

EQIP Provides Opportunities for Rangeland Concerns

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist Eric B. Banks, announced that the application evaluation cutoff date will be **Friday, November 16, 2012**, for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

“EQIP is a very popular program in Kansas,” said Banks. “And with the drought conditions this past summer, I want to remind producers and ranchers that EQIP provides opportunities for producers and ranchers to address resource concerns, such as plant health and vigor, inadequate livestock water, noxious weeds, and brush invasion.”

State Rangeland Management Specialist David Kraft said that due to the extended period of less than desirable moisture which Kansas producers have received on grazing lands, opportunities exist to address these resource concerns and also focus on minimizing the impacts of the drought. Grazing plans as a part of a larger conservation plan enables producers to identify forage production potential as well as production deficiencies in the midst of a drought. Keeping plants healthy and providing plant communities the chance to not only persist or survive, but to actually improve during drought is the focal point. This approach allows producers to see quicker responses from their grazing lands as climatic conditions improve.

EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers through contracts up to a maximum term of ten years in length. These contracts provide financial assistance to help plan and implement conservation practices that address natural resource concerns and provide opportunities to improve soil, water, air, plant, animal, and related resources on agricultural land, such as cropland and rangeland, and non-industrial private forestland.

I know fall is a busy time and NRCS wants everyone to have the opportunity to develop a conservation plan and submit an application in time,” said Banks.

Applications are accepted year round, but those received by **Friday, November 16, 2012**, will be evaluated for fiscal year 2013 funding. Applicants must meet certain eligibility requirements.

“EQIP helps address the unique circumstances of socially disadvantaged, limited resource, and beginning farmers and ranchers, who have natural resource concerns that need to be addressed on their land,” said Banks. Qualifying Kansas producers compete separately and receive higher payment rates.

For more information visit the Kansas NRCS Web site www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs or your local U.S. Department of Agriculture Service Center. To find a service center near you, check your telephone book under “United States Government” or on the Internet at offices.usda.gov. Follow us on Twitter @NRCS_Kansas. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.