



The Maine Department of Agriculture is partnering with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to inform fruit and vegetable growers of opportunities available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

## What is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program?

The NRCS offers the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) as a voluntary conservation program that supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, growers may receive financial and technical assistance in adopting more ecologically beneficial pest management practices.

## Eligibility

Any agricultural producer engaged in livestock or crop production on eligible land may apply for EQIP. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pasture, and private non-industrial forestland. In order to be eligible to sign up for EQIP, the applicant must be determined to be an eligible producer by NRCS.

The land offered for EQIP must also be determined eligible by NRCS. Eligible land is land that has a resource concern identified by a certified conservation planner that can be addressed through application of the conservation practices eligible for the sign up period.

## How to Apply

### ✓ Contact your local Farm Service Agency to determine your eligibility.

If you are a new USDA program applicant, please contact your local Farm Service Agency office, located at the USDA Service Center, for information on eligibility requirements. If you have been a USDA program participant in the past, please contact your local USDA Service Center office to review and update information.

### ✓ Apply for financial assistance.

Contact your local NRCS field office, located at the USDA Service Center, and apply for financial assistance. Application for EQIP financial assistance contracts may be submitted at any time. There are typically one or two application evaluation and ranking periods each year. The number of applications funded in each evaluation and ranking period is limited by availability of funds.

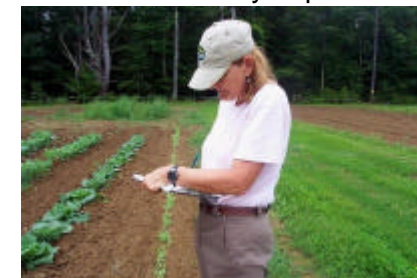
Financial assistance is NOT a grant. You initiate and pay for all conservation treatments specified in the NRCS contract. Once those activities are certified as complete and as meeting NRCS standards and specifications, NRCS will reimburse you based on payment rates established in the contract.

The EQIP financial assistance agreement lasts from one to ten years from the date the contract is signed. Contract length is based on the practice implementation schedule. Under the agreement, you agree to maintain the contracted practices.

### ✓ Work with your NRCS field office to develop a conservation plan.

To be considered for funding during an evaluation and ranking period, your application must be supported by a

completed conservation plan that reflects your decision to address identified natural resource issues by implementing eligible EQIP practices. Contact your NRCS field office to sign up for assistance in completing a conservation plan. This assistance is offered at no cost to you.



A conservation plan assesses resource concerns (soil, water, air, plants, and animals) and identifies conservation practices that are eligible for EQIP or similar programs. The plan describes your goals and objectives that address those concerns and lists ways that will promote stewardship, yet maintain farm productivity.

Your conservation plan may include integrated pest management activities such as insect trapping, scouting, record keeping, trap cropping, row covers, or biological control under the Pest Management Practice Standard. A conservation plan may also include other NRCS practices.

To get started, you will need copies of:

- Pest and nutrient management records.
- A list of areas where you have conservation concerns.
- A list of crops and rotation schedules, if applicable.

### ✓ Submit your application.

Once you have completed the conservation planning process with NRCS field staff, submit your application to NRCS. It will be ranked with other applications in Maine based on NRCS Field Office Technical Guide resource concerns and quality criteria. Higher priority will be given to applications that use cost-effective conservation practices; address national, state, and local priority resource concerns; and provide long lasting, environmental benefit.

## Contract Obligation

Applications chosen for funding will receive a financial obligation based on current fiscal year payment rates developed for eligible EQIP practices. Under the contract, participants agree to install or implement contracted practices according to NRCS Standards and Specifications and to maintain the practices for a specified life-span period. Participants also agree to allow NRCS employees access for providing technical assistance, certifying practice completion, and performing annual contract compliance reviews.

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**For more information about Integrated Pest Management:**  
University of Maine Cooperative Extension  
Pest Management Office  
<http://pmo.umext.maine.edu/default.htm>  
Or call 1-800-287-0279

Maine Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources,  
Integrated Pest Management Program  
<http://www.maine.gov/agriculture/pi/pestsurvey/ipm/ipm.htm>  
Or call 207-287-7616

**For more information about EQIP:**  
[www.me.nrcs.usda.gov/programs](http://www.me.nrcs.usda.gov/programs)  
Or an NRCS field office near you (list of offices on back).

Information in this brochure is adapted from: *Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in Maine*, by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

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<http://blog.americanfeast.com/images/USDA&20Veggies.jpg>

Maine Department of Agriculture,  
Food and Rural Resources  
Division of Plant Industry  
IPM Program  
28 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333  
207-287-7616



### Androscoggin/ Sagadahoc Counties

254 Goddard Road  
Lewiston, ME 04241  
207-753-9400

### Aroostook County

**Central Aroostook**  
735 Main Street, Suite #3  
Presque Isle, ME 04769  
207-764-4153

**Southern Aroostook**  
304 North Street  
Houlton, ME 04730  
207-532-2087

**St. John Valley**  
139 Market Street  
Suite 106  
Fort Kent, ME 04743  
207-834-3311

Cumberland/  
York Counties  
306 U.S. Route 1, Suite A1  
Scarborough, ME 04074  
207-883-0159

Franklin County  
107 Park Street  
Farmington, ME 04938  
207-778-4767

Hancock County  
190 Bangor Road  
Ellsworth, ME 04605  
207-667-8663

## NRCS Field Offices in Maine

Kennebec County  
Central Maine Commerce Ctr  
21 Enterprise Drive, #1  
Augusta, ME 04330  
207-622-7847

Knox/Lincoln Counties  
191 Camden Road  
Warren, ME 04864  
207-273-2005

Oxford County  
1570 Main Street, Suite #10  
Oxford, ME 04270  
207-743-5789

Penobscot County  
1423 Broadway, Suite #2  
Bangor, ME 04401  
207-947-6622

Piscataquis County  
42 Pine Crest Drive  
Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426  
207-564-2321

Somerset County  
12 High Street, Suite #3  
Skowhegan, ME 04976  
207-474-8324

Waldo County  
266 Waterville Road  
Belfast, ME 04915  
207-338-1964

Washington County  
Federal Building and  
Post Office  
51 Court Street  
Machias, ME 04654  
207-255-3995

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**Maine Department of  
Agriculture, Food and  
Rural Resources**



**Fruit and  
Vegetable  
Growers!!**

**Looking for financial assistance  
to improve your farming  
practices?**

**A Guide to NRCS  
Environmental Quality  
Incentive Program (EQIP)**

**March 2008**