

NRCS EQIP and Organic Dairy Farms

Presented by
Sarah Brown, Organic Specialist, Oregon Tilth & NRCS

and
Kevin Kaija, Agronomist, Vermont NRCS

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Outline

- NRCS and EQIP
- The Organic Initiative
- Sign-up Process
- NRCS Conservation Practices
- Examples
- Additional Resources



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Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

United States Department of Agriculture



- NRCS Services
 - Soil Survey
 - Technical Assistance
 - Farm Bill Programs
 - Emergency Assistance
 - Conservation Partnership Efforts
 - Information & Outreach



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Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)

Technical and financial assistance to help plan and implement **conservation practices that address natural resource concerns** and for opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland.



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EQIP Organic Initiative

- Eligibility-certified organic, transitional, and exempt producers
 - Submit organic certificate or Self-Certification
- \$50 million annually nationwide
- Producer payment limit- \$20k annually / \$80k entire contract
 - Regular EQIP is also an option
- 2014 ranking deadlines vary by state



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Conservation Assistance Sign-up Process

- Contact NRCS
 - Develop Conservation Plan with NRCS
 - Identify resource concerns
 - Identify needed conservation practices
- Contact FSA
 - Establish eligibility to Participate in Farm Bill Programs
 - Establish official USDA farm records including farm/tract #



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Sign-Up Process

- NRCS Responsibilities:
 - Provide/Accept Application
 - Determine Land Eligibility
 - Gather Irrigation History
 - **Develop a Conservation Plan**
 - Screen and Rank
 - Develop conservation plan specifications



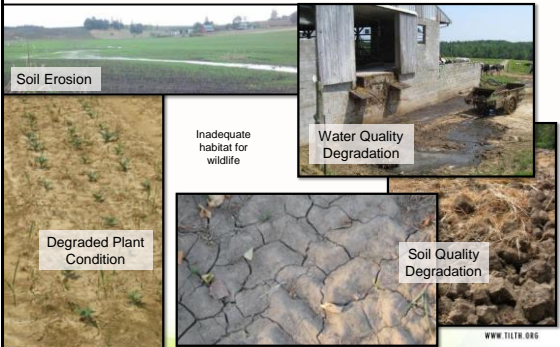
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Developing an NRCS Conservation Plan



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What are NRCS resource concerns?



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What are NRCS 'conservation practices'?



Prescribed Grazing



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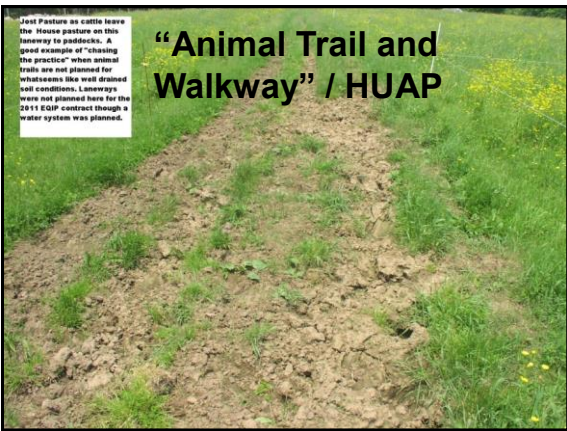




Animal Walkways



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"Animal Trail and Walkway" / HUAP

Fence



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“Brush Management” & Access Control



Forage and Biomass Planting



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Conservation Buffers

- Can serve multiple purposes:
 - Honey bee forage
 - Pollinator & wildlife habitat
 - Windbreak
 - Water filtration
 - Block pesticide drift



Photo: Katarina Ulman, www.oregontilth.org

Watering Facility



Water systems are clean and well-maintained. With plastic components any leakage will be quickly noticed and it will not pollute.



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Manure Management Practices



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Structural Practices

- Compost Facility
- Access Road
- Underground Outlet
- Subsurface Drain
- Sediment Basin
- Diversion
- Fence
- Roof Runoff Structure
- Stream Crossing
- Water Control Structure
- Portland Livestock Structure



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Vegetative Practices

- Cover Crop
- Hedgerow
- Critical Area Planting
- Windbreak
- Grass Waterway
- Filter Strip
- Conservation Cover



How do you implement conservation practices?



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Pollinator Hedgerows Planning Considerations

- Purpose/Use
- Plant selection
- Beneficial Insectary
- Pollinator/Timing
- Height/Spread
- Irrigation
- Wildlife
- Screening/Aesthetics
- Monitoring & Maintenance
- Weed & Gopher Control
- Irrigation



Photo: Katharina Ullmann, Xerces Society

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Compost Facility Planning Considerations

- Purpose
- Location, Size, Shape
- Source: On-site, Imported
- Facility Type
 - Structure or Field
 - Cover Type
- Equipment
 - Stockpiling/Turning
 - Spreading/Incorporation
- Water Supply
- Building materials in organic systems



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Financial Assistance Cost Lists

- EQIP payments based on typical costs for implementation
- Beginning Farmer, Limited Resource Producer, and Socially Disadvantaged are eligible for an increased payment rate of 25%- ASK!
- Many practices have multiple payment scenarios/rates-ASK!
- Some states have organic and/or small farm payment 'rates'-ASK!

Practice	Approximate Payment
Compost Facility	\$9/CuFt
Fencing	\$3/ft
Field Boarder	\$979/acre
Pollinator Habitat	
Irrigation Water Management	\$500/farm/year
High Tunnel Implementation	\$2.57/SqFt
Conservation Cover for Pollinators	\$987/acre
Cover Crops	\$188/acre (irrigated) \$168/acre (non-irrigated)
Herbaceous Wind Barrier	\$2/ft
Nutrient Management	\$584/farm/year

*2012 Sample practice costs from OR. Costs will vary. Contact your local NRCS office to inquire on actual costs.

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Additional Details

- NRCS certifies installed practices before payment to producer
 - See USDA FSA or ShadeFund (www.shadefund.org) for loans
- Program payments may be taxable
- May sign up for multiple Farm Bill Programs on same farm
- Can have more than one active EQIP contract at a time on the same farm



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Additional Opportunities



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- State Technical Committees & Local Working Groups
 - Provide Input on:
 - Local Resource Concerns
 - Screening/Rank Criteria
 - New Practices and Costs
- Host a tour
- Attend a listening session
- NRCS Conservation Innovation Grants

For More Information:

<http://tilth.org/education-research/organic-conservation-program>

For detailed information about the program, how to sign-up, and what the process looks like visit this wonderful NCAT/ATTRA document:
 Accessing the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) Organic Initiative for Conversion or Expansion,
Additional Resources
 NRCS EQIP Organic Initiative State Contacts
 NRCS EQIP Organic Initiative Factsheet (PDF, 177KB)
 NRCS State Technical Committees and Local Working Groups: A Guide for Organic Farmers and Ranchers, Organic Farming Research Foundation
 Pollinator Conservation: Organic Farms, The Xerces Society
 Biodiversity Conservation: An Organic Farmers Guide (PDF), Wild Farm Alliance
