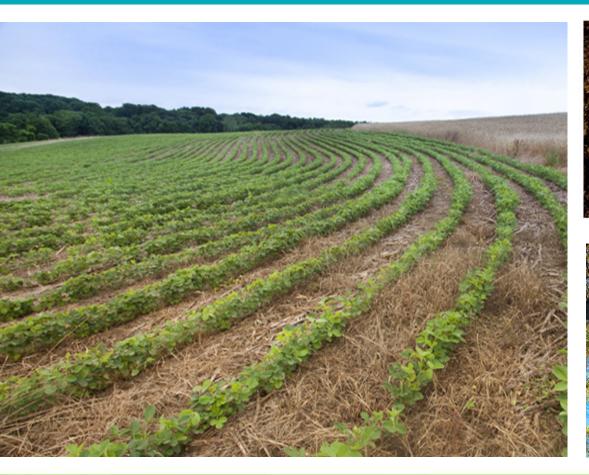
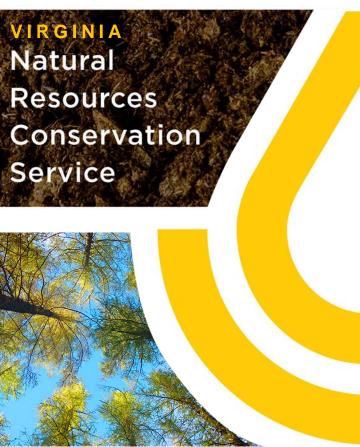


United States Department of Agriculture





Helping You Help Your Land

11/20/2017 Rachel Loveday

Natural Resources Conservation Service

nrcs.usda.gov/



Who We Are



NRCS: Who are we?



Federal Agency

- Soil Conservation Service
- Hugh Hammond Bennett
- Voluntary
- Non-regulatory



- Helping People Help the Land
- Provide resources to farmers and landowners to aid them with conservation.



The Soil Conservation Act was passed April 27, 1935 amid the Dust Bowl, leading to the creation of the Soil Conservation Service, now NRCS.







First Step

Technical and/or Financial Assistance



Technical Assistance: What's Your Vision?

- NRCS works with operations of every size and type to promote ag production and environmental quality as compatible goals.
- Our advice is free and we even come to you! We'll walk the land together to identify problem areas and develop a management system to address them.
- Our nine-step planning process is designed to ensure that the right conservation practices are installed to provide the best return on your investment.







Do You Have a Resource Concern?

- A resource concern is a threat to or degradation of your soil, water, air, plant, or animal resources to an extent that their sustainability or intended use is impaired.
- NRCS quantifies or describes resource concerns as part of a comprehensive conservation planning process that includes client objectives as well as human and energy resources.
- Your local conservationist will recommend conservation practices that can help address that specific threat.





Steps to Financial Assistance









Financial Assistance to Reach Your Goals

Once you have a plan, we help you understand Farm Bill Programs and consider options for financial assistance.

If you're new to our programs, you'll need to take a copy of your deed and plat to the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to get a Farm and Tract number.

While you're there, complete the following forms:

- AD-1026 HEL and WC certification to give us permission to visit your farm and make conservation compliance determinations.
- Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) If your AVERAGE gross income over the past three years, preceding the most immediate taxable year, totals more than \$900,000, you may not be eligible for USDA Programs.



Big Three NRCS Programs 🔾 🔾 🔾 🔾





Flagship program

Covers many land uses and many practices



Conservation Stewardship Program

For producers are already doing good conservation and they want to take it to the next level



Regional Conservation Partnership Program

Program <u>varies by region</u> and practices that it supports

Fencing, invasive control and more

**Easements programs are also available.



EQIP Outlook for 2018

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) eligible land includes crop, range, pasture, and non-industrial forest land. Funding is available for practices to address resource concerns on:

- Cropland
- Grazing Lands
- Forestland
- Livestock Operations
- Vegetable or organic operations



Natural Resources Conservation Service



EQIP Funding

- At least 60% of available Fiscal Year (FY)18
 EQIP funds will be allocated to livestock-related resource concerns.
- A minimum of 5% of funds will be committed for wildlife concerns.
- New Northern Bobwhite in Working Grasslands will address the needs of both by restoring native grasses to reverse habitat loss without taking the land out of production.







EQIP Practices

- Livestock Watering Systems
- Energy Audits
- Gutters and Downspouts
- Cover Crops
- Manure Management
- Winter Feeding Facilities
- Riparian Forrest Buffer
- Wildlife Habitat
- Grassed Waterway
- Tree Planting
- And many more......





Cover Crops (Practice 340) 🕠 🗘 👌



Purposes are many:

- Enhance soil health
- Scavenge for nutrients
- Reduce erosion
- Decrease compaction
- Add organic matter

If roots are present, erosion is reduced!

Rye, canola and vetch following corn for grain





High Tunnel System (Practice 325)



The High Tunnel
Conservation Practice
helps producers extend
the growing season by
growing plants earlier in
the Spring and growing
later into the Fall.

All crops must be grown in the soil (no trays or pots)



High Tunnel System Guidelines

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To be eligible for a high tunnel, you must be:

- a "farmer" at the time of application. This means, you have farm records in FSA's database indicating that you have control of the land and can make the management decisions for all land associated with the operation.
- growing or producing agricultural crops that could benefit from being grown in a high tunnel on the land offered in the application.

