

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service
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More Good News for Organic Growers or Those Transitioning to Organic Production

TOLLAND—Connecticut State Conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Douglas L. Zehner today announced the agency has extended the sign-up period for organic producers to apply for the more than \$310,000 made available as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The purpose for this initiative, in its second year, is to encourage more organic agricultural production.

“The 2008 Farm Bill provided funding specifically to help organic farmers and those agricultural producers transitioning to organic farming,” said Zehner. “This initiative will help make organic food producers eligible to compete for EQIP funds.”

Successful applicants will receive funding to implement priority conservation practices designed to improve natural resource conditions. Not only do these practices offer significant environmental benefits, they are also important to growers. Practices include crop rotation, cover crop, nutrient management, pest management, access control, fence, seasonal high tunnel, and prescribed grazing.

The new deadline for applications is April 16, 2010; they will be ranked at that time. If you are a certified organic producer, you must submit an Organic System Plan (OSP) at the time of application, along with proof of farm ownership. If you are a producer in transition to organic farming, you must provide proof of farm ownership and written, self-certification agreeing to develop an OSP and implement conservation practices consistent with EQIP statute and the OSP.

Note that applications are always accepted for this and any other NRCS program; however, only applications received by April 16, 2010, will be considered for this year's funding.

Interested producers should visit their nearest USDA Service Center (listed below) to determine eligibility. Additional information on the EQIP Organic Initiative is available at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/.

Brooklyn Service Center
(860) 774-0224, Ext. 102

Torrington Service Center
(860) 626-8258, Ext. 200

Windsor Service Center
(860) 688-7725, Ext. 118

Norwich Service Center
(860) 887-3604, Ext. 300

Wallingford Service Center
(203) 269-7509, Ext. 205

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