

# 2014 Farm Bill Programs

**NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service)**



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With the mission of “Helping People Help the Land,” the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) delivers voluntary programs, products and services that help local people protect and improve natural resources. We work mainly with private land owners but have built up partnerships with other federal agencies.

Our locally based NRCS staffs work directly with farmers, ranchers and others to provide technical and financial conservation assistance suited to each client’s particular needs. We provide technical information and guidance, develop conservation plans on conservation systems and practices, and offer financial assistance for conservation activities through the Farm Bill programs.

We have a variety of programs that are aimed at preserving and restoring our private lands, and protecting all our natural resources (soil, water, air, plants, humans, and energy).

# Farm Bill Background

**Since the passing of the first Farm Bill in 1996, we have passed Farm Bills 2002 and 2008 and are currently working under Farm Bill will 2014. With each new farm bill passed, the government has increased program opportunities and funding allocations. The 2014 Farm Bill was signed in February of 2014. Financial assistance programs include the following:**

**EQIP** -- Environmental Quality Incentives Program - provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers in order to address natural resource concerns & deliver environmental benefits.

**ACEP** -- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - is a new program that consolidates three former programs – the Wetlands Reserve Program, Grassland Reserve Program and Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program.

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

**CSP** -- **Conservation Stewardship Program** - Helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns.

# Other Programs

- CTA (Conservation Technical Assistance)

The CTA Program provides land users with technically sound assistance needed to achieve the benefits of a healthy and productive landscape (no financial assistance).

- National - EQIP INITIATIVE Programs

- [EQIP Organic Program Initiative](#)

- [EQIP Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative](#)

# **EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentive Program**

(EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers. To be eligible to participate in EQIP, the applicant must be **actively** engaged in some type of agricultural product.

## **PRODUCER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:**

Agricultural products includes but are not limited to the following:

- Grains or row crops
- Tobacco
- Seed crops
- Vegetables or fruits
- Hay, forage, or pasture
- Orchards or vineyards
- Flowers or bulbs
- Ornamentals
- Plant materials, including those grown in greenhouses or seasonal high tunnels
- Trees
- Other agricultural commodities

**OR if the applicant is in the livestock production business, raising, growing and reproducing the following livestock:**

- Beef cattle
- Bison
- Dairy cattle
- Fish or other animals raised through aquacultural methods
- Horses
- Llamas
- Ratites
- Poultry
- Sheep or goats
- Swine
- Turkeys
- All other livestock or fowl produced as part of agricultural operations on farms or ranches identified by the State Conservationist, considering the advice of the State Technical Committee.

**OR if applicant has Nonindustrial private forest land ; rural land that has existing tree cover or land suited for growing a woodland.**

## **LAND ELIGILITY CRITERIA**

- Applicant must have control of the land for the term of the proposed contract period ( for at least 3 years).
- Landlords must allow their tenants to participant in this program. Applicant must show control if their leasing the land from the landowner. Tribal members must have a letter from tribal officials stating the members are farming or ranching that operation.
- Applicants must be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation compliance provisions. Must fill out a AD-1026 form. The purpose of this provisions is to: (1) reduce soil loss due to wind and water erosion; (2) protect the Nation's long-term capability to produce food and fiber;(3) reduce sedimentation and improve water quality; and (4) assist in preserving our wetlands.
- Applicant must be within appropriate payment limitation requirements (\$450,000), once you exceed this limit you cannot apply for additional funds under this current Farm Bill).
- Be in compliance with adjusted gross income requirement (household income cannot exceed 1 million dollars, this includes on farm income). Exception: Federally recognized Indian Tribes are exempt from adjusted gross income requirements.

## **Ineligible Entities**

- (1) Federal, State, county, and local governments, and political subdivisions of State government (e.g., school districts, conservation districts, etc.) and entities containing these units of government or subdivisions, are not eligible for EQIP. However, land owned by these entities may be eligible if leased to an eligible applicant.
  
- (2) Agricultural support businesses, such as agricultural supply buyers and sellers, are not eligible to participate in EQIP.
  
- (3) EQIP may only be used to implement practices or support activities on eligible land. As such, areas of water in which no land-based conservation practices will be implemented are not eligible.

## **NATIONAL PROGRAM INITIATIVES: Under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program - 2 initiatives for FY 2015**

**SEASONAL HIGH TUNNEL INITIATIVE-** The SHT a national initiative intended to provide financial and technical assistance to farmers who are interested in a Seasonal High Tunnel and management practices to extend their growing season.

Through this initiative producers may be eligible to develop and implement a plan/contract which includes a wide range of NRCS conservation practices related to *irrigation systems improvements (Drip), High tunnel systems (hoop houses), Cover Crops, Crop Rotations, Pest & Nutrient management, pollinators, other soil quality practices, and other practices* are also eligible for financial assistance through this initiative. Check with your local NRCS office to view batching periods

**ORGANIC and TRANSITION TO ORGANIC INITIATIVE-** A portion of EQIP funding in New Mexico is dedicated to conservation activities on operations that are organic or transitioning to organic. Agricultural producers who want to transition to organic farming (crop or livestock) or are currently certified as organic farmers may apply for EQIP under the Organic Initiative in each category. Financial and technical assistance is given.

Eligible practices include such measures as: *Drip irrigation, Cover Crops, Seasonal High Tunnels, Pest Management, Nutrient Management, Pollinators, Conservation Crop Rotation, Prescribed Grazing, Forage Harvest Management, and more.*

To be eligible for the Organic-In Transition or Organic Program, Applicants must meet these criteria:

- Be pursuing an organic certification or be in compliance with their organic certification. For more information on organic certification, please visit the National Organic Program (NOP) Web page.
- Must develop and carry out an Organic System Plan (OSP); carry out practices consistent with an OSP or be working with (OCC) - Organic Commodity Commission on developing an OSP.
- If you make under \$5000 in ag products you are exempt from certification.
- For SHT eligibilities, check with your local office for more details.

