

NRCS News Release: Extended EQIP timeline for Organic and Transitioning Growers

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NRCS Extends EQIP Timeline For Organic And Transitioning Growers

LIVERMORE, Calif., February 23, 2010—The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has extended the timeline to apply for a special \$2 million Organic Initiative, available through the agency's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Organic producers and those transitioning to organic now have until March 12, 2010, to apply for the current round of funding consideration.

Producers awarded contracts under this initiative will receive 75 percent of the average cost of conservation practices, rather than the usual 50 percent. Beginning farmers, limited resource farmers, and individuals who are members of socially disadvantaged groups may receive 90 percent cost share. Organic and transitioning producers can receive up to \$20,000 per year or \$80,000 over six years through this initiative. Organic producers may also apply for assistance under general EQIP.

"The Farm Bill provides a special focus on assisting organic and transitioning producers and we look forward to working more closely with this group of farmers with whom we believe we share a strong conservation ethic," said Ed Burton, State Conservationist for NRCS in California.

The Organic Initiative in California includes cost share for more than two dozen conservation practices, including conservation crop rotation, cover crop, nutrient management, pest management, prescribed grazing, and the new pilot practice, high tunnels.

The NRCS encourages organic producers and those transitioning to organic production to contact their local USDA Service Center as soon as possible to learn more about this opportunity before the March 12, 2010 deadline. Information and applications are available at any NRCS office. For Alameda County, contact the Livermore office, located at 3585 Greenville Road, Suite 2, Livermore.

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