

IDAHO POTATO PULSE



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For Immediate Release

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AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS ENCOURAGED TO SUBMIT ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM (EQIP) APPLICATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2012

BOISE, ID – October 26, 2011 – Idaho agricultural producers and landowners interested in improving or protecting natural resources on their land are encouraged to visit their local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field offices to discuss potential applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). EQIP is a voluntary program that supports conservation practices on agricultural lands. Through EQIP, farmers may receive financial and technical help with structural and management practices and incentive payments may be made to encourage a farmer to adopt beneficial land management practices.

"EQIP funding helps producers complete conservation plans and projects they choose to do on their farms or ranches. Funded projects have included improving irrigation efficiency, protecting water quality, reducing erosion, and many other kinds of activities," said Jeff Burwell, NRCS State Conservationist. "This is a popular program that has funded many conservation activities in Idaho."

In 2011, Idaho NRCS received 970 applications of which 359 were funded for a total of \$13.8 million provided in financial assistance. "Implemented practices produced numerous on- and off-site benefits including improved water, air and soil quality, as well as improved irrigation efficiency," Burwell said.

NRCS accepts applications for EQIP all year, with one or more ranking periods set annually. The fiscal year 2012 application and ranking periods have not yet been determined, but applications are accepted on a continuous basis. Because applications are funded through a competitive process, producers are encouraged to start working with the District Conservationists in their local field office as soon as possible for guidance on program requirements and priorities.

For specific information on EQIP and eligibility requirements, stop by your local USDA service center or visit NRCS online at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/>.