



**NEWS**

*For Immediate Release*

**Deadline for popular conservation program set for August 13**

SPOKANE, Wash. (June 21, 2010) – Agricultural producers have until August 13 to apply for financial and technical assistance through Washington’s most popular conservation program, USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced today.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary, technical and financial assistance program designed to help farmers improve irrigation efficiency; manage nutrient run-off and/or animal waste; improve the health of native plant communities; and reduce soil loss. In most instances, producers who participate in the program pay for roughly half of the costs of the conservation measures or practices.

The August 13 signup deadline is for Washington’s general EQIP funding. According to the NRCS, there will be additional ranking deadlines later in the year for some of the EQIP special initiatives such as funding specifically for Organic Producers, funding for Conservation Activity Plans and possibly others.

“EQIP has become NRCS’ primary conduit in providing conservation assistance to producers on Washington’s working lands,” Asst. State Conservationist Dave Brown said. “Applicants who want to be considered for a fiscal year 2011 EQIP contract will need to have a signed application on file by August 13,” he said.

Based on an estimate of funding availability, selected applicants will work with NRCS staff to develop conservation plans that serve as the basis for their EQIP contracts.

In 2009, Washington agricultural producers qualified for more than \$13 million in financial assistance through the program, according to the NRCS.

Brown said that while NRCS programs operate on a year-round signup basis, and producers can file applications at any time, periodic ranking deadlines are established so applications on file at that time can be evaluated for the next available funding allocation.

Interested agricultural producers are encouraged to contact their local USDA service center office or check the agency’s web site at [www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov) for more information.

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