



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): Incorporating Innovative Technology

FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

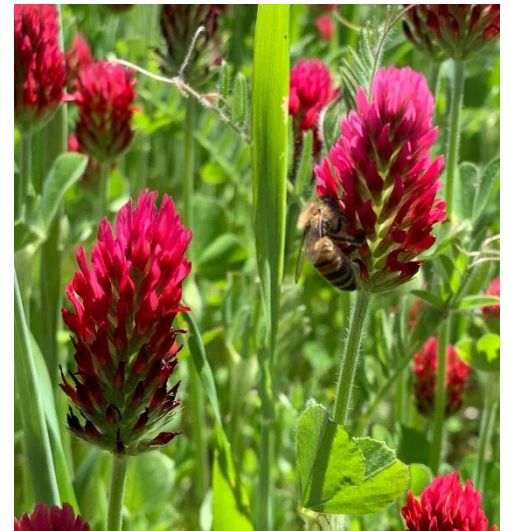
Introduction to USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Our Mission: We deliver conservation solutions so agricultural producers can protect natural resources and feed a growing world.

Our Vision: A world of clean and abundant water, healthy soils, resilient landscapes, and thriving agricultural communities through voluntary conservation.

Supporting America's Working Lands

Through one-on-one, personalized advice, we work with voluntary producers and communities to find the best solutions to meet their unique conservation and business goals.



Farmers.gov provides 24/7 access to USDA Programs and Services

- What can you find on Farmers.gov
 - Locate a local USDA Service Center.
 - Secure access to USDA records and maps for your land using your private account.
 - Explore conservation concerns.
 - Request conservation assistance from NRCS.
 - Other forms of assistance from the Farm Service Agency.

Farmers.gov Tools

<p>Service Center Locator Get business help through staff from the Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or Rural Development. Also available in Español. Find your Service Center</p>	<p>Farm Loan Tools Learn about the farm loans that might be right for you and get instructional help with the application forms. Find a Loan</p>	<p>Your Farmers.gov Account Access secure self-service business tools like managing loans, viewing farm records and e-signing documents. Create a New Account</p>
<p>Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool Learn about USDA disaster assistance that might be right for you by completing five steps. Find Assistance</p>	<p>Create Your H-2A Visa Checklist Answer a few questions to get a checklist of requirements, fees, forms, and a timeline built around your H-2A hiring needs. Create Your Checklist</p>	<p>Conservation Concerns Tool Learn about conservation issues that might impact the productivity of your working land, then partner with us on solutions. Try the Tool</p>

Farmers.gov Account Tools

Farm Records Mapping
Your [farmers.gov account](#) allows you to access and export your FSA farm records, maps and common land units on demand.

- [Farm Records Mapping Factsheet](#)
- [Farm Records Mapping Video Tutorials](#)

Conservation
Use your [farmers.gov account](#) to request conservation assistance, e-sign documents and track your conservation practices and contracts.

- [Conservation Features Fact Sheet](#)
- [Conservation User Guide](#)
- [Conservation How-To Video Tutorials](#)

Switch Profiles to Manage Another Account
Login and act on behalf of another farming operation to use tools, sign documents, and access records using your [farmers.gov account](#).

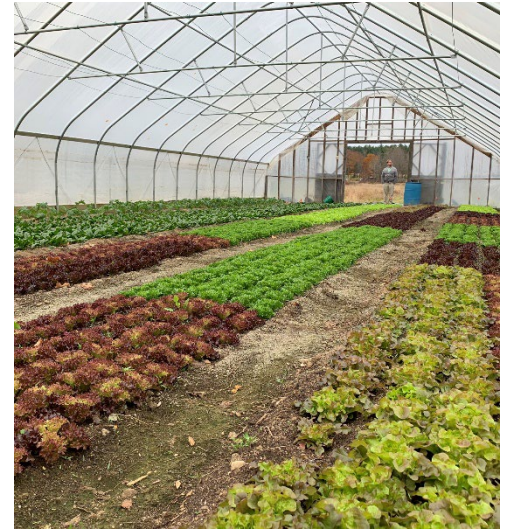
Meet NRCS Locally

- All NRCS services and programs are delivered locally through USDA Service Centers.
- Find a local USDA service center using this link:
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/find-a-service-center>



