

NEWS RELEASE



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2008 Sign-Up Open for Conservation Work on Ag Lands

INDIANAPOLIS, October 10, 2007—Jane Hardisty, state conservationist for Indiana's USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced today that the sign up is under way for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for Fiscal Year 2008. EQIP offers financial and technical assistance for farmers to install structural practices or implement management practices on agricultural land. EQIP promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals.

Conservation funds are available for farmers engaged in row crop, livestock or other agricultural production. As a way to assure that EQIP assistance is available to all producers, Beginning farmers and limited resource farmers are eligible for higher conservation practice payments.

Hardisty points out that, applications for EQIP are accepted on a continuous basis. "Once we have the application in hand, our district conservationists rank the application using the producer's conservation plan. Producers who don't have a plan will get help from the district conservationist to develop one. Ranking is based on the natural resource concerns addressed in the producers' conservation plans. Applications that have conservation plans, and that are in our system on October 19, 2007, will be considered in the initial round of funding for EQIP 2008 dollars. Then every two weeks after the initial funding we will repeat the process until our 2008 EQIP allocation is exhausted. In 2007, we committed \$10.9 million in EQIP to conservation practices in Indiana. We expect EQIP funding to be about the same for the 2008 fiscal year, which began October 1st."

“This is a busy time for farmers, we know. But, there is conservation work that needs to be done. By getting contracts approved early, farmers will be ready to apply conservation practices this fall or in the spring,” says Hardisty.

Farmers are encouraged to apply as soon as possible for the 2008 EQIP funds. Applications that were not funded in previous years will need an updated application and updated conservation plan.

More information is readily available from NRCS at your local USDA Service Center, or on the internet at www.in.nrcs.usda.gov.

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