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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Iowa NRCS Sets Nov. 22 Cutoff for Conservation Program Applications

DES MOINES, IA, Oct. 17, 2024 — The first application cutoff for Iowa farmers and other private landowners to apply for conservation practices in Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 through USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs is Nov. 22.

NRCS accepts conservation program applications on a continuous basis but sets application cutoff dates as funding allows. Iowa agricultural producers and private landowners can apply for NRCS conservation program funding by visiting their local NRCS office. Iowa has 100 NRCS field offices, located at USDA Service Centers in every county.

The Nov. 22 application cutoff includes the following NRCS Farm Bill programs:

- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

Last year, NRCS obligated a record \$103 million to Iowans through CSP, EQIP and RCPP. Iowa NRCS State Conservationist Jon Hubbert believes FY25 will be another record year. “The demand for conservation funding in Iowa has never been greater,” said Hubbert. “From soil health to water quality to wildlife habitat, our staff are available to help with your resource conservation needs.”

A major reason for the increase in conservation funding is the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Signed into law in August 2022, the IRA is delivering unprecedented conservation funding to Iowa farmers. About 36 percent of Iowa NRCS conservation funding last year was through the IRA.

In addition to traditional program funding, the IRA adds targeted funding for climate-smart agricultural practices that benefit soil health, water quality, wildlife habitat, and treat other resource concerns. Examples include no-till farming, cover crops, conservation cover, crop

rotations, nutrient management, prescribed grazing, tree-shrub establishment, and windbreak-shelterbelt establishment/renovation.

More about NRCS conservation programs:

CSP

Through CSP, NRCS helps agricultural producers build their operation while implementing conservation practices that help ensure its sustainability. The program provides many benefits including increased crop yields, decreased inputs, wildlife habitat improvements, and increased resilience to weather extremes. CSP is intended for working lands including cropland, pastureland, nonindustrial private forest land and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of a tribe.

EQIP

Through EQIP, NRCS offers planning and financial assistance to implement conservation practices such as no-till, cover crops, terraces, grassed waterways, nutrient management, manure management facilities, and pasture management.

The Nov. 22 application signup cutoff includes EQIP initiatives, such as the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI), Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI), Prairie Pothole Water Quality and Wildlife Program, Organic Initiative, High Tunnel Initiative, and On-Farm Energy Initiative.

RCPP

Through RCPP, NRCS co-invests with partners to implement projects that demonstrate innovative solutions to conservation challenges and provide measurable improvements and outcomes tied to resource concerns.

For a complete list of Iowa RCPP projects, visit: nrcs.usda.gov/programs-initiatives/iowa/RCPP.

To apply for NRCS conservation programs, contact your local NRCS office. For more information about conservation planning and programs to help treat natural resource issues on your land, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/ia.

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