



**Natural Resources
Conservation Service**

355 East Hancock Ave., Ste. 212
Athens, GA, 30601
Voice: 706-546-2069
Email: chris.groskreutz@ga.usda.gov
Web: <http://www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov>

News Release

Release No.: 00003.17

Contact:
Chris Groskreutz
(706) 546-2069
Chris.groskreutz@ga.usda.gov

DUE TO DROUGHT, USDA-NRCS ANNOUNCES ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM SIGN-UP EXTENSION IN GEORGIA

ATHENS, GA, November 18, 2016 — State Conservationist Terrance O. Rudolph of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced today that the statewide sign up for fiscal year 2017 [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#) has been extended through December 16, 2016.

In October, NRCS announced a Georgia cutoff for November 18, but due to persistent and worsening drought conditions over most of Georgia, Rudolph is giving producers more time to decide how or if EQIP can help them help their land. Those applicants in the worst impacted counties of Georgia (counties designated as “extreme drought” (D3) or “exceptional drought” (D4) according to the [U.S. Drought Monitor as of November 15, 2016](#)) will be assigned the highest priority. Others in non D3 or D4 counties are still eligible to apply.

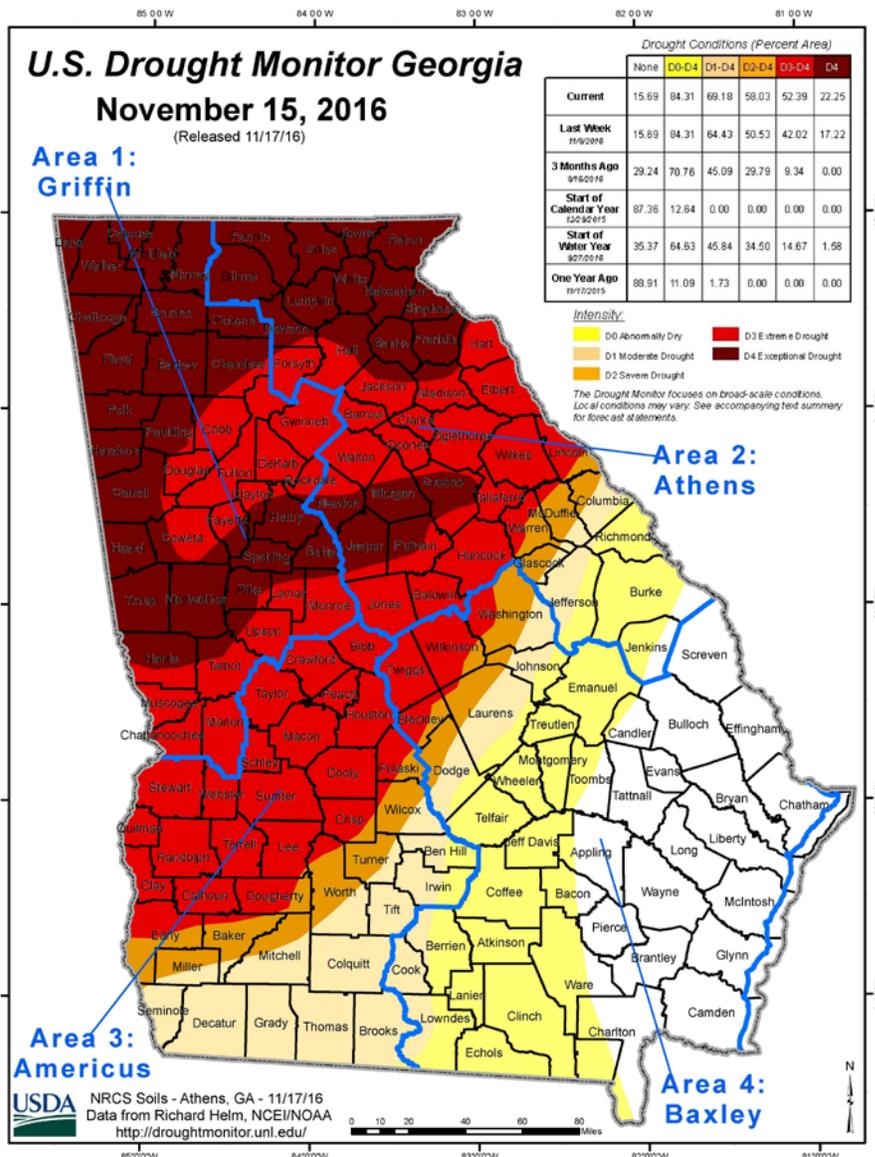
“Our farmers, ranchers and forest landowners are among the more than 8.3 million Georgians currently experiencing drought conditions of some kind. We want them to know that NRCS is prepared to assist those most affected, as much as we can,” said Rudolph. “I encourage producers to take this extra time to contact their field office staff and discuss if EQIP is right for them. Also, if they already have an application on file, to make sure it reflects all of their current needs.”

While producers can apply year round, this application cutoff announcement is for fiscal year 2017 funding and any applications received after December 16, 2016, will not be considered in this funding cycle, unless another sign up period for this year is announced. Anyone who wants to apply can do so by visiting their local [USDA Service Center](#) and submitting a [Conservation Program Application \(NRCS-CPA-1200\)](#).

EQIP was originally established under the 1996 Farm Bill and reauthorized in the 2014 Farm Bill. It provides technical and financial assistance to landowners to voluntarily address soil, water and other natural resource concerns on private lands. EQIP conservation practices include, but are not limited to: pasture and hay land planting, heavy use areas, waste storage facilities, terracing, pest management, tree planting, seasonal high tunnels, organic crop assistance, and wildlife habitat management.

104 counties in Georgia are eligible to receive high priority assistance as indicated by the U.S. Drought Monitor Data shown below on the map under D3 Drought – Extreme and D4 Drought – Exceptional.

High Priority Counties: Baldwin, Baker, Banks, Barrow, Bartow, Bibb, Bleckley, Butts, Calhoun, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattahoochee, Chattooga, Cherokee, Clarke, Clay, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Crisp, Crawford, Dade, Dawson, DeKalb, Dooly, Dougherty, Douglas, Early, Elbert, Fannin, Fayette, Floyd, Forsyth, Franklin, Fulton, Gilmer, Gordon, Greene, Gwinnett, Habersham, Hall, Hancock, Haralson, Harris, Hart, Heard, Henry, Houston, Jackson, Jasper, Jones, Lamar, Laurens, Lee, Lincoln, Lumpkin, Macon, Madison, Marion, McDuffie, Meriwether, Monroe, Morgan, Murray, Muscogee, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Paulding, Peach, Pickens, Pike, Polk, Pulaski, Putnam, Quitman, Rabun, Randolph, Rockdale, Schley, Spalding, Stephens, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taliaferro, Taylor, Terrell, Towns, Troup, Twiggs, Union, Upson, Walker, Walton, Warren, Washington, Webster, White, Whitfield, Wilcox, Wilkes, Wilkinson and Worth.



NRCS provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain and improve our natural resources and environment. More information on NRCS conservation programs can be found at <http://www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov> under the Programs tab.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.