

## NEWS RELEASE



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### USDA Makes Additional Funds Available for Farmers

INDIANAPOLIS, July 16, 2008—Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer announced an additional \$200 million will be made available through the 2008 Farm Bill to help farmers nationwide to solve natural resource problems through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers EQIP, which provides financial and technical assistance to producers.

"These additional funds will help our Indiana farmers in addressing critical natural resource issues," said NRCS State Conservationist Jane Hardisty. "With this announcement, Indiana will receive \$9 million through EQIP that will help us fund a large number of the 402 EQIP applications in backlog."

Voluntary incentive-based programs like EQIP are the key to helping producers meet their conservation goals and provide the public with important benefits such as cleaner water, improved air quality, healthy soils, and abundant wildlife.

Hardisty said, "Because of the June 2008 floods, many of our farmers in Indiana are facing serious damage on their land. With the additional EQIP funds, \$1 million will be applied to repair existing EQIP conservation practices that were damaged by the devastating floods. This money could not have come at a better time."

EQIP, which was reauthorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, helps farmers and ranchers improve agricultural production while protecting environmental quality. EQIP helps producers install or implement structural and management practices on private agricultural land.

Limited resource producers and beginning farmers and ranchers may be eligible for higher rates in EQIP to address their natural resource issues. USDA can provide incentive payments to encourage producers to adopt conservation practices that would result in extra environmental benefits.

For additional information about EQIP, please visit  
<http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/2008eqip/eqip2008.html>.

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