

## Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Funds Available

*June 13, 2011, Jackson, Miss.* - The USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is encouraging landowners, farmers and producers to visit their local conservation office and apply for assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The application process for these Farm Bill conservation programs is continuous, and funding selections are only made once or twice a year. The focus of these funds is for historically underserved landowners.

“NRCS programs are available to farmers wanting to put environmentally friendly practices on their land,” State Conservationist Al Garner said. “These practices can include grade stabilization structures, irrigation improvements, cross fencing, livestock watering facilities, ponds, heavy use protection areas and many others. NRCS uses the Environmental Quality Incentives Program as a tool to help American farmers be stewards of the nation’s resources.”

Farmers can sign up at the NRCS office in USDA Service Centers statewide. NRCS anticipates more than \$1 million in funds for Mississippi producers. The deadline for filing an application for this extended period is **July 1, 2011**.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program administered by the NRCS. Reauthorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, it supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, agricultural producers may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land.

To find your local USDA service center, visit <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=MS&agency=NRCS> or call (601) 965-5205. For more information on historically underserved landowners, visit <http://www.ms.nrcs.usda.gov/CivilRights.html>.

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