



NEWS RELEASE

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NRCS ANNOUNCES 21 MILLION FOR CONSERVATION COST-SHARE PROGRAM

St. Paul, MN, Dec. 1, 2004 -- The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has announced that 21 million is available to help agricultural producers apply needed conservation practices on land throughout Minnesota. William Hunt, State Conservationist for NRCS in Minnesota, announced the signup dates for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program which will be held at all USDA Service Centers in Minnesota.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program, called EQIP, is a competitive and very popular program. Producers will receive up to 50 percent cost-share with certified Limited Resources Farmers receiving up to 90 percent to implement conservation practices.

The EQIP signup period begins on December 13, 2004. Applications will be scored and ranked based on a locally prioritized statewide environmental ranking worksheet. High priority applications will be funded at the end of each of the following scoring periods: January 28, 2005, February 25, 2005 and March 25, 2005.

EQIP is a competitive program with the most cost-effective and environmentally beneficial projects selected for funding. To apply for funding, landowners should visit the NRCS office at the USDA Service Center for their county.

“Our focus with EQIP is to help producers with conservation on working agricultural land,” said Hunt. “Implementing conservation practices on privately owned working land, which is 70 percent of the land base in this country, is the most effective thing we can do to protect our water quality and the health of our soil.” EQIP also supports abundant wildlife habitat and productive grasslands and woodlands.

For more information on conservation practices and/or the statewide and county EQIP signup, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service at your local USDA Service Center or visit the Minnesota NRCS website at www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov.

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