

About NRCS

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works to protect and conserve natural resources on our nation's private lands.

As part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, NRCS administers conservation programs funded primarily through the 2008 Farm Bill.

The conservation provisions in the 2008 Farm Bill will affect farmers for years to come. New provisions continue to build on the conservation gains made by U.S. citizens over the past decade. Existing programs have been simplified and new programs created to address high priority environmental protection goals.

In addition to addressing a broad range of environmental goals, the 2008 Farm Bill includes increased financial assistance for new, limited resource, and socially disadvantaged farmers.



Contact your local NRCS field office for more information and assistance.

Contact NRCS:

Delaware USDA Service Centers

Kent: 302-741-2600

New Castle: 302-832-3100

Sussex: 302-856-3100

Are You Eligible for NRCS Assistance?

Introduction

If you would like to receive financial assistance through NRCS programs, please review the checklist below to determine your eligibility. However, if you are not interested in receiving funding, but would like to talk to someone about addressing natural resource concerns on your operation, please contact your local USDA Service Center. Our staff is available to assist anyone with conservation planning anytime the office is open.

Step 1: Meeting the minimum eligibility requirements

Check your requirements here. Applicant must:

- ✓ be **currently** engaged in agricultural or forest production on eligible land;
- ✓ be an individual, entity, or joint operation;
- ✓ have documented control of the land for the term of the contract; and
- ✓ have an average adjusted gross income of \$1 million or less annually.

Eligible land must:

- ✓ be ag land, nonindustrial private forest land, or other land on which ag products, livestock, or forest products are produced.
- ✓ not receive other USDA program payments for the same conservation practice;
- ✓ have an identified natural resource concern which NRCS can address;
- ✓ be in compliance with highly-erodible land (HEL) and wetland compliance provisions; and
- ✓ be privately owned. Publicly owned lands are eligible only if the land is leased or rented to an eligible agricultural producer.

Step 2: Applying for assistance

- The recommended next step is obtaining a conservation plan for your land.
 - A NRCS representative will schedule an appointment to complete an on-site assessment of your farm and develop a conservation plan. Conservation planning completed prior to application ranking allows the ranking process to move more quickly, because the applicant will already have identified the conservation needs.
- Complete and sign a NRCS-CPA-1200 program application. You will need to read the NRCS-CPA-1202-GPC appendix which explains the rules of the programs.
- Complete any additional necessary forms, as requested by the NRCS representative.



Applying for Financial Assistance

Help for beginning, limited-resource and socially disadvantaged farmers

The 2008 Farm Bill continues to address the unique circumstances and concerns of farmers who are beginning (farming fewer than 10 years), have limited resources, or who are socially disadvantaged because they belong to racial or ethnic groups that have historically been subjected to prejudice. It provides for voluntary participation, offers incentives, and focuses on equality in accessing USDA programs and services.

Additional benefits include (but are not limited to):

- Increased payments for the costs associated with planning and implementing conservation measures may be available for socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers.
- Socially disadvantaged customers may be eligible for an advance payment up to 30 percent of anticipated costs to be incurred to purchase materials or services to implement a practice. The landowner must make a formal request, and if approved, must agree to complete project within 30 days.



For more information visit NRCS online:

www.de.nrcs.usda.gov

Step 3: Required Documentation

- If you do not have a Farm and Tract number, you will need to contact the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to establish one. FSA offices are co-located within NRCS offices in each county. Bring with you proof of your control of the land (deed/lease) and signature of authority to represent a business, if applicable (for entities, or joint operations).
- Then the Farm Service Agency will assist you in completing:
 - Form to determine HEL and Wetland Compliance;
 - Form to establish Adjusted Gross Income; and
 - Form CCC-901 Members' information for entities and joint operations.

Step 4: Application Ranking & Selection

- Your application, completed in step 2, is given a ranking score based on National, State and local ranking factors. After the funding cut-off date, the