Financial Assistance Programs

- **Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program**: Private or tribal land in agricultural production including improved,_Implanted, prevented, managed, grazed, and non-enrolled private forest land. 10 years. Payments support practice implementation and off-site and on-site income and income generating.

- **Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)**: Up to 10 years for AWEP partnerships agreements. Payments support practice implementation and on-site income and income generating. Payments support.

- **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**: Private or tribal agricultural land and non-enrolled private forest land. Does not include land enrolled in CRP, WRP, or GRP. 5 years, at least 50% of actual cost, based on incurred cost*

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**: Private land that contains at least 50% for agricultural production including cropland, hayland, pastureland, rangeland, grassland, and non-industrial private forest land. Does not include land enrolled in CRP, WRP, or GRP. 1-10 years or minimum of 5 years; 5-year rental contract, 10-year rental contract, or 30-year contract. Payments support practice implementation and income foregone*.

**What Land is Eligible?**

- **Programs**: All programs are subject to final USDA regulations. Historically underserved participants may be eligible for increased payment rates up to 90%; EQIP offers up to 30%.

- **All programs**: 1985, and adjacent lands that maximize wetlands converted prior to December 23, 1985. Private or Tribal farmed wetlands or those features. Non-industrial private or Tribal forest land in an area that historically contained grassland, shrubland, grassland, pastureland, and forest land.

- **Programs**: The HFRP, or a similar program. Private or Tribal agricultural land. Does not include land enrolled in CRP, WRP, or GRP.

- **Programs**: Private, public, and Tribal land in agricultural production including cropland, hayland, pastureland, rangeland, grassland, and non-industrial private forest land. Does not include land enrolled in CRP, WRP, or EQIP. 1-10 years or minimum of 5 years; 5-year renewal option, 5 years; 5-year extension; 10-year contract; 30-year contract. Payments support practice implementation and income foregone*.

**Program Payments**

- **Cost-Sharing Agreements**: Agreements obligate funds annually to support the conservation and environmental functions and values. Contribute to restoration costs. Develop and follow an AWEP EQIP plan that describes the environmental objectives, non-industrial private forest land, and non-enrolled private forest land. Does not include land enrolled in CRP, WRP, or GRP. 1-10 years or minimum of 5 years; 5-year rental contract, 10-year rental contract, or 30-year contract. Payments support practice implementation and income foregone*.

- **Contracts**: 30 annual payments or up to 100% of actual cost. 30-year contracts, and 30-year agreements; up to 100% for permanent easements. Payments support practice implementation and income foregone*.

**Easements**

- **Programs**: Federal or private land. Does not include land enrolled in CRP, WRP, or EQIP. Annual rental payment based on county rate determined by FSA. One-time, up-front payment or up to 5 years. 150 years, or minimum of 5 years; 5 years. Payments support practice implementation based on incurred cost.

- **Programs**: Private land that contains at least 50% for agricultural production including cropland, hayland, pastureland, rangeland, grassland, and non-industrial private forest land. Does not include land enrolled in CRP, WRP, or GRP. Payments support practice implementation based on incurred cost.

**Programs**: Federal, State, local farm, or ranch protection programs; or supports the policies of a prime, State, or locally important farmland. Private land that contains at least 50% for agricultural production including cropland, hayland, pastureland, rangeland, grassland, and non-industrial private forest land. Does not include land enrolled in CRP, WRP, or EQP. Payments support practice implementation and income foregone*.

**Producer Responsibilities**

- **Programs**: Developed and followed. If you enroll land in any of our conservation programs, you retain ownership of the land. Although participation in conservation easement programs limits certain uses of the land during the term of the agreement or easement, you still maintain control of public access.

- **Programs**: Will I be responsible for maintaining practices that I install under a conservation program? Yes. Am I required to allow public access to my land? Yes. I will not manage all of the practices. I am not required to allow public access. I will not manage all of the practices. I am not required to allow public access.

**FAQ**

- **How do I improve the chances of my conservation program application being accepted?** Most program applications are selected according to ranking processes specific to your area. Working with your local NRCS representative, you can develop a conservation program for your land that provides alternatives for various levels of resource treatment relevant to application ranking considerations in your area. You can select the level of treatment that best meets your individual needs while improving your chances of being accepted for funding.

- **Will I be responsible for maintaining practices that I install under a conservation program?** Yes. Am I required to allow public access to my land? Yes. I will not manage all of the practices. I am not required to allow public access. I will not manage all of the practices. I am not required to allow public access.
**CONSERVATION PRACTICES & PROGRAMS FOR YOUR LAND**

Waterways

- **Managing manure to improve water quality**: Use manure and compost to maintain water quality and contain sediment.
- **Restoring and protecting riparian habitats**: Improve water quality and wildlife habitat through riparian buffer planting.

