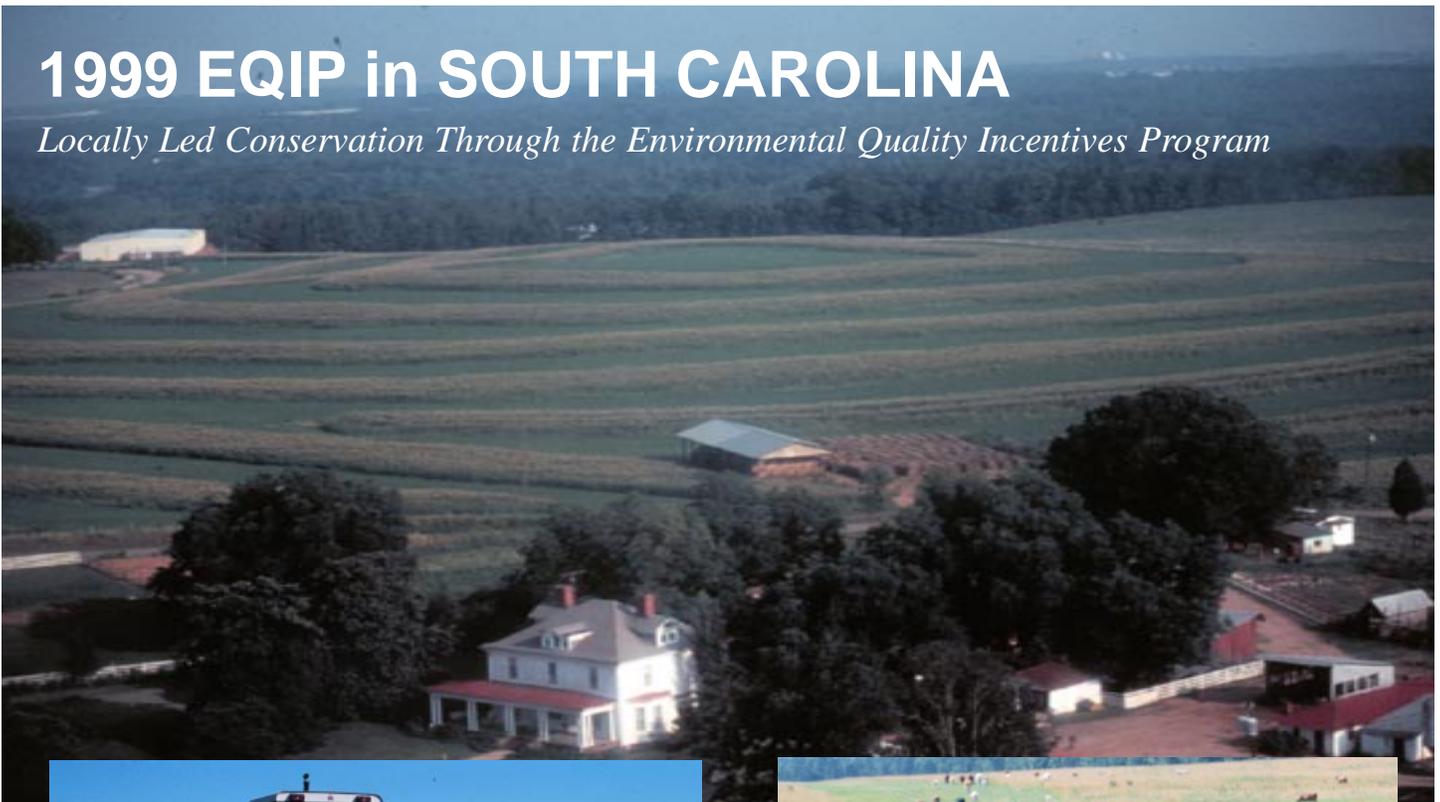


1999 EQIP in SOUTH CAROLINA

Locally Led Conservation Through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program

