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TREE FARM BULLETIN

Natural Resources Conservation Service 2014 Farm Bill - Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers and forest landowners to plan and implement conservation practices that improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related natural resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland.

Who can apply:

Owners of land in agricultural or forest production or persons who are engaged in livestock, agricultural or forest production on eligible land and that have a natural resource concern on that land may apply to participate in EQIP. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pastureland, non-industrial private forestland and other farm or ranch lands.

Eligible applicants must:

- Be agricultural producer (person, legal entity, or joint operation who has an interest in the agricultural operation, or who is engaged in agricultural production or forestry management).
- Control or own eligible land.
- Comply with adjusted gross income (AGI) for less than \$900,000 averaged over the last 3 years.
Note: Federally recognized Native American Indian Tribes or Alaska Native corporations are exempt from the AGI payment limitations.
- Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements.
- Develop an NRCS EQIP plan of operations that addresses at least one natural resource concern.

Additional program requirements may apply.

How EQIP works:

Financial assistance payments are made on completed practices

Financial assistance payments through EQIP are made to eligible producers, to implement approved conservation practices on eligible land or to help producers develop Conservation Activity Plans (CAP) to address specific land use issues. Payments are made on completed practices or activities identified in an EQIP contract that meet NRCS standards. Payment rates are set each fiscal year and are attached to the EQIP contract when it is approved. Payment rates for each conservation practice can be found at each NRCS State Programs website.

Historically underserved producers may be eligible for higher payment rates

Historically underserved producers (limited resource farmers/ranchers, beginning farmers/ranchers, socially disadvantaged producers, Indian Tribes and veteran farmer or ranchers) who self-certify on Form NRCS-CPA-1200, Conservation Program Application are eligible for a higher practice payment rate to support implementation of contracted conservation practices and activities. Self-certified socially disadvantaged farmer/rancher, beginning farmers/ranchers, and veteran farmer/rancher producers may elect to be evaluated in special EQIP funding pools. More information can be found on the State Programs website or from your local NRCS office.

Payment and contract limitations

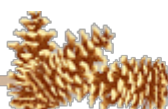
Payments received by producers through EQIP contracts under the 2014 Farm Bill may not exceed \$450,000 for all EQIP contracts. Federally recognized Indian Tribes are not subject to payment or EQIP contract limitations.

Producers must submit a complete program application by December 7th, 2018. They must also establish “farm records”, and other documentation to support eligibility to be considered for financial assistance through EQIP. Applications submitted after this date will be evaluated and considered for funding during later funding opportunities.

How to apply for EQIP:

To apply for EQIP, visit your local USDA Service Center. You can also apply on-line using the Conservation Client Gateway found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getstarted>.

If you would like to be considered for funding in 2019, your application must be completed and submitted to your local NRCS office by close of business on December 7th, 2018.



1) FROM THE CHAIR - GIVING TO NEW MEXICO

As I noted in a previous article, serving as chair to the New Mexico Tree Farm Committee has been one of my most cherished experiences. Elections for all four board positions (Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary) will be held at our December 12th, 2018 meeting. This is an opportunity to get involved in one of the most important human endeavors in our state. We work closely with State Forestry, as private landowners, to restore and maintain our forests. Our shared goal is to promote healthy forests, preserve wildlife habitat and protect of our state's watersheds. Further, serving on the board is exactly that – serving. It is the chance to give back to the people of New Mexico through meaningful and measurable leadership. I hope to see you in December. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me - *Matthew Silva*.

2) COMMITTEE MEETING AND COMMITTEE ELECTION!

All Tree Farmers are invited and encouraged to attend our 3rd New Mexico Tree Farm Committee Meeting of the year (three held annually). ***In addition to our usual agenda, we will be electing members for the positions of Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary.*** Please join us at 1:30 pm on Wednesday, December 12th, 2018 at the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish office located at 3841 Midway Place NE, Albuquerque, NM. Come out and hear what other tree farmers have been up to and share your tree farm accomplishments with the group. We look forward to visiting with you. If you have any questions, please contact Arnie Friedt at arnie.friedt@state.nm.us

3) BUY, SELL OR TRADE

Are you looking for forestry related equipment to buy (i.e. chipper, splitter, chainsaw, etc.)? Or, do you own forestry related equipment you would like to sell or trade? Forestry related equipment only, please, no homes or land. We would like to help you make the connection with other New Mexico Tree Farmers. Provide us with a description of the equipment, price, photo and contact information and we will post it in the New Mexico Tree Farm Bulletin. If you would like us to help you make the connection, please provide information to Arnie Friedt at arnie.friedt@state.nm.us

4) COMMUNITY CORNER

If your community is having a forestry related public event let us know the details and we would be delighted to promote your event in the New Mexico Tree Farm Bulletin. Give us the event details, Who, What, Where and When with contact information and we will include in our monthly bulletin. If you would like us to help you promote your event, please provide information to Arnie Friedt at arnie.friedt@state.nm.us

5) E-MAIL INSTEAD OF SNAIL MAIL

Would you prefer to receive your Tree Farm Bulletin by e-mail instead of snail mail? If so, contact Doug Boykin at doug.boykin@state.nm.us and provide him with your contact information. By receiving your Tree Farm Bulletin by e-mail our operating costs are reduced. Thank you for considering this option.

