



United States Department of Agriculture



Kansas  
Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
Service



**Monty Breneman, ASTC-FO, Hays - Area 1  
Republican/Solomon Regional Advisory Committee  
April 27, 2023**

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## The Agency:

NRCS provides many services; however, the foundation of the Agency is the **free** Technical Assistance offered to develop conservation plans and resource management systems.

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# Conservation Planning:

**Conservation planning** is a process from which plans are developed by first understanding the resource needs and a landowner's desired land use goals.

- Based on sound scientific practices, NRCS provides hands-on assistance to help the landowner achieve as many of their goals as possible.



# NRCS Programs Available

## 2018 Farm Bill:

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
  - Administered by Farm Service Agency

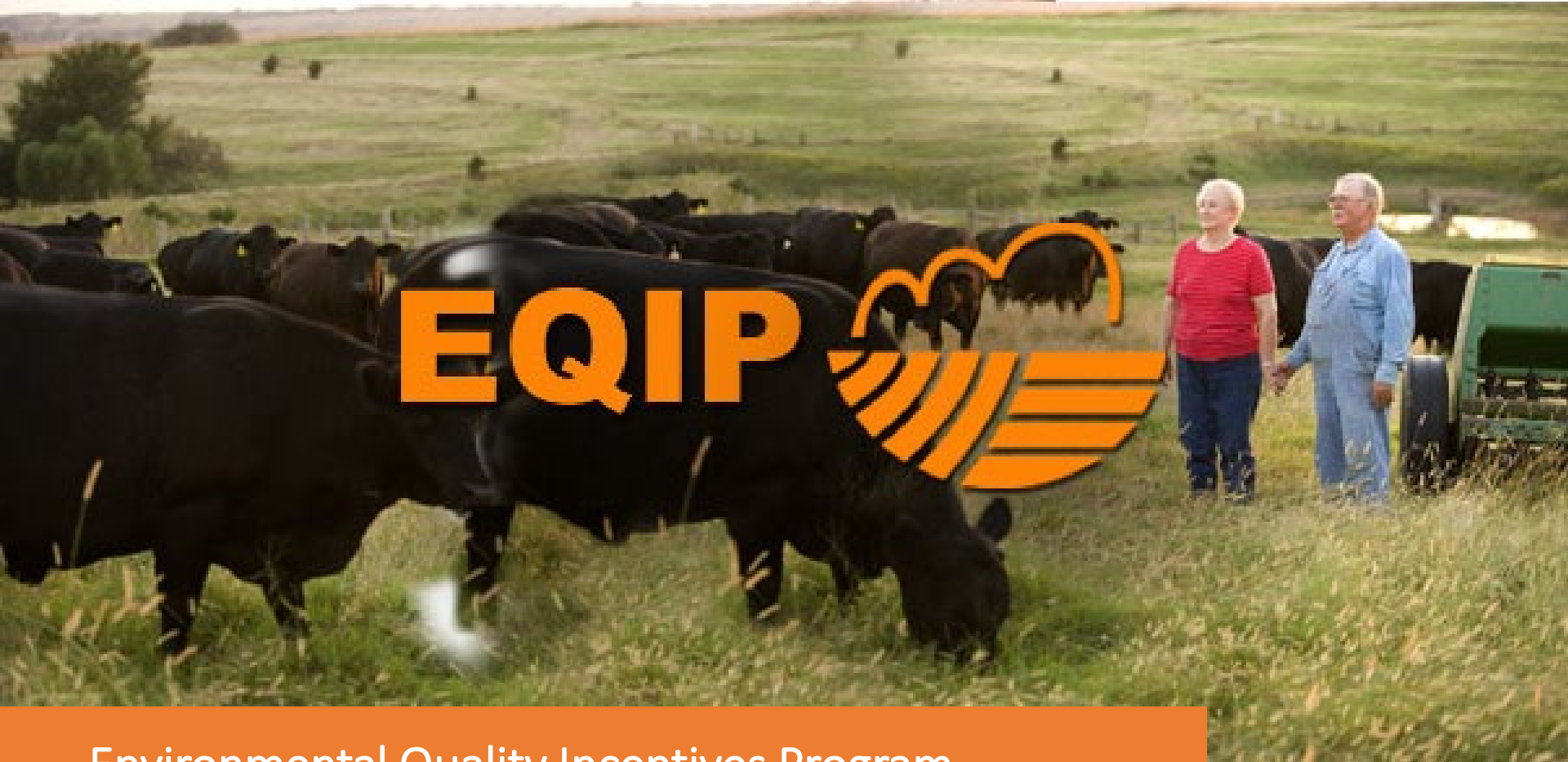


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# All NRCS Programs:

- Applications are accepted on a continuous basis, however, NRCS establishes application "cut-off" or submission deadline dates for evaluation, ranking, and approval of eligible applications.
- Open to all eligible agricultural producers with established records with the FSA.
- Open to all applicable, eligible lands.
- Pays the contract holder directly.
- Payment rates are flat rates, not a percent.



