



Natural Resources
Conservation Service
1221 College Park Drive, Suite 200
Dover, DE 19904
www.de.nrcs.usda.gov

News Release

Contact:

Brooke Jones, (302) 678-4181

Dastina Wallace, (302) 678-4179

Financial Assistance Available to Help Delaware Producers Improve Natural Resources

DOVER, Del., October 4, 2022—The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is encouraging all Delaware agricultural producers to apply today for conservation resources to improve the health and productivity of their agricultural land. NRCS offers technical and financial assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) program. The first application cutoff for fiscal year (FY) 2023 funding is November 18, 2022.

EQIP and AMA assistance can help Delaware farmers and landowners plan and implement conservation practices to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air and related resources on eligible agricultural and non-industrial forest land. Popular practices include waste storage structures, heavy use area pads, high tunnels, energy, cover crops, irrigation water management, poultry windbreaks and more.

Delaware NRCS is highlighting two initiatives in FY2023:

- The **Northern Bobwhite** effort is designed to increase suitable wildlife habitat. A separate fund pool is available for wildlife practices to manage nesting cover, brood-rearing habitat, forage habitat and escape cover for bobwhite quail in priority areas throughout the state.
- The **American Black Duck** effort helps reduce threats to critical habitat. A separate fund pool is available to create shallow water ponds and other wetland practices to support habitat development.

NRCS conservationists will work with producers to develop a conservation plan on their land to identify concerns and opportunities, help determine objectives and recommend solutions.

In fiscal year 2022, Delaware approved a combined 169 EQIP and AMA contracts covering nearly 16,500 acres for a total of \$7.7 million.

NRCS accepts applications year-round; however, Delaware producers with applications in before November 18, 2022 will have a higher chance of application approval as funding is limited. Two additional application cutoff dates are scheduled for the third Friday of March and May 2023 respectively.

To be eligible for program assistance, producers must have an eligible resource concern on their agricultural operation at the time of application. Historically underserved producers may request advance payments for EQIP practices, which provides the producer with a payment of at least 50 percent for practice implementation.

To apply for financial assistance, contact your local USDA Service Center. In Sussex County, call 302-856-3990, ext. 3; in Kent County, call 302-741-2600, ext. 3; and in New Castle County, call 302-832-3100, ext. 3. Additional information on NRCS programs and services is available on the Delaware NRCS website at www.de.nrcs.usda.gov.

Delaware NRCS works with Delaware Conservation Districts in a partnership effort to address resource concerns on privately-owned agricultural and forest lands.

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