Conservation Programs Overview

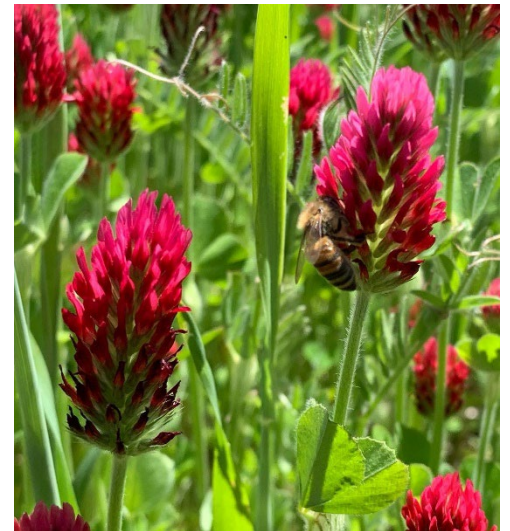
- Primary NRCS Conservation Programs
 - Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
 - Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
 - Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
- Provide incentive payments to implement planned Conservation Practices
- Typically, program contracts are with individual farms, farmers, or private landowners



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Three variations:

- **EQIP Classic** – For eligible ag landowners, operators and forestland owners.
 - Offers payments for conservation practices through a contract that can be up to 10 years.
 - Typical contracts are much shorter than 10 years.
- **EQIP Conservation Incentives** – 5-year contracts for certain conservation practices focusing more on land management practices.
- **Conservation Innovation Grants** (CIG Classic and On-Farm Trials) – Grants to eligible individuals or entities to help facilitate the adoption of new but proven conservation technologies.



Where Does EQIP Fit?

Improving resource use and production outcomes on:

- Crop, livestock, and non-industrial private forestry operations
- Large and small operations
- Rural and urban agricultural operations
- Aquaculture operations
- And more!



Basic Program Eligibility

- Applicant Eligibility:
 - Adjusted Gross Income requirements
 - Filing a Farm Operating Plan
 - Highly Erodible Land/Wetland Conservation requirements
 - Farm records
- Land Eligibility
 - Land must generally be agriculture land (cropland, non-industrial private forest land, pasture, range, farmstead, associated agriculture land).
 - If enrolling rented land, applicant must maintain control of the land throughout the program contract period.
- Practice/Resource Concern
 - A conservation plan is developed to identify natural resource concerns and one or more practices that can address the resource concern.
 - Producers may choose to implement one or more practices from the conservation plan through a contract.

Conservation Practices

- EQIP is designed to implement conservation practices
 - Each conservation practice has a “Standard” that is reviewed and updated periodically.
 - New practices are often released through an “Interim Conservation Practice” – State or national.
 - Many practice standards support multiple application techniques to address a wide array of resource issues in various landscape settings and to meet the producers’ needs.

Program Payments

- Payments are based on estimated costs associated with labor, materials, and foregone income in each State
- Payments are typically made upon practice completion
- Advance payments may be provided to historically underserved producers
- Technical Assistance payments support the use of technical service providers

Program Payments: Materials vs. Equipment

Materials

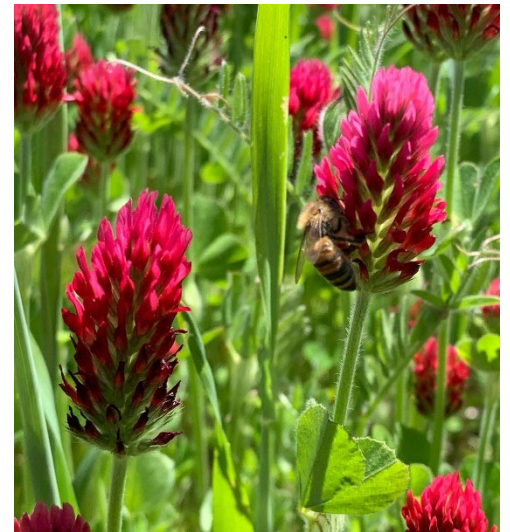
- Components used to make, develop, or implement a practice
- Examples: sand, gravel, grass seed, soil amendments, plants, pipes, concrete, sensors, water measurement devices
- Associated costs are included in the “materials” cost category of the payment schedules

Equipment for installation

- Tools, machinery, or similar items needed to implement the practice
- Examples: trucks, tractors, other vehicles, large farm equipment
- Covered costs include the expense of equipment that is owned, rented, or hired while implementing a conservation practice. NRCS will not cover costs associated with purchasing equipment.

Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

- Competitive grants that drive innovation in agricultural resource conservation approaches and technologies
- National and State CIG programs
- Newly authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill: On-Farm Trials to support more widespread adoption of innovation
- Annual national CIG funding average: \$20 million
- 711 CIGs awarded since 2004
- \$286.7 million in national CIG funding since 2004



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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992.

Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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