

CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR

# Specialty Crops and Organic Producers



*Targeted Farm Bill funds are available to Specialty Crop and Organic Producers to address identified resource concerns on the farm*

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## BACKGROUND

The conservation programs available through USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are available to any agriculture producer (including row crops, livestock, forestry), but there are targeted funds available to Specialty Crop and Organic Producers. NRCS defines specialty crops as any crop other than corn, soybeans, or wheat grown for grain. Organic producers are defined as those either certified USDA Organic, certified exempt, or are pursuing USDA Organic certification.

## TARGETED FUNDING

In addition to conservation programs available to all agricultural producers, there are targeted funds available to Specialty Crop Farms and to Organic Farms.

## AVAILABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Eligible producers may receive up to 75% of the cost to install conservation practices to address identified resource concerns on the farm (up to 90% may be available for qualified Limited Resource or Beginning Farmers):

### Soil Health/Water Quality

- Cover Crops
- Conservation Crop Rotation
- Residue Management (No Till; Mulch Till)
- Nutrient Management
- Livestock Exclusion from Sensitive Areas
- Prescribed Grazing/Grazing Systems
- Manure Storage and Management
- Alternatives for Erosion Control
- Buffers (windbreaks, filter strips, field borders)

### Animals/Habitat

- Livestock Watering Sources
- Pollinator and Wildlife Habitat Establishment
- Invasive Species Control

### Pest Management for Orchards, Vegetable/Truck Crops

- Precision Pest Management (use of Directed Spray or GPS-Precision Equipment)
- Integrated Pest Management

## ADDRESSING RESOURCE CONCERNS

If your farm has a need to address any of the following resource concerns, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) may have opportunities to provide technical and financial assistance through our programs. Examples include:

### Soil Health

- Minimizing Soil Erosion
- Reducing Compaction
- Increasing Soil Organic Matter
- Reducing runoff and increasing infiltration

### Water Quality

- Minimizing Nutrient and Sediment Losses
- Reducing Pesticide Losses
- Decreasing Stream Temperatures
- Increasing Irrigation Efficiency



## NRCS OVERVIEW

Private citizens own 70 percent of the land in the United States, making stewardship absolutely critical to the health of our Nation's environment. Farmers and forest landowners are making daily decisions about natural resource use and management that impact soil and water quality. With the Natural Resources Conservation Service's help, many are creating more productive lands while maintaining healthy ecosystems.

### Animals

- Providing Quality Water for Livestock
- Providing Wildlife Habitat

### Plants

- Removing Invasive Species
- Ensuring Healthy Plant Communities

### Air Quality

- Minimizing Wind Erosion
- Reducing Farm Odors
- Minimizing Chemical Drift

### Energy

- Minimizing Energy Inputs on the Farm (Buildings, Land Management)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact your District Conservationist at your local USDA Service Center. To find a Service Center near you, visit: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/contact/local/>

More information on specific Farm Bill programs is available at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/programs/farmbill/>