



A Quality Environment

DICKINSON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SPIRIT LAKE, IOWA 51360 712-336-3782, EXT. 3

MAY 2009

EQIP Signup Continues for Dickinson County Ag Producers

Second round signup continues through May 21, 2009, for Dickinson County agricultural producers to receive financial and technical assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), a voluntary program for farmers who face threats to soil, water, air and related natural resources on their land.

EQIP applications are accepted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), located at the USDA Service Center, 2412 17th Street in Spirit Lake. Through the 2008 Farm Bill, NRCS provides financial incentives to producers to promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals, optimize environmental benefits, and help farmers meet environmental regulations.

Conservation plans must be developed for the entire area included in an EQIP contract. NRCS provides technical assistance and financial payments to producers who apply practices based on conservation plans.

EQIP practices include, but are not limited to:

grassed waterways; livestock waste management facilities; livestock mortality facilities; grazing management systems and equipment; composting facilities; grade stabilization Structures; pest and nutrient management; no-till and biofilters.

District Conservationist Carroll Oskvig says EQIP applications are accepted on a continuous basis. Oskvig says early applications allow for more thorough conservation planning. "If you apply early, a conservation plan can be developed to identify all natural resource concerns and treatment options," he says. "Early application also ensures that all eligibility issues are in order."

If you are interested in more information or to set up an appointment to sign up for EQIP, please contact the Spirit Lake USDA Service Center at 712-336-3782, Ext. 3.

Organic Production:

Likewise, Iowa farmers transitioning to organic production or already certified as an organic producer may qualify for a new initiative providing more than \$1.4 million in financial assistance through EQIP.

According to EQIP Program Coordinator Dave Brommel, **producers must submit organic production applications by May 29, 2009**, to be included in the initial ranking for funding.

Organic producers can receive up to \$20,000 per year or \$80,000 over six years through this Initiative. Due to increased costs for some conservation practices related to organic operations, NRCS is increasing the standard payment rate up to 60 percent for some practices. Under the Organic Initiative required minimum core conservation practices will be determined by specific resource concerns.

The core practices are:

Conservation Crop Rotation; Cover Crop; Nutrient Management; Pest Management; Prescribed Grazing; and Forage Harvest Management.

Other practices offered through this Initiative include:

Animal Mortality Facility; Composting Facility; Residue and Tillage Management; No-Till/Strip Till/Direct Seed; Contour Farming; Contour Buffer Strips; Residue and Tillage Management; Ridge-Till;

District Commissioners

Mark Ingwersen Chris Hoffman Scott Mitchell
John Myhre Curt Smith

Assistant Commissioners

Orville Berg Earl Muilenburg Phyllis Nielsen
Keith Van Kleek

District Mission Statement

The Dickinson SWCD will serve its customers and the needs of the District's natural resources through education, promotion, and demonstration.

**Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment;
Fence; Field Border; Pasture and Hay
Planting; Pipeline; Heavy Use Protection
Area; Strip Cropping; Watering Facility;
and Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation.**

The 2009 Organic Initiative is a nationwide special initiative to provide financial assistance to National Organic Program (NOP) certified organic producers as well as producers in the process of transitioning to organic production. All applicants must have an organic system plan that meets the NOP guidelines. For more information check out the website at www.ams.usda.gov/nop/.

Organic producers may also apply for assistance under general EQIP.

**Cost-Share Funds Available for
Conservation Practices**

While completing your spring field work, you might have noticed area(s) in your cropland that would benefit from a conservation practice, such as a **grassed waterway, sediment basin or grade stabilization structure.**

Or you may have noticed over the winter that your windbreak could be improved or that perhaps a new windbreak is needed.

Windbreaks and shelterbelts can reduce wind-induced erosion and save on heating and cooling costs associated with farmsteads. When properly placed to shield farm buildings from strong winds, windbreaks can lower heating and cooling costs by up to 20 percent.

The NRCS/SWCD office can help you with a number of cost-share programs for conservation practices.

State cost-share usually provides for 50% of actual costs for structures and 75% of actual costs for windbreaks.

A **no-till, ridge-till or strip-till incentive** is offered on a one-time only, per producer basis, with a maximum of 80 acres at \$10 per acre.

For more information on cost-share programs or to

request technical assistance, contact the USDA Service Center at 2412 17th Street, Spirit Lake, or call 712-336-3782, Ext. 3.

**Dickinson—Emmet NRCS
Shared Management Unit**

Carroll Oskvig began serving as the NRCS District Conservationist for both Dickinson and Emmet counties in September of 2008.

Loren Ehlers will begin work as the NRCS Resource Conservationist in Estherville in July, 2009.

The three NRCS staff in Spirit Lake and the two NRCS staff in Estherville work cooperatively on projects in both counties.

**Urban Conservationist Called to
Military Duty**

Steve Anderson, Urban Conservationist for Dickinson and surrounding counties, has stepped into a new "job" for the coming year.



Steve is a 15 year member of the South Dakota National Guard.

He began a year's deployment of military

service in April.

John Wills, Clean Water Alliance Coordinator, will be filling in as Urban Conservationist while Steve is gone. Derek Namanny will be joining the office in May as Clean Water Alliance Assistant.

**Check out the Clean Water Alliance
website at
www.cleanwateralliance.net**

NRCS Staff:

Carroll Oskvig, District Conservationist
Tim Moran, Soil Conservation Technician
Betty Romero, Soil Conservation Technician

IDALS-DSC Staff:

Maxine Butler, State Secretary

District Staff:

John Wills, CWA Coordinator / Urban Conservationist
Ryan Ransom, Silver Lake Coordinator
Derek Namanny, CWA Assistant
Steve Anderson—military deployment

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