



United States Department of Agriculture



NRCS Practices for Water Conservation

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

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Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

- The primary program that is utilized to provide cost share for producers to address irrigation and ground water-based resource concerns.
- Sign Up is year-round, but there are cutoffs for different rounds of funding.
 - Currently in Round 2 of Funding
- Each application is assessed and ranked based on the practices selected to address the Resource Concerns on the property.
 - Applications exceeding a certain point threshold or the highest-ranking applications are selected for funding.

Practices used to Improve Water Conservation

Continuing Irrigation

- 442: Center Pivot System
- 441: Irrigation System, Microirrigation
- 449: Irrigation Water Management (IWM)
- 430: Irrigation Pipeline

Ceasing Irrigation

- 328: Conservation Crop Rotation
– Irrigated to Dryland Conversion Scenario

Eligibility for Irrigation Based Practices

- The planned acres must have been irrigated for at least 2 out of the last 5 years.
- The irrigation system must be able to apply 3 gpm/acre.
 - There are options for mitigation if you don't meet the 3 gpm/acre out right.
- Pivot or Drip systems must be 20+ years olds to be eligible to be replaced.
 - Age of systems can be verified through original bill of receipt, insurance documentation, or a letter from pivot dealer saying that the pivot is older than 20 years old based on either the serial number or the manufacturer.

442: Center Pivot System

- The main intent of the practice is to replace an aging, inefficient irrigation system with a new center pivot system.
- The new system must meet a certain level of application efficiency based on the type of nozzle package selected for the system.
 - You can convert the old system with a new type of nozzle package (i.e. going from a LPIC system to a LESA system)
- Cost share for 442:Center Pivot System replacement is paid by the foot. Conversion are paid by the drop.

441: Irrigation System, Microirrigation

- The main intent of the practice is to replace an aging, inefficient irrigation system with a new subsurface drip system.
- The new subsurface drip system can only be planned for how many acres meet the 3 gpm/acre rule (no mitigation allowed).
- All drip systems must be reviewed and approved by the State Irrigation Engineer.
- Cost Share for 441: Irrigation System, Microirrigation is paid by the acre.

449: Irrigation Water Management

- The main intent of the practice is to provide the producer with more information related to their irrigation system to make more informed irrigation decision.
- The two major components of this practice are:
 - Soil Moisture Sensors, High Intensity, First Year
 - Irrigation System Monitoring, High Intensity, First Year
- Cost Share for 449: Irrigation Water Management is paid by the unit.

430: Irrigation Pipeline

- The main intent of the practice is to replace older pipeline that is no longer effectively transferring water to the irrigation system due to leaks.
- The planned irrigation pipeline must be tied to lands with irrigation history.
- This practice can not be used to tie two or more irrigation systems together.
- Cost share for 430: Irrigation Pipeline is paid by the foot.

328: Conservation Crop Rotation: Irrigated to Dryland Conversion Scenario

- The main intent of the practice is to assist producers with converting their operation from irrigated production to dryland production.
- The practice is planned for either 3, 4, or 5 years.
- For acres to be eligible for this practice scenario they must meet the irrigation history requirement (2 out of the last 5 years irrigated)
- Cost Share for 328: Conservation Crop Rotation: Irrigated to Dryland Conversion Scenario is paid by the acre.

Planning Irrigated to Dryland Conversion Scenario

- The new dryland crop rotation must meet the following requirements to be eligible:
 - 2 different crops planted within 3 years
 - One high residue crop within the rotation
 - Low residue crops can not be planted back-to-back
 - The new cropping rotation must meet the Tolerable Soil Loss Limit (T) for the major soil map unit
 - The new cropping rotation must show an increase in the Soil Conditioning Index (SCI) score compared to the benchmark cropping rotation.
 - No grazing is permitted during the contract

Irrigated to Dryland Conversion Challenges

- Meeting the “T” and SCI requirement for soils with a I value of 134 or greater is difficult.
 - These soils have very poor soil aggregate stability, leading them to be more prone to erosive forces.
- Benchmark cropping rotation that experience little erosion and already have a positive SCI score are difficult to improve on when converting to dryland.
 - This is very apparent with no-till system that already incorporate high residue crops in the rotation.

Interested?

If you are interested in possibly participating in the EQIP program to apply one of these practices on your farm, then visit your local NRCS office.

OR

Contact me:

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Questions?

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