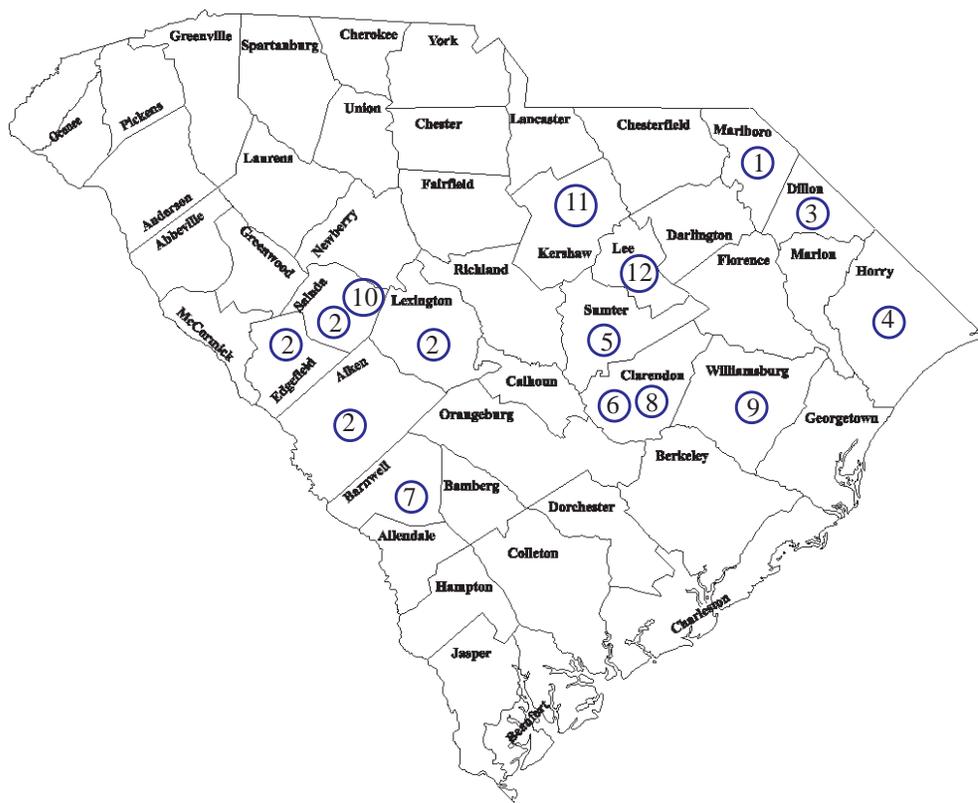


- 12 funded locally led priority area projects for a better environment
- \$1.6 million for financial and education assistance in 1999
- Conservation plan development and implementation provided to producers
- 65% of funds to South Carolina's 12 funded priority areas
- 35% of funds to statewide resource concern: ***water quality improvement***



Natural Resources Conservation Service, *in cooperation with* the USDA Farm Service Agency and the Conservation Districts of South Carolina -- **Columbia, South Carolina, December 1998**

1999 EQIP Priority Areas in South Carolina



The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) depends on South Carolinians working together to address erosion, water quality, manure management, wildlife habitat and other natural resource issues.

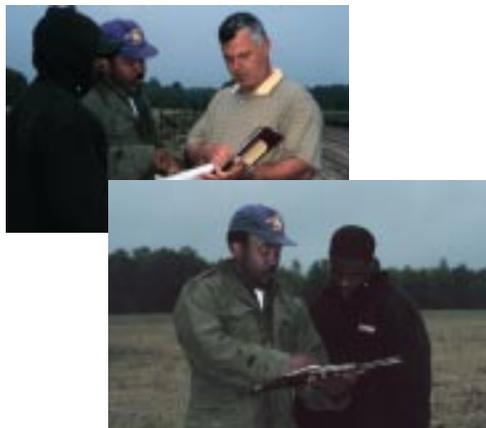
The program involves producers and partners in a locally led planning process to identify natural resource needs, assess conditions, develop solutions and set conservation priorities. For FY99, 12 local priority areas have been funded in South Carolina from 32 projects submitted statewide.

EQIP was established in the 1996 Farm Bill to provide a single, voluntary conservation incentive program for landowners to protect natural resources.

Priority Area Project Name	County(s)	Acres	Funding
1. Wallace-Crooked Creek	Marlboro	98,000	\$ 70,000
2. Ridge Sustainable Agriculture	Edgefield, Aiken, Lexington, Saluda	100,000	90,000
3. Dillon Waste Management	Dillon	135,000	100,000
4. Horry Wetland Protection	Horry	170,000	110,000
5. Upper Black River WQ	Sumter	215,000	110,000
6. Upper Lake Marion	Clarendon	37,400	79,000
7. Upper Salkehatchie	Barnwell	137,000	88,000
8. Lower Lake Marion	Clarendon	48,000	79,000
9. Black Mingo	Williamsburg	47,300	78,000
10. Little Saluda River	Saluda	40,788	78,000
11. Central Kershaw	Kershaw	49,700	79,000
12. Scope Ore Watershed	Lee	67,000	78,000

EQIP Success in South Carolina

Here a just a few examples of EQIP at work in the state



Mark Myers

Livestock Producer
Sumter County, SC

Mark Myers decided to apply for EQIP funding to improve his pastureland where his horses and livestock graze. Once in cropland, the 16-acre coastal bermuda grass field is now complete with fencing, awaiting completion of an automatic running water system. Under his EQIP contract, Myers received cost sharing to install his fencing and water source.

