

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
375 Jackson Street  
St. Paul, MN 55101-1854

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February 3, 2004

MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 260-4-5

SUBJECT: INF – EQIP – NEWS RELEASE

Purpose. To distribute a sample news release to all offices.

Expiration Date: September 30, 2004.

NRCS in Minnesota has received an allocation of over \$23 million to assist farmers to install conservation practices through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The first cut-off date for scoring will be March 31.

Attached is a sample news release intended for producers. This news release should be adapted to reflect local concerns and distributed to your local radio and television station(s) as well as to your daily newspaper.

All technical questions about EQIP should be directed to Tim Koehler, Assistant State Conservationist, at 651/602/7857. Questions regarding public information efforts should be directed to Julie MacSwain, Public Affairs specialist, at 651/602-7859.

WILLIAM HUNT  
State Conservationist

Attachment

DIST: AO

**SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE FOR FIELD OFFICES**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 4, 2004

CONTACT: District Conservationist  
(Telephone Number)

**FIRST CUT-OFF DATE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
INCENTIVES PROGRAM SCORING AND APPLICATION ANNOUNCED**

**(City of Office Location)** - Minnesota has received an allocation of over \$23 million to assist farmers to install conservation practices through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), according to William Hunt, State Conservationist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in St. Paul.

Applications for the program, which cost-shares with producers on practices ranging from animal waste systems to windbreaks to grazing systems, are currently being taken at NRCS offices across the state Hunt said.

In 2003 over 1200 Minnesota farmers were awarded contracts in the program for over \$15 million. Applications are scored and ranked based on a locally modified scoring system striving to get the best environmental benefits Hunt said. "Each county has the opportunity to focus EQIP dollars and prioritize conservation work to their own most pressing resource needs," Hunt said.

According to \_\_\_\_\_, NRCS District Conservationist at \_\_\_\_\_, EQIP helps producers looking to solve a resource problem, such as a gully, and those looking to work with environmental and regulatory concerns such as feedlot laws.

\_\_\_\_\_ said that March 31<sup>st</sup> will be the first cut-off for scoring and ranking applications, which should allow for some producers to get work done this spring. Additional cut-off dates will be established depending on the number of applications and dollars obligated in the first ranking period he said.

EQIP rules were significantly revised by Congress as part of the 2002 farm bill to increase participation in the program. The program's objective is to promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals.

For more information farmers should contact their local NRCS, Soil and Water Conservation District, or Farm Service Agency office.

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