



Indiana NRCS Announces EQIP Application Deadline

Indianapolis, IN, September 27, 2017—Indiana’s agricultural producers who want to improve natural resources and address concerns on their land are encouraged to sign up for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) through the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Jane Hardisty, NRCS State Conservationist, announced that December 15, 2017 will be the EQIP application deadline in Indiana.

“While we take EQIP applications throughout the year, applications received after December 15th will be considered in future announced application rounds. I encourage producers with resource concerns on their land to submit an application by the deadline,” Hardisty explains.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program available for agricultural producers. Through EQIP, NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to install conservation practices that reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, improve soil health, improve water and air quality, and create wildlife habitat.

Many applicants are interested in using funds to address soil erosion and water quality issues on their land; however, funds are also available for pasture and grazing land, confined livestock operations, organic producers, drainage water management, invasive plant control, and wildlife habitat improvement. Also included in this sign up are several state and national initiatives including:

- **National Organic Initiative:** NRCS provides financial payments and technical assistance to help producers implement conservation measures in keeping with organic production. Beginning, limited resource, and socially disadvantaged producers may obtain additional assistance.
- **National On-Farm Energy Initiative:** NRCS provides agricultural producers with technical and financial assistance that quantifies how energy can be used more efficiently to reduce input costs, increase productivity and reduce air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions. This initiative only offers assistance for 128 Conservation Activity Plans-Ag Energy Management Plans (AgEMPs) and certain energy conservation practices.
- **NRCS Western Lake Erie Basin Initiative (WLEB):** NRCS and partners work with producers and landowners to implement voluntary conservation practices that improve water quality, restore wetlands, enhance wildlife habitat and sustain agricultural profitability in the Western Lake Erie basin.
- **Monarch Butterfly Habitat Development Initiative (EQIP):** The Monarch Butterfly Habitat Development Project is a multi-state effort focused on increasing monarch habitat on private lands through plantings of milkweed and nectaring forms as well as managing pesticide use in proximity to monarch habitat.
- **Joint Chief’s Landscape Restoration Initiative:** This project targets forest land to improve conservation and restoration of oak communities. Funding is available in the following counties: Bartholomew, Brown, Clark, Crawford, Dubois, Floyd, Greene, Harrison, Jackson, Lawrence, Martin, Monroe, Morgan, Orange, Owen, Perry, Putnam, Washington.

- Working Lands for Wildlife Initiative (EQIP): The goal of this initiative is to convert tall fescue and other non-native forages to native grasses and forbs and develop prescribed grazing plans to address the habitat needs of bobwhite quail and associated grassland/shrub land species. This category is available statewide on land which overlaps one of the Indiana DNR C.O.R.R.I.D.O.R.S. priority areas.
- Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI): NRCS and partners work with producers and landowners to implement voluntary conservation practices that improve water quality, restore wetlands, enhance wildlife habitat and sustain agricultural profitability in the Great Lakes.
- NRCS Landscape Conservation efforts:
 - Resource Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) projects: RCP promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through the following program contracts or easement agreements.
 - Tri-State Western Lake Erie Basin Phosphorus Reduction Initiative (Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Noble, Steuben and Wells Counties)
 - Southern Indiana Young Forest Initiative
 - Big Pine Watershed Partnership (Benton, White, Warren, and Tippecanoe Counties)
 - The Michigan/Indiana St. Joseph River Conservation Partnership (Elkhart, LaGrange, Steuben, Noble, Kosciusko, DeKalb and St. Joseph Counties)
 - Indiana Watershed Initiative: The University Of Notre Dame (Kosciusko, Newton, Jasper and Benton Counties)
 - Improving Working Lands for Monarch Butterflies Partnership (statewide)
 - Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI): NRCS and partners work with producers and landowners to implement voluntary conservation practices that improve water quality, restore wetlands, enhance wildlife habitat and sustain agricultural profitability in the Mississippi River basin.
 - Little Wea Watershed (Tippecanoe County)
 - Big Pine Creek Watershed – Headwaters (Benton and White Counties)
 - Big Pine Creek Watershed - Brumm and Darby (Benton County)
 - Big Cicero Creek Watershed (Boone, Clinton, Hamilton and Tipton Counties)
 - Busseron Creek Watershed (Sullivan and Vigo Counties)
 - Fish Creek Watershed (Greene, Monroe and Owen Counties)
 - Plummer Creek Watershed (Green County)

In addition, EQIP offers financial assistance for payment of practices and conservation activities involving the development of plans appropriate for the eligible land. The conservation practice associated with plan development is known as a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP). EQIP applications for CAP are not required to be submitted by December 15th; they may be submitted, accepted and considered for funding at any time. Funding is based on dollars available and meeting eligibility requirements.

Producers interested in EQIP should submit a signed application to the local NRCS field office. Applications submitted by the December 15th deadline will be evaluated for the funding period submitted. Participants in EQIP must meet eligibility requirements. NRCS staff will work with producers to determine eligibility and complete necessary worksheets and rankings in order for the applicant to compete for funding.

For more information about EQIP and other technical and financial assistance available through Indiana NRCS conservation programs, visit

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/programs/financial/eqip/> or contact your county's District Conservationist <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/contact/local/>.

#

Contacts:

Jane Hardisty, State Conservationist, 317-295-5801 (jane.hardisty@in.usda.gov)

Gerald Roach, ASTC Farm Bill Programs, 317-285-5820 (jerry.roach@in.usda.gov)

Becky Fletcher, State Public Affairs Specialist, 317-295-5825 (rebecca.fletcher@in.usda.gov)