resources and identify opportunities for conservation improvements. Together you will decide how to address your natural resource concerns. Your decisions will be recorded in a conservation plan. Your conservation plan will become part of your EQIP application and will be ranked against other farms in Massachusetts for a portion of available funding.



How does the ranking process work?



NRCS evaluates each application using a state-wide ranking procedure. Applications are scored by identifying the natural resource concerns, the extent of treatment and the environmental benefits to be achieved. Additional

consideration is given to proposals that enhance compliance with environmental regulations, agricultural land protection, leveraged funds, agricultural production, conservation systems, innovation, and cost effectiveness. Applications with the highest environmental benefit will be awarded contracts until all Massachusetts EQIP funds are obligated.

Will my application be funded?

If your application ranks high and receives funding, NRCS will have you sign an EQIP contract and agree to do the conservation work according to a schedule and NRCS standards and specifications.

How does the contract work?

The contract will last a minimum of two years and a maximum of 10, or at least one year past installation of the last practice. The contract will be carried out according to the conservation plan that you developed. All practices established with EQIP funding must be maintained for the life span of the practice.

What's new in EQIP?

- All livestock operators are eligible to receive cost-share payments for waste storage facilities regardless of the number of animal units.
- A comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP) will be required of all livestock producers who receive funding for animal waste storage systems.
- Participants can receive payments for installed practices as early as the first year of the contract.

Conservation Practices

- Access road
- Ag-fuel secondary storage containment facility
- Agrichemical mixing facility
- Anaerobic digester (ambient or control temp)
- Animal trails & walkways
- Barnyard runoff management
- Brush management
- Composting facility
- Comprehensive nutrient management planning
- Constructed wetland
- Contour farming
- Cover crop
- Critical area planting
- Deep tillage
- Dike
- Diversion
- Fence
- Field border
- Filter strip
- Forage harvest management
- Forest stand improvement
- Grade stabilization structure
- Grassed waterway
- Invasive plant species control
- Irrigation storage reservoir
- Irrigation system, sprinkler (water quantity or chemigation)
- Irrigation system, sprinkler (chem. w/ medium or high level treatment)
- Irrigation tailwater recovery
- Irrigation water conveyance (water quantity or quality)
- Irrigation water management
- Irrigation, microirrigation
- Land smoothing
- Lined waterway or outlet
- Manure transfer
- Mulching (biodegradable)
- Nutrient management
- Open channel
- Pasture and hay planting
- Pest management
- Pipeline (livestock watering)
- Pond (livestock watering)
- Prescribed grazing
- Pumping plant
- Residue management (no-till or mulch-till)
- Restoration/management of rare & declining habitats
- Riparian forest buffer
- Riparian herbaceous buffer
- Roof runoff structure
- Sediment basin (including as part of an animal waste system)
- Shellfish aquaculture (pending approval of interim standard)
- Spring development
- Streambank and shoreline protection
- Stripcropping
- Structure for water control (cranberry)
- Subsurface drain
- Surface roughening
- Terrace
- Transition to organic production
- Tree/shrub pruning
- Underground outlet
- Waste facility cover
- Waste storage facility
- Waste utilization
- Waste water treatment strip
- Water & sediment control basin
- Watering facility
- Well
- Windbreak/shelterbelt

USDA-NRCS Offices

Massachusetts State Office

451 West Street, Amherst, MA 01002

413-253-4350

Barnstable Field Office

270 Communications Way, Unit 1G, Hyannis, MA 02601

508-771-6476

Greenfield Field Office

55 Federal Street, Room 290, Greenfield, MA 01301

413-772-0384 ext 3

Hadley Field Office

195 Russell Street, Suite B6, Hadley, MA 01035

413-585-1000 ext 3

Holden Field Office

52 Boyden Road, Room 10, Holden, MA 01520

508-829-4477 ext 3

Pittsfield Field Office

78 Center Street, Suite 206, Pittsfield, MA 01201

413-443-1776 ext 3

Westford Field Office

319 Littleton Road, Suite 302, Westford, MA 01886

978-692-1904 ext 3

West Wareham Field Office

15 Cranberry Highway, West Wareham, MA 02576

508-295-5151 ext 2

For more information on the
Massachusetts EQIP program visit:

www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip.html

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United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

in Massachusetts