If FSA determines that the agricultural land is not producing or has not produced agricultural crops which typically could be grown within a High Tunnel System, a resource concern does not exist and you will not be eligible for NRCS funding this year.



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High Tunnel System Continued 🔷 🔷

- The High Tunnel System practice is a one-time incentive payment made when the practice is established, according to manufacturer's specifications. Applicants are not allowed to fabricate the High Tunnel themselves.
- NRCS does not provide design criteria but will need a copy of the specifications that come with the high tunnel package.
- You must keep records of the crops grown in the high tunnel for years one through three and provide a copy for our case file.







The Application Package 🕠 🗘 🗘 🔾

Here's what we need to get started:

- NRCS Application (CPA 1200)
 We'll assist you in completing this form and cover the legal obligations spelled out in the appendix.
- Entity-Specific Forms
 Entities will need to complete some additional documents with NRCS and FSA. (We will cover this information on an individual basis).
- Map of the property
 FSA provides this item, which includes your Farm and Tract number.
- 1199A-Direct Deposit Form*
 All incentive payments must be direct deposited.





Special Fund Pools

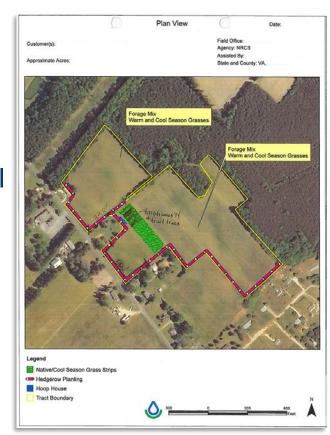


- At least five percent of EQIP funding will be allocated to socially disadvantaged and new and beginning farmers who will be eligible for a higher payment rate, along with limited resource producers.
- These individuals can receive financial assistance payments of up to 90 percent of the installation costs for conservation practices.
- Veteran farmers who are also new or beginning farmers also receive the higher payment rate and will be funded first.



Next Steps ...

- Once the paperwork and the application are completed, your application will be reviewed and scored based on environmental benefits.
- Applications will be funded in descending order from greatest score to least benefit until funds are depleted for the year.
- Once our State Office makes the funding decision, we'll send you a letter asking if you'd like to proceed with the preapproval.
- If so, we will then prepare a contract. Once all documents have been signed, you have one year to start the practice.





Review & Ranking Practice Installation Program Signups Funding Approvals Inspection & Payments

- Though we take applications throughout the year, we announce signup periods to make funding decisions at specific times. (Don't wait until the last day to submit an application. We cannot process your paperwork in that amount of time).
- Funding approvals typically happen within two weeks of ranking. If you begin a practice prior to approval, we cannot pay for it.



The Bottom Line ...



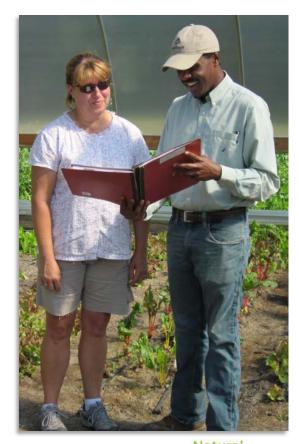
- All FY18 applicants may receive up to \$10,000 for the construction of a High Tunnel.
- The FY17 payment rates were \$2.85/sq. ft. for a Quonset style and \$3.73/sq. ft. for a Gothic style (peaked roof). FY18 rates should be similar.
- Additional supporting practices:
 - Gutters and downspouts
 - Underground tanks
 - Outlets
 - Diversion
 - Grassed waterway
 - Critical area





The Bottom Line cont....

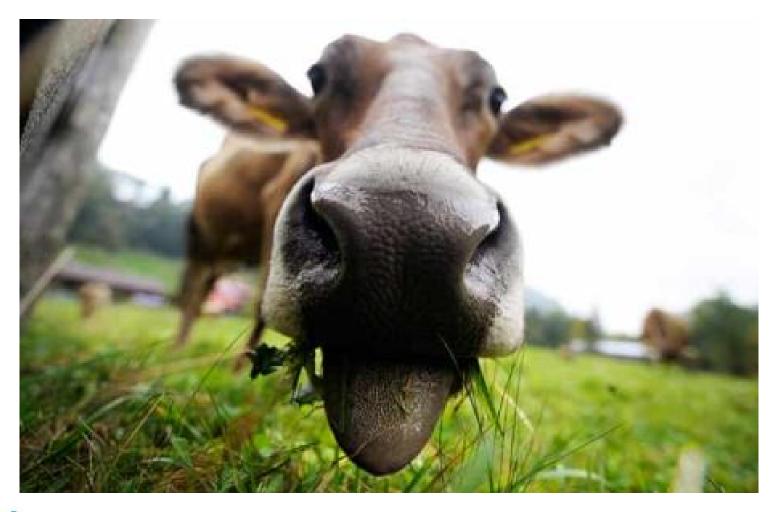
- Rates per square foot are higher if you qualify as a Beginning Farmer, Socially Disadvantaged, or Limited Resource Producer.
 - You are still limited to \$10,000
- FY18 signups are underway.
- Contact your local NRCS office today to get started on your application.
- You can find out who that is at:
 https://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?age
 ncy=nrcs
 or searching for USDA Service Center
 Locator



Natural Resources Conservation Service



Questions?







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Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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