“EQIP is a good program, and NRCS will go to great lengths to help you get started,” emphasized Myers who learned about the program through another limited resource farmer. “I was already planning the fencing; EQIP just helped me to move up my timetable a bit. I was really pleased that the project went so well.”

Myers is seeing great benefit from using EQIP funding to improve his livestock operation. So far, he is able to maintain his herd more efficiently with more grazing, more pounds per cow, and more profit.

Tyson Waddell

Dairy Farmer
Spartanburg County, SC

In operation about two years, Tyson Waddell specializes in producing genetically improved Jerseys for worldwide distribution. As a matter-of-fact, his herd is 22nd of the 5500 nationwide, and he has the sixth ranked Jersey of the top 200 in the country. Maintaining the 130-acre farm with approximately 80 Jerseys, Waddell was able to fully realize his dream of having his own herd with a little help from EQIP.

“As with any dairy operation, concern arises with waste management. EQIP helped me to implement a waste management system, in addition to cross fences, drainage pipes funneling from the cow facility to the lagoon, and fences to keep the cows out of the creek.” Waddell’s EQIP planning and implementation is virtually complete, and he is getting excellent results from the work that was done.

“NRCS gave me good advice and the financial assistance I received under EQIP was definitely put to good use.”

James Brailsford

Turkey Producer
Lee County, SC

James Brailsford is a full-time turkey producer, raising birds to sell to Prestige Farms. In need of a more efficient method of waste disposal from his eight turkey housing units, he applied for EQIP funding to develop a better waste management system.

Through EQIP, Brailsford was able to build the first turkey composter in Lee County, which he built himself with advisement from NRCS. “The composter allows me the opportunity to use the litter as fertilizer,” he said, “which I wasn’t able to do before.” Adjacent farmers also benefit from using the litter on their land. In the near future, he hopes to add another composter and stacking shed.

“The program is very good...but people are not taking full advantage of the opportunity EQIP offers,” he adds. Brailsford makes it a point to encourage other farmers in neighboring counties to get involved and participate in many of the programs offered by NRCS.

EQIP '99 at a glance...

Continuing in 1999, local conservation projects are being funded through USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Local work groups developed applications with specific natural resource concerns for a designated watershed area.

An interagency group rated the applications based on criteria and direction from the State Technical Committee. In FY99, 32 project priority area projects were submitted from areas in the state.

South Carolina received just over \$1.6 million for financial and education assistance through EQIP in 1999.

While more than 65 percent of the funds are used in priority areas, 35 percent of the money is available to landowners outside those areas that are working on statewide resource concerns.

EQIP contracts

EQIP provides cost-share to apply structural practices and incentive payments for management practices for natural resource improvement.

The multi-year contracts are long-term commitments by USDA and the producer to treat several resource concerns over a period of time. Comprehensive plans are developed to treat a tract of land or whole farm.

Landowners who enter into EQIP sign 5- to 10-year contracts. Practices and plans for EQIP are to treat the land to a sustainable level to address the primary resource concern. EQIP contracts may have several components.

Application for an EQIP contract is done at the USDA Service Center. Applications are ranked and selected for funding based on environmental benefits achieved and costs of applying the practices.

In a priority area

Most decisions are made locally for EQIP. If you believe you have eligible land in a priority area and want to apply for consideration for a funded EQIP contract, visit your local USDA Service Center.

The local work group makes these decisions:

- Conservation practices that will be cost shared
- Cost share rates
- Sign up dates
- Application criteria
- Criteria used for ranking varies from priority area to area.

Outside a priority area

Land not in a priority area is also eligible for EQIP funds. To receive the highest ranking, you must be treating the designated statewide resource concern: *water quality improvement*

Contact your local USDA Service Center for application information.

Program Administration

NRCS has overall leadership for EQIP, but NRCS and FSA jointly administer the program. The State Technical Committee offers advice on establishing criteria and priorities at the state level.

Local work groups, which include representatives from soil and water conservation districts, the FSA county committee, the FSA county executive director, and the NRCS district conservationist, are responsible to address natural resource issues and to set local program direction. The locally led process also involves input from local groups including producers, agency personnel, environmental organizations, commodity groups and many others. The conservation district chairs local work groups.

The local work group provides guidance and direction for the local development of priority area proposals and the overall USDA conservation programs in each county.

