



# Environmental Quality Incentives Program

United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Massachusetts

## 2008 EQIP Participation and Eligibility

Participation in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is voluntary. The applicant develops an EQIP plan of operations that serves the basis for the EQIP contract for the agricultural land to be treated. NRCS provides participants with technical and financial assistance to apply needed conservation practices. To be eligible to participate in EQIP, an applicant must meet the following criteria:

### Producer Eligibility

To participate in EQIP, an applicant must be an individual, entity or joint operation and meet the following criteria:

- Be an **agricultural producer** with an annual minimum of \$1,000 of agricultural products produced and/or sold from the operation for two of the last five years.
- Have an interest in the farming operation associated with the land being enrolled;
- Have control of the land for the term of the proposed contract;
- Be in compliance with provisions for protecting tenants and sharecroppers, including sharing EQIP payments on a fair and equitable basis;
- Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985;
- Be within the \$450,000 limitation in EQIP payments received from 2002 or newer contracts;
- Be in compliance with the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) requirements (*a person or entity is not eligible if the three-year average AGI exceeds \$2.5 million with less than 75% derived from farming or forestry sources*).
- Producers with **forestland** are exempt from the \$1,000 minimum annual sales, but must meet the other criteria, and have one of the following:
  - a forest management plan or forest stewardship plan;
  - a prior record of timber harvest or revenue from timber sales;
  - proof of capital investment on forest practices such as tree plantings, forest stand improvement, site preparation, prescribe burning, or other agro-forestry practices, other agricultural commodities or other crops used for subsistence;
- Federal and state governments and political subdivisions are **NOT** eligible; however land that they own may be eligible if leased to an eligible agricultural producer.

### Land Eligibility

The land being offered for enrollment in EQIP must meet the following criteria:

- Be used in agricultural or livestock production;
- If applying for irrigation practices, the land must have been irrigated for 2 of the last 5 years;
- Meet any of the following land ownership and control criteria:
  - Privately owned;
  - Public land where all of the following apply:
    - under private control for the contract period and included in the participant's operating unit;
    - where installation of conservation practices will contribute to an improvement in the identified natural resource concern
    - where the conservation practices will directly benefit agricultural land owned by the participant;
    - where there is written authorization from the government or tribal landowner to apply the conservation practices
  - Tribal, allotted, ceded, or Indian land.
- Land enrolled in other USDA programs cannot receive EQIP benefits for the same practice on the same land.

## Applications

EQIP applications are accepted on a continuing basis throughout the year. Cutoff dates are scheduled to allow for ranking, prioritization and selection of applications for funding.

All applicants wishing to participate in the current funding round must submit the forms listed below to the receiving office no later than the close of business on **Tuesday, November 13, 2007.**

Farmers should call or visit their local USDA Service Center as soon as possible to begin the conservation planning process and complete the necessary paperwork.

### Summary of Forms Required at Time of Application:

Criteria	Forms	Title	Where to File
Program Application	NRCS-CPA-1200	Conservation Program Application	NRCS
Contract Terms & Conditions	NRCS-CPA-1202 Appendix	Appendix to Form NRCS-CPA-1202 Conservation Program Contract	NRCS
Compliance with HELC/WC	AD-1026	Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification	FSA
Compliance with AGI	CCC-526	Payment Eligibility Average Adjusted Gross Income Certification	FSA
Payment Eligibility Documentation	CCC-501A	Member's Information	FSA
Interest in Operation	CCC-502	Farm Operating Plan for Payment Eligibility	FSA

**Notes:**

<sup>1)</sup> The application must be signed by the individual receiving the program payment or the legally authorized representative of an entity or joint operation.

<sup>2)</sup> Depending on the type of operation, signature authority documentation can include articles of partnership, affidavits, valid power of attorney, court orders of appointment, certified evidence of probate, last will & testament, trust agreement, letter of authorization/administration, charter, bylaws or resolution.

### USDA-NRCS Massachusetts Field Office Locations

**BARNSTABLE FIELD OFFICE**

270 Communications Way, 1G  
Hyannis, MA 02601  
508-771-6476  
Serving **Cape Cod and the Islands**

**GREENFIELD FIELD OFFICE**

55 Federal Street, Room 290  
Greenfield, MA 01301  
413-772-0384 ext 3  
Serving **Franklin County**

**HADLEY FIELD OFFICE**

195 Russell Street, Suite B6  
Hadley, MA 01035  
413-585-1000 ext 3  
Serving **Hampden and Hampshire counties**

**HOLDEN FIELD OFFICE**

52 Boyden Road, Room 10  
Holden, MA 01520  
508-829-4477 ext 3  
Serving **Worcester County**

**PITTSFIELD FIELD OFFICE**

78 Center Street, Suite 206,  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
413-443-1776 ext 3  
Serving **Berkshire County**

**WESTFORD FIELD OFFICE**

319 Littleton Road, Suite 205  
Westford, MA 01886  
978-692-1904 ext 3  
Serving **Essex, Middlesex and Suffolk counties**

**WEST WAREHAM FIELD OFFICE**

15 Cranberry Highway  
West Wareham, MA 02576  
508-295-5151 ext 2  
Serving **Bristol, Norfolk and Plymouth counties**

**County Offices**

USDA Service Centers are located around the country. They are designed to be a single location where customers can access the services provided by the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Rural Development agencies. [Locate the Service Center closest to you at: http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locate/r/app](http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locate/r/app)