

## NEWS RELEASE



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### **USDA RELEASES ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO HELP DROUGHT-STRICKEN HOOSIERS**

INDIANAPOLIS, October 3, 2007—Jane Hardisty, state conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced today that Indiana will use Fiscal Year 2008 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds to provide assistance for livestock producers to address soil quality issues brought about by Indiana's drought-like conditions. The intent is to help producers in drought-stricken Indiana to manage alternative fall forages, including corn and soybean stubble.

Late in September, NRCS provided over \$159,000 of Fiscal Year 2007 EQIP funds to assist nearly 40 producers plant cover crops in a two-day period. Harold Thompson, assistant state conservationist for programs, stated, "Requests for the additional EQIP funds made late in the fiscal year far exceeded the available funds. The fact that nearly 40 producers took the time to apply for the funds in the short two-day time frame demonstrates how critical the need is for the EQIP funds to address soil quality issues associated with the loss of forage production."

Thompson also points out that we are facing a very short time frame to get cover crops seeded in favorable conditions. Most cover crops need to be seeded by mid to late October, depending on geographic location, to meet NRCS standards for optimal soil protection.

Recognizing the need to get the cover crops and associated practices installed in a timely fashion, Hardisty is granting a statewide practice waiver for cover crop seeding that will also include installation of temporary fencing and a temporary watering tank when used in conjunction with the cover crop. This waiver will allow producers to complete these practices before an EQIP contract is approved, but it does not guarantee that an application will be approved for funding. If a producer completes a practice without a waiver, then that practice would not be eligible for EQIP funding.

Producers can greatly protect soil quality, improve efficiency, and stretch forage supplies longer this fall if they use a managed approach to grazing their corn or soybean fields instead of turning livestock loose on the entire field for long periods of time. This system is similar to what producers use in managed grass systems, only on a temporary basis. Producers would need to

fence off two to three acres of corn stalks or bean stubble at one time, and provide water for livestock grazing those small areas.

Producers are encouraged to contact their local NRCS office as soon as possible to file an EQIP application and receive a copy of the statewide waiver granted by the NRCS state conservationist. Additional questions can be directed to the NRCS state office at (317) 290-3200.

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