



Inflation Reduction Act Funds for Climate-Smart Agriculture Available for RI Farmers



USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service is making over \$780,000 in fiscal year 2023 funds available for oversubscribed conservation programs in Rhode Island – the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) – through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

IRA funding is targeted to help farmers and forest landowners apply climate-smart practices to improve their operations' resiliency and productivity. Investments in practices like cover crops, conservation tillage, wetland restoration, prescribed grazing, nutrient management, tree planting, forage and hay planting, and livestock waste management will also benefit the environment, and the producer's bottom line, by conserving water, improving soil health and wildlife habitat, and reducing runoff.

“The Inflation Reduction Act provided a once-in-a-generation investment in conservation on working lands, and we want to work with farmers and forest landowners to invest in climate-smart practices that create value and economic opportunity for producers,” said R. Phou Vongkhamdy, Rhode Island NRCS State Conservationist.

NRCS accepts producer applications for its conservation programs year-round, but farmers and forest landowners should apply for this year's EQIP-IRA and CSP-IRA funding cycle by April 21, 2023.

For ACEP Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE), applications for the current IRA funding cycle must be submitted by March 17, 2023. This year, NRCS will prioritize ACEP-WRE for eligible lands that contain soils high in organic carbon.

Funding is provided through a competitive process and will include an opportunity to address the unmet demand from farmers who have previously sought funding for climate-smart conservation activities. For details, see the national news release, visit the Rhode Island NRCS website at www.RI.nrcs.usda.gov or contact your local NRCS office.

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