## Environmental Quality Incentives Program

- **EQIP** is a voluntary conservation program that helps agricultural producers in a manner that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals.
- Through **EQIP**, agricultural producers receive financial and technical assistance to implement structural and management conservation practices that optimize environmental benefits on working agricultural land.

# EQIP:

- Most EQIP applications are accepted on a continuous basis, however, Disaster Relief only occurs after the disaster is declared.
- EQIP is open to all eligible agricultural producers and has multiple funding pools available.
- Long term contract from one to ten years.
- Pays the contract holder after the practice is installed.

# EQIP Fund Pools

## Water Quality

- Terraces—regular and tile outlet
- Filter Strips

## Soil Health

- Cover Crops

## Livestock Waste

- Pumps and pipelines to transfer manure
- Waste management plans

## Rangeland and Pasture

- Cross fencing
- Brush management and noxious/invasive plant management
- Stream crossings

## Wildlife

- Seeding Native Plants
- Northern Bobwhite Habitat

## Forestry

- Timber stand improvement
- Windbreaks



# EQIP Initiatives:

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- On-Farm Energy
- Organic
- Monarch Butterfly
- Urban and Non-Traditional Agriculture
- Soil Health (Conservation Incentive Contracts)
- Drought Resiliency (grassland)
- Advanced Soil Health Livestock Integration
- Great Plains Grassland Initiative





## Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP):

**Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)** is a voluntary program that encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by:

- Undertaking additional conservation activities; to include improving maintaining and managing existing conservation activities.

# CSP

- Everything you operate according to records at the Farm Service Agency (FSA) must be enrolled in the program.  
(If the landowner will not grant control of land for the term of the contract that property will be excluded from enrollment.)
- Contracts are for five-year periods. Annual payments are made once a year for the baseline payment and all activities completed that fiscal year.
- Existing Activities -
  - Your current level of conservation equates to a higher baseline payment.
- Enhancements and Practices -
  - Conservation activities you agree to add and pays a set dollar amount.



# NRCS Conservation Easements

NRCS conservation easements are acquired through the voluntary sale of a property right that restricts what a landowner may do on their land.

Easements are attached to the land:

- The restrictions attach to a parcel and apply to all subsequent landowners.

Easements have long-term conservation benefits:

- 85% - Perpetual or maximum duration allowed under State law.
- 15% - 30-year



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# ACEP-Wetland Reserve Easement (WRE)

- The purpose is to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands and associated lands.
- Lands protected with an easement provide critical habitat for improving water quality and give a home to birds of conservation and recreational importance.
- A WRE easement may either be in perpetuity (with up to 100% cost share) or for 30-years (up to 75% cost share).
- **The United States holds the easement**, meaning that NRCS is responsible for the monitoring, management, and enforcement consistent with conservation values.



# ACEP-Agricultural Land Easement (ALE)

- NRCS provides funds to Eligible Entities for the purchase of agricultural land easements.
- Eligible Entity holds the easement.
- The United States maintains a 3rd party right of enforcement.
- Eligible Entity responsible for monitoring, management, and enforcement.





**RCPP**



## Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

- RCPP promotes the implementation of conservation activities through agreements between Partners and landowners.
- RCPP identifies specific geographical regions or area at the National and State level.
- Projects may focus on water quality and quantity, erosion, wildlife habitat, drought and flood control, or other regional priorities.



# Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

- Administered by Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- NRCS is the technical service provider.
  - Land Eligibility determinations.
  - Conservation planning.
  - Practice implementation.



# Conservation Compliance

- 1. Highly erodible land (HEL)**
- 2. Wetland compliance (WC)**
  - Aims to reduce soil loss on erosion-prone lands and to protect wetlands for the multiple benefits they provide.
  - HELC and WC provisions apply to all land that is considered highly erodible or a wetland, and that is owned or farmed by persons voluntarily participating in USDA programs, unless USDA determines an exemption applies.



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# Conservation Compliance

- Producers and any affiliated individuals or entities who participate in most programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Risk Management Agency (RMA) are required to comply with these provisions.
  
- Non-compliance may affect the following types of USDA program benefits:
  - FSA loans and disaster assistance payments.
  - NRCS and FSA conservation program benefits.
  - Federal crop insurance premium subsidies.

## Conservation Compliance with HELC and WC Provisions:

- To comply with the HELC and WC provisions, producers must fill out and sign form AD-1026 certifying they will not:
  - Plant or produce an agricultural commodity on highly erodible land without following a conservation system;
  - Plant or produce an agricultural commodity on a converted wetland; or
  - Convert a wetland which makes the production of an agricultural commodity possible.

# Additional Funding - Inflation Reduction Act

Program	Fiscal Year (dollars in millions)					Notes
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	-	250	1,750	3,000	3,450	
Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	-	250	500	1,000	1,500	
Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)	-	250	800	1,500	2,400	
Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)	-	100	200	500	600	
Conservation Technical Assistance (CTA);	1,000					Available until September 30, 2031
Quantify Carbon Sequestration Program (\$300)	300					Available until September 30, 2031
Administrative Costs for this section	100					Remain available until September 30, 2028,

Estimated IRA Funding

ANY  
Questions?

Thank You



# HAPPY TRAILS



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