

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

A Voluntary Program for Farmers
and Ranchers

AgStar Conference

St. Louis, Mo

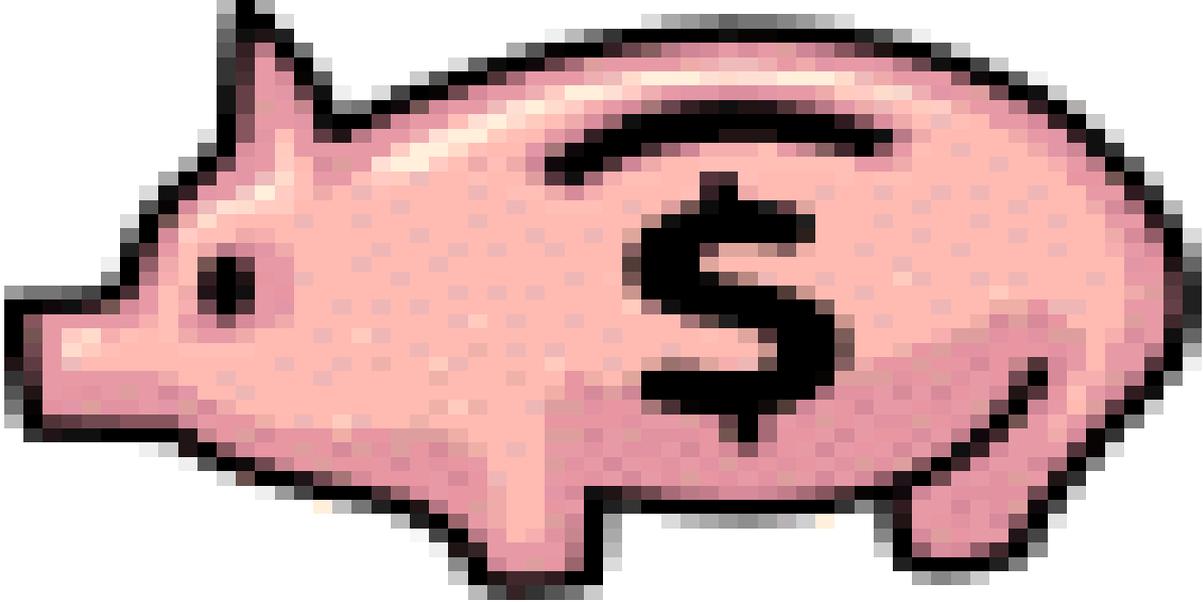
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Barry L. Kintzer, P.E.

USDA-NRCS

What is EQIP?

- Conservation program for private land
- Objective: Improve soil, water, air and related natural resources
- Promotes agriculture and conservation
- Assistance to producers



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE



Base EQIP funding

- \$387M for 2002
- \$695M for 2003
- \$1B for 2004
- \$1.2B for 2005 and 2006
- \$1.3B for 2007

NRCS Technical Assistance



Certified Private Consultants (Technical Service Providers - TSPs)



Technical Service Providers

- Certification program
- Supplements NRCS staff
- Cost of TSP may be included in EQIP contract

What is EQIP?

- Conservation program for private land
- Objective: Improve soil, water, air and related natural resources
- Promotes agriculture and conservation
- Assistance to producers
 - Financial
 - Technical
- Utilizes structural, vegetative or management practices
- Helps producers meet regulatory requirements

Develop Plan to Address Resource Concern



Comprehensive Nutrient Management Planning



Component Practices Waste Storage Facility



Component Practices Nutrient Management



Component Practice Strip Cropping





EQIP Process

- National NRCS responsibilities
 - Establish rules and regs
 - Provide program direction and guidance
 - Allocate \$ to the states
 - Assess program benefits
 - Conduct reviews of state programs

EQIP National Priorities

- Reduction of nonpoint source pollution
- Reduction of emissions
- Reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation from unacceptable levels
- Promotion of at-risk species habitat conservation

EQIP Process

- State NRCS responsibilities
 - Federal \$ allocated to states
 - State Technical Committee
 - Made up of local, state or regional governmental authorities and other stakeholders
 - Propose priority concerns and ranking criteria
 - Establishes state eligibility criteria and ranking criteria (all visible on our National Website – www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EQIP)

EQIP Process

- Local Working Group-Makes recommendations to District Conservationists on
 - Local resource concerns
 - Eligible incentive and cost share practices
 - Cost share rates, not to exceed 75%

EQIP Process

- Contracts developed and written at local level
 - Producer applies at NRCS
 - Local NRCS staff determines resource concerns
 - Local NRCS staff develops Conservation Plan with producer
 - Competition for \$ is local
 - Local NRCS provides technical assistance

EQIP Eligibility

- Be an Agricultural Producer
- Be in compliance with highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions

EQIP Application Process

- Landowner submits application to local NRCS Office
- NRCS develops an EQIP plan of operations
- Application is ranked according to plan
- Applications approved by ranking to limit of funds allocated

EQIP Application Process

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- Contract signed by landowner and NRCS to obligate funds
- Landowner also signs a contract appendix agreeing to maintain conservation practices according to practice life spans.

EQIP Challenges

- Only 1 out of every 6 EQIP applications has typically been funded
- Increased cost share payment limitation may even further reduce the number of applications approved
- Utilize other sources of state and local funding to further leverage EQIP funds

OUR MISSION

To address priority natural resource concerns

Help producers meet environmental regulation

While promoting agricultural production