



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Massachusetts State Office

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Federal conservation cost-share assistance available to Massachusetts farmers

AMHERST, MA— Massachusetts farmers who would like to address soil and water conservation concerns on their land may apply for federal cost-share assistance through February 15, 2007. A total of \$4 million in financial assistance is available statewide this year through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Farmers are encouraged to call or visit their local USDA service center to schedule a time to complete the necessary paperwork and begin the conservation planning process. USDA service center locations are listed on-line at <http://offices.usda.gov> or in the phone book under Federal Government, U.S. Department of Agriculture. General program information is available on the NRCS Massachusetts website at www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov.

EQIP helps farmers improve production while protecting environmental quality by addressing such concerns as soil quality, grazing land conservation, irrigation efficiency and comprehensive nutrient management. With financial and technical assistance from NRCS, farmers will promote environmental quality on farmland, address water quality and quantity challenges, and protect valuable fish and wildlife habitat.

In Massachusetts, NRCS also offers special pilot initiatives for greenhouse irrigation efficiency projects in Essex, Middlesex, Norfolk and Bristol counties and shellfish aquaculture management in Barnstable County.

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“USDA is committed to providing conservation tools and resources to help Massachusetts farmers ensure that their land remains healthy and productive,” said State Conservationist Christine S. Clarke. “NRCS field staff are available to help farmers develop a conservation plan to address their resource concerns.”

The Natural Resources Conservation Service is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment. NRCS has seven Massachusetts field offices in Greenfield, Hadley, Holden, Hyannis, Pittsfield, Westford, and West Wareham, which work with local conservation districts and other partners to serve farmers and landowners throughout the commonwealth.

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NOTE TO EDITORS AND REPORTERS:

If you would like to include local contact information for your readers, please cite the office below that serves your area. If you have any questions, please call the contact above or your local office below. For additional news releases, background information and future story ideas, visit <http://www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov/news>.

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