

Incentive program aids summer terrace construction

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Terrace and grassed waterway construction has typically been limited to early spring and late fall, but now, thanks to the Summer Constructive Incentives program through USDA, Iowa farmers can hire contractors to build in the summer and early fall.

Farmers will not be allowed, however, to plant a typical cash crop in the areas needed to facilitate construction and will be required to plant a temporary cover crop, such as rye or winter-killed oats, in these areas to control soil erosion and help suppress weeds.

To offset lost income, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will make a one-time payment of \$200 per acre to farmers through the Sum-

mer Construction Incentive funded by the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Construction must occur between June 15 and Oct. 15.

Kristy York, area program specialist, NRCS, Atlantic, says this four-month window provides better construction weather and contractor availability. It also allows larger projects to get accomplished in a single year.

"It's a very efficient way to get conservation on the ground," she said. "We often use the incentive to construct multiple terraces on a hillside. Instead of going back and building additional terraces several years in a row, the producer can more quickly enjoy the benefits of the constructed system and not have to worry about getting the

contractor back several years in a row."

Summer Construction Incentive NRCS District Conservationist Jeff Matthias added that the program also helps producers in years of untimely bad weather. "Contractors like the program because they are not in as big of a time crunch as during fall construction," he said. "Landowners often favor it because it does not reduce yields as with spring construction."

Additional program information is available at the Le Mars NRCS office. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Division of Soil Conservation (IDALS-DSC) offers a similar program with information on it available from the department's office in Des Moines.