Soil

- **Conserving soil and water resources**: Implement practices to conserve soil and water resources.

Wind Erosion

- **Conserving wind resources**: Implement practices to conserve wind resources.

Water Erosion

- **Conserving water resources**: Implement practices to conserve water resources.

**WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?**

Contact your local NRCS office or visit www.nrcs.usda.gov to learn more about conservation programs and services.

NRCS works with many partners to deliver conservation services and conservation programs. These include local conservation districts, nonprofit organizations, and other conservation professionals. Additional resources are available through NRCS, other federal agencies, and conservation organizations.

For More Information

Visit the NRCS website at www.nrcs.usda.gov for more information on conservation programs and services.

**NEW FARM BILL**

The new Farm Bill offers a variety of financial and economic incentives for farmers and ranchers. The bill includes provisions for conservation and environmental programs, as well as programs to support research and development.

**WHAT'S NEW?**

- **2008 Farm Bill payments**: The new Farm Bill includes provisions for conservation and environmental programs, as well as programs to support research and development.

**Technical Assistance**

NRCS can help farmers and ranchers identify and implement conservation practices that will help them achieve their goals. NRCS works with many partners to deliver conservation services and conservation programs. These include local conservation districts, nonprofit organizations, and other conservation professionals. Additional resources are available through NRCS, other federal agencies, and conservation organizations.

**WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?**

- **NRCS can help farmers and ranchers identify and implement conservation practices that will help them achieve their goals.**

**For Long-Term Success**

- **NRCS can help farmers and ranchers identify and implement conservation practices that will help them achieve their goals.**

**NRCS works with many partners to deliver conservation services and conservation programs.**

**These include local conservation districts, nonprofit organizations, and other conservation professionals.**

**Additional resources are available through NRCS, other federal agencies, and conservation organizations.**

**For More Information**

Visit the NRCS website at www.nrcs.usda.gov for more information on conservation programs and services.
2008 Farm Bill conservation programs can help landowners and producers improve air quality. Financial and technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) helps producers and landowners plan and implement conservation practices to improve air quality while ensuring sustainability of agricultural operations. Emphasis is placed on assisting producers and landowners who manage the land to conserve natural resources.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is the primary program providing financial and technical assistance that address air quality concerns. EQIP helps producers and landowners plan and implement conservation practices that will result in improved air quality.

High-priority conservation practices to address air quality resource concerns may include:

- Residue and tillage management;
- Cover crops;
- Surface irrigation;
- Nutrient management;
- Integrated Pest Management; and
- Windbreaks, shelter belts, and biofilters.
The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) provides technical and financial assistance to producers and landowners who already have applied basic conservation practices but want to achieve a higher level of conservation on their operations. Participating producers and landowners receive payments to maintain existing practices and implement additional conservation treatment.

NRCS offers a Comprehensive Air Quality Management Plan (CAQMP) to help producers identify air quality concerns and develop alternative solutions. A CAQMP provides a comprehensive and complete air quality analysis of operations and strategies to address identified issues.

For more information, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.

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*Helping People Help the Land*
The 2008 Farm Bill features many opportunities for non-industrial private forest (NIPF) landowners. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and its partners, such as State forestry agencies and other Technical Service Providers (TSPs), provide forestry-related assistance to private landowners and Tribes to plan and implement conservation practices and address resource concerns on their forest, woodland, farm, or ranch.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is available to help participants address a wide range of resource concerns on forest land and other land uses. For example:

- Thin dense stands of trees;
- Control invasive and noxious weeds/brush/trees;
- Develop, protect, or enhance wildlife habitat;
- Reduce the threat of wildfire by treating slash and installing fire breaks;
- Plant trees and other grasses/shrubs to restore forest ecosystems;
- Improve water quality by installing riparian forest buffers; and
- Reduce soil erosion and energy usage by establishing windbreaks/shelterbelts on cropland and building sites.
Before applying for financial assistance through EQIP for your forest or woodland, you should develop a forest management plan. To get started, contact your State forestry agency or local USDA service center to find a forester near you. Your State forestry agency may be able to help you develop a Forest Stewardship Plan (a type of forest management plan). The Forest*A*Syst Web site (www.forestasyst.org) can also help you locate a professional forester, as well as provide valuable information about managing your forest. If you already have a forest management plan, contact your forester or local NRCS office to learn if additional information is needed.

The Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP) helps private landowners restore and enhance forest ecosystems to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species, improve biodiversity, and enhance carbon sequestration.