Call or Visit your local NRCS office-Natural Resources Conservation Service USDA or visit our website at: [www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov)

# EQIP BRIEF OVERVIEW

## ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM

- FINANCIAL & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
- ADDRESSES NATURAL RESOURCE CONCERNS  
(SWAPA+HE)

▲ Soil

▲ Water

▲ Animals

▲ Plants

▲ Air

▲ Humans

▲ Energy

# EQIP PROCESS

Ag Producer makes contact with NRCS



Conservation Questionnaire

Ineligible Land  
or  
Ineligible Producer

Eligible Land/  
Eligible Producer



Conservation  
Technical  
Assistance



Application w/all supporting documentation  
Objective Identified  
Plans & Designs Created  
Ranking  
Approval  
Implementation  
Certification  
Payment

# QUESTIONNAIRE

**Conservation Planning Questionnaire Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Assisted by:** \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information

Land Owner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Operator's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business or Individual: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Business DUNS: \_\_\_\_\_ Registered with Sam.gov: Yes or No LLC or Corp: \_\_\_\_\_

Tax ID: \_\_\_\_\_ EIN or SS (Last 4 digits only) Was is your Title w/business: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Physical Address/Location of Land:

\_\_\_\_\_

Names of all people who own the land or are associated with the operation of the farm: (use back if necessary/list last 4 of tax id next to name)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

General Operation Questions

How much in agricultural products is the operation producing each year? \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (more or less)

Have you applied for NRCS programs in the past? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, what year? \_\_\_\_\_

What Program? \_\_\_\_\_ Who assisted you? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you done any work with Soil & Water Conservation District? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been in operation? \_\_\_\_\_ How long have you been involved in farming/ranching? \_\_\_\_\_

Is your operation a farm or a ranch? \_\_\_\_\_ How many acres? \_\_\_\_\_

Are Farm and Tract Numbers established with FSA (Farm Service Agency)? \_\_\_\_\_

If Yes, what is the Farm Number(s)? \_\_\_\_\_ What is the Tract Number(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your current water delivery system?

Do you have to go under or through Railroad tracks, roads, or other government properties to use the water? \_\_\_\_\_ If Yes, Explain:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Crops: What type of crops are you producing? (Vegetables, Alfalfa, Grass/Hay, etc.)**

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When was the last time you irrigated the fields? \_\_\_\_\_ How often do you water? \_\_\_\_\_  
How do you water? (MRGCD, Acequia, Well, Ground Water Rights, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you apply pesticides? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you apply fertilizers? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you apply herbicides? \_\_\_\_\_  
Explain Yes Answers: (type, brands, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

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**Range/Pasture**

Do you raise livestock? \_\_\_\_\_ Type of livestock/breed? \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of Head? \_\_\_\_\_ How many pastures do you have? \_\_\_\_\_ Avg. Size: \_\_\_\_\_  
How many months are you grazing each pasture? \_\_\_\_\_ Is the pasture under any type of irrigation? \_\_\_\_\_  
Type of grazing management plan: \_\_\_\_\_ Continuous \_\_\_\_\_ Intensive Rotation \_\_\_\_\_ Scheduled Pasture Deferment

**Non-Industrial Forest Lands**

How many acres are you proposing? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have a Forest Management Plan? \_\_\_\_\_  
If applying for EQIP, are you engaged in livestock or agricultural production? \_\_\_\_\_

**OBJECTIVES**

What **major** problems do you see with your operation that you would like assistance with?

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What are your **overall** objectives on this land unit? (What would you like to see done (now/future)

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Are there particular agricultural practices you are interested in?

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Documents needed from producer? (For NRCS Office Use Only)

# Conservation Practices



## Seasonal High Tunnels

High tunnels are similar to greenhouses, except they are considered “passively heated.” That means they do not require electricity to heat – only sunlight. The plastic on the frame actually provides enough insulation to add up to 12 extra weeks to the growing season, depending on location. The inside of a high tunnel boasts its own microclimate, often producing crops of higher quality and quantity than those in traditional farm fields.



# Wildlife Habitat Improvements

The former Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) was folded into EQIP



# Structure for Water Control



# Irrigation Water Conveyance



A wide-angle photograph of a large, flat, brown field, likely a construction or agricultural site. The field is the central focus, extending to the horizon. In the background, there are several trees, some with green leaves and some bare, and a house with a white roof. A silver pickup truck is parked on the right side of the field. The sky is clear and blue. The text "Irrigation Land Leveling" is overlaid in the center of the image.

# Irrigation Land Leveling

# Fencing to split up pastures



# Livestock Drinkers



# Brush Management



# Water Development Storages



# Concrete Ditch



# NRCS Websites

NRCS has numerous websites and mobile applications that are rich in data on soils, water, air, energy, and other natural resources. View the list below and see more in-depth information on this page about these websites and apps.

## **Quick links - Soils**

[Soil Web](#)

[Web Soil Survey](#)

[Soil Data Access](#)

## **Quick links - Water**

[SNOTEL – Water Supply Data & Forecasting](#)

[NRCS National Water & Climate Center Climate Reports](#)

[NRCS National Water & Climate Center GIS Products](#)

## **Quick links - Plants**

[Plants Database](#)

## **Quick links - Air**

[COMET-VR](#)

[National Air Quality Site Assessment Tool](#)

## **Quick links - Energy**

[Energy Estimator](#)

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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# QUESTIONS



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