

# Environmental Quality Incentives Program

## EQIP for ORGANIC PRODUCTION

The **EQIP Organic Initiative** provides financial and technical assistance to help New Mexico's organic farmers and ranchers — and those transitioning to organic — to install conservation practices, including:

**PEST MANAGEMENT • NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION CROP ROTATION • PRESCRIBED GRAZING  
COVER CROPS • FORAGE HARVEST MANAGEMENT  
AND MORE, INCLUDING A BRAND NEW PRACTICE:**

### HIGH TUNNELS

A High Tunnel is a seasonal, polyethylene covered structure that helps growers extend the growing season, increase yields, reduce pesticide use, keep vital nutrients in the soil, and provide other benefits.



The Organic Initiative of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program that helps producers voluntarily protect the soil, water, air and other natural resources on organic farms and ranches.

Through the program, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides certified organic producers and those transitioning to organic production with funding and professional expertise to install conservation practices.

#### **Technical & Financial Assistance**

Those who submit an application and are accepted into EQIP may receive payments to offset costs associated with planning, materials and installation of a number of on-farm conservation measures.

Producers may receive up to \$20,000 in financial assistance per year, or \$80,000 over six years through the EQIP Organic Initiative.

A list of practices and current payment rates can be found on the New Mexico NRCS Web site at: [http://www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/2010/eqip\\_organic.html](http://www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/2010/eqip_organic.html) or at your local NRCS office.

#### **Historically Underserved Clients**

EQIP provides higher practice payment rates to agricultural producers (individuals, joint operations or entities) who qualify as a Beginning Farmer-Rancher, a Socially Disadvantaged Farmer-Rancher, or Limited Resource Farmer-Rancher. For more information, contact your NRCS office or go to: [www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/SLB\\_Farmer](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/SLB_Farmer).



[www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov)

HELPING PEOPLE  
HELP THE LAND

NRCS NEW MEXICO

**Land Eligibility**

Eligible land includes privately owned and Tribal cropland, rangeland and pasture currently under organic production or in the process of transitioning to organic.

**Applicant Eligibility**

The applicant for EQIP may be an individual or an entity engaged in livestock or agricultural production. Applicants must own or manage the land and have a vested interest in the operation. In the case of contract farmers, either the landowner or lessee may enter into an EQIP contract.

In addition, eligible applicants will:

- Provide a copy of their approved Organic System Plan (OSP) to NRCS;
- Have control of the land during the length of the contract;
- Be in compliance with highly erodible land & wetland conservation provisions of the Farm Bill;
- Meet Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) criteria; and
- Meet other program requirements.

**When and How to Apply**

Applications for the EQIP Organic Initiative, as well as the general EQIP sign-up, may be submitted at any time at the local USDA Service Center.

In addition to submitting application materials, you will also work with NRCS to identify and plan the conservation measures you want on your land. This information is recorded in a conservation plan that includes a detailed description of your selected practices.

**Program Participation**

Each year, NRCS announces a cutoff date when applications are ranked and selected for funding.

After an application is selected for funding, the applicant enters into a program contract with USDA. The contract is based on practices outlined in the conservation plan and will specify a period of time, one to ten years, during which activities must be completed.

EQIP Organic Initiative participants are required to develop and carry out an Organic System Plan and maintain related records.

In addition, program participants are expected to maintain any EQIP practice throughout its useful life, even after the contract is completed.

In most cases, EQIP payments are made after practices have been completed and certified by NRCS as meeting practice standards and specifications.

**More Information**

Contact NRCS to learn more about how EQIP can help you protect and improve your working lands. More information can be found at your local USDA Service Center listed in the telephone book under Federal government agencies.

Or, visit the NRCS Web site at:

[www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nm.nrcs.usda.gov)

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