Farm and ranch owners may apply to the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP) to protect forest land from development. The forested land must contribute to the viability of the agricultural operation and cover up to two-thirds of the land.

Other NRCS programs that may be helpful for private forest landowners include the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP).

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Helping People Help the Land
The 2008 Farm Bill places additional emphasis on providing technical and financial assistance to producers who want to reduce the use of fossil fuel energy. Financial and technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will help eligible producers plan and implement conservation practices that help improve energy efficiency, utilize renewable energy, and sustain production.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) helps producers:
- Address soil, water, air, plant, animal, and energy conservation concerns;
- Obtain financial and technical assistance to plan and implement basic conservation practices;
- Conserve and improve natural resources for a sustainable farming operation; and
- Develop a Conservation Activity Plan for energy conservation.
High-priority conservation practices that address energy conservation may include:
• Energy audits;
• Residue and tillage management;
• Conservation crop rotations;
• Cover crops;
• Nutrient management;
• Pest management;
• Irrigation water management (and related practices); and
• Anaerobic digesters.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) provides technical and financial assistance to producers who already have applied the basic conservation practices but want to implement a higher level of conservation. Eligible producers participating in CSP would receive payments for additional conservation treatment (such as energy conservation) on their operations.

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Helping People Help the Land
The 2008 Farm Bill places additional emphasis on providing technical and financial assistance to producers who want to transition to organic farming as well as current certified organic producers. Financial and technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will help producers plan and implement conservation practices to sustain their organic operations.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is available to help farmers and ranchers:

- Address soil, water, air, plant, animal, and energy conservation concerns;
- Obtain financial and technical assistance to plan and implement basic conservation practices ($80,000 payment limitation);
- Meet the requirements needed for National Organic Program certification;
- Maintain an existing organic certification; and
- Conserve and improve natural resources for a sustainable farming operation.
High-priority conservation practices to address soil, water, air, plant, animal, and energy conservation concerns may include:

- Conservation crop rotations;
- Cover crops;
- Nutrient management (organic);
- Pest management/Integrated Pest Management;
- Prescribed grazing; and
- Forest harvest management.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) provides technical and financial assistance to producers who already have applied basic conservation practices, but want to implement a higher level of conservation. Eligible producers participating in CSP could receive payments for additional conservation treatment on their operations.

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Helping People Help the Land
Historically Underserved Individuals & Groups

The 2008 Farm Bill addresses the unique circumstances and concerns of historically underserved individuals and groups. These groups include socially disadvantaged, beginning, and limited-resource farmers and ranchers. Financial and technical assistance and improved access to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) programs and services, including those of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), are available for voluntary program participants.

Many 2008 Farm Bill programs provide up to 90 percent of costs for socially disadvantaged, limited-resource, and beginning farmers or ranchers associated with planning and implementing conservation measures. Up to 30 percent of such payments may be made in advance for purchasing materials or contracting.

Up to 5 percent of available Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funds may be used to assist beginning farmers or ranchers and 5 percent to assist socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers. Five percent of available Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) acres may be set aside to assist beginning farmers or ranchers and 5 percent to assist socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers. Unused funds and acres may be “repooled” for these groups and made available to all applicants.

A Beginning Farmer or Rancher is defined as an individual or entity who has operated a farm or ranch for less than 10 consecutive years. All members of an entity must fit this description for the farm or ranch to qualify for USDA aid under this program. Furthermore, the individuals must materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch.
A Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher is a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group, defined as one whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of the group, without regard to their individual qualities. These groups include:

- American Indians or Alaska Natives
- Asians
- Blacks or African Americans
- Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders
- Hispanics

At least 50 percent ownership in the farm business must be held by socially disadvantaged individuals for an entity to qualify. Gender alone is not a covered group under NRCS programs in the 2008 Farm Bill.

A Limited-Resource Farmer, Rancher, or Forest Owner has:

- Direct or indirect gross farm sales of not more than the current indexed value in each of the previous 2 years;
- A total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four; or
- Less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous 2 years.

An entity or joint operation can be a limited-resource farmer, rancher, or forest owner if all individual members independently qualify.

To learn if you qualify, use the Limited Resource Farmer Self-Determination Tool at www.lrftool.scegov.usda.gov.

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Helping People Help the Land
The 2008 Farm Bill places additional emphasis on assistance for specialty crop producers. Specialty crops are intensively cultivated plants including fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture, and floriculture and nursery crops; wild plants are not considered specialty crops. Financial and technical assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) helps producers plan and implement conservation practices resulting in sustainable specialty crop operations.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) helps producers:

- Address soil, water, air, plant, animal, and energy conservation concerns;
- Obtain financial and technical assistance to plan and implement basic conservation practices; and
- Conserve and improve natural resources for a sustainable farming operation.
High-priority conservation practices that are tailored for specialty crops to address soil, water, air, plant, animal, and energy conservation may include:

- Conservation crop rotations;
- Cover crops;
- Conservation cover;
- Contour farming and strip cropping;
- Nutrient management;
- Pest management/Integrated Pest Management;
- Field borders and filter strips;
- Irrigation water management;
- Grassed waterways and diversions; and
- Agri-chemical handling facility.

The new Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is available to provide technical and financial assistance to producers who already have applied basic conservation practices but want to achieve a higher level of conservation. Eligible producers participating in CSP would receive payments to provide for additional conservation treatment on their operations.

For more information, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.

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*Helping People Help the Land*
Indian Tribes and Indian producers are eligible for all 2008 Farm Bill programs. Special incentives address the unique circumstances and concerns of Indian Tribes through Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs.

The 2008 Farm Bill:
• Provides Tribal farmers and ranchers equal opportunity to participate in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), with cost-share assistance for conservation practices up to 90 percent. Advance payments may be available.
• Provides option to enroll acreage owned by Indian Tribes in 30-year contracts, 30-year easements, or permanent easements in the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) and Healthy Forests Reserve Program (HFRP). Tribes may also enter into 10-year restoration cost-share agreements, under either WRP or HFRP.
• Provides funding, through Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG), for up to 50 percent of projects carried out by Tribal, State, and/or local governments or private organizations or individuals.

• Exempts Tribes (but not individuals) from adjusted gross income limitations and program payment limitations that apply to other groups.

Contact your local NRCS office for more information, including official definitions of the terms “Indian Tribes,” “Acreage owned by Indian Tribes,” and “Indian Lands,” or visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.

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Helping People Help the Land
The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to help producers mitigate the effects of climate change.

NRCS provides incentives and supports voluntary actions by private landowners to manage greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and carbon sequestration through a portfolio of beneficial conservation programs including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), and Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). A wide range of conservation efforts can result in sequestration of carbon in soils and woody biomass, reduction in GHG emissions, substitution of fossil fuel with renewable energy sources, and provide additional ecosystem benefits.

NRCS works with partners to develop new technologies and tools to enable producers to make appropriate adaptive management decisions and to prepare for environmental stresses such as drought, changes in disease or pest prevalence, and floods. These efforts are critical for conservation of natural resources, continued production, and food security.

The table on the reverse of this insert illustrates just a few of the approaches that producers may want to consider in their conservation plans.
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<th>Conservation Effort</th>
<th>GHG* Objectives</th>
<th>Additional Ecosystem Benefits</th>
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<td><strong>Crops</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conservation tillage and reduced field pass intensity</td>
<td>Sequestration</td>
<td>Improves soil, water, and air quality. Reduces soil erosion and fuel use.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emissions reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Efficient nutrient management</td>
<td>Sequestration</td>
<td>Improves water quality. Savers expenses, time, and labor.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emissions reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crop diversity through rotations and cover crops</td>
<td>Sequestration</td>
<td>Reduces erosion and water requirements. Improves soil and water quality.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emissions reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Livestock</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Manure management</td>
<td>Emissions reduction</td>
<td>On-farm sources of biogas fuel and possibly electricity for large operations. Provides nutrients for crops.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rotational grazing and improved forage</td>
<td>Sequestration</td>
<td>Reduces water requirements. Helps withstand drought. Increases long-term grassland productivity.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emissions reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feed management</td>
<td>Emissions reduction</td>
<td>Reduces quantity of nutrients. Improves water quality. Increases efficient use of fuel.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Agroforestry</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Windbreaks for crops and livestock</td>
<td>Sequestration</td>
<td>Improves crop and livestock protection and wildlife habitat. Provides alternative income source (specialty crops, hunting fees).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emissions reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Silvopasture with rotational grazing and improved forage</td>
<td>Sequestration</td>
<td>Provides annual income from grazing and long-term income from wood products.</td>
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<td>Emissions reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riparian forest buffer</td>
<td>Sequestration</td>
<td>Improves water quality and wildlife habitat. Provides alternative income source (specialty crops, hunting fees).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Emissions reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Land Use Change</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Conversion of cropland to grassland, wetland, or forest land</td>
<td>Sequestration</td>
<td>Improves soil, water, and air quality. Reduces soil erosion and fuel use. Improves wildlife habitat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emissions reduction</td>
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* Greenhouse gas

For more information, visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov).

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