



Conservation Programs & Practices for: Greenhouses

About NRCS

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works with agricultural and forest producers to protect and conserve natural resources on our nation's private lands.

NRCS administers conservation programs funded primarily through the current Farm Bill (Agricultural Act of 2014), and offers financial and technical assistance to landowners to address high priority resource concerns through the implementation of conservation practices. Contact your local NRCS field office for assistance.

The 2014 Farm Bill

The 2014 Farm Bill, enacted on February 7, 2014, offers voluntary conservation programs that benefit both agricultural and forest producers and the environment.

The conservation provisions in the 2014 Farm Bill continue to build on the conservation gains made by U.S. citizens over the past decades and previous farm bills.

Contact NRCS:

Massachusetts USDA Service Centers

- Greenfield: 413-772-0384 ext.3
- Hadley: 413-585-1000 ext. 3
- Holden: 508-829-4477 ext. 3
- Pittsfield: 413-443-1776 ext. 3
- Westford: 978-692-1904 ext. 3
- West Wareham: 508-295-5151 ext. 2
- West Yarmouth: 508-771-6476

NRCS offers technical and financial assistance for Massachusetts greenhouse operations to improve water quality, water conservation, air quality and energy efficiency through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Resource concerns & conservation practices

Following are examples of the natural resource concerns for which greenhouse growers can get help and the related conservation practices:

Water Quality – addressing nutrient and pesticide runoff or leaching to nearby water resources by improving chemigation systems.



→ **Surface & Subsurface Irrigation Systems:** Closed (zero discharge) irrigation systems prevent nutrients, pesticides and water losses through the installation of ebb-and-flow benches or flood floors along with a tailwater recovery system to catch runoff for reuse.

Water Conservation – addressing insufficient surface and groundwater supplies by improving irrigation water use efficiency on historically irrigated cropland (irrigated two out of the last five years), where the proposed practices will result in water savings.



→ **Microirrigation:** Conversion to a micro-spray or multiple outlet drip microirrigation system to provide highly efficient irrigation to a greenhouse. Water applications are reduced and runoff eliminated.

Air Quality and Energy Conservation – assistance to apply energy efficient practices that reduce energy consumption and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases which contribute to climate change.



→ **Farmstead Energy Improvement:** Energy/shade screens, high efficiency heating systems with automated controls, root zone heating, horizontal air flow and ventilation can provide energy savings of 30% or more for greenhouses



NRCS Conservation Programs & Practices for Greenhouses

Why do we offer help for greenhouses?

The greenhouse and nursery industries use a large amount of water, energy and agri-chemical products.

EQIP provides an opportunity to protect water quality and reduce stream and groundwater withdrawal, thereby protecting the commonwealth's natural resources.

We can help you develop and implement a conservation plan that will protect and conserve your land and natural resources.



Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

EQIP helps promote farm and forest production by enhancing the environmental quality of soil, water, air, plants and animals.

Who can apply?

- Owners of land in agricultural or forest production, or persons who are engaged in livestock, agricultural or forest production, on eligible land that has a natural resource concern.
- There is no minimum acreage requirement to apply for EQIP, however, projects that address more significant resource concerns are more likely to receive funding.

How and when do I apply?

- Applications may be submitted anytime. All applications will be evaluated periodically in a competitive ranking process as funding becomes available. Ranking criteria is available on our website.
- To apply, you will need to file the following forms (also on our website):
 - Conservation Program Application (CCC-1200)
 - Adjusted Gross Income Certification (CCC-926)
 - Highly Erodible Land & Wetland Conservation Certification (AD-1026)
- A DUNS number, and registration and yearly renewal in the System for Award Management (SAM) will be required before contracts can be obligated and for payment eligibility determination.
- If your application is funded, you will be required to install and maintain your conservation practices according to NRCS standards.

Conservation Plans & Conservation Activity Plans

Your program application must be supported by an NRCS approved conservation plan, which provides documentation of the practices that could be used to address your natural resource concerns. We will work with you to develop an approved conservation plan.

You may also apply for financial assistance to hire Technical Service Providers (TSP) to develop a specialty plans called Conservation Activity Plans (CAP) to address certain land use activities or specific resource needs on your land.

Call your local NRCS field office or visit us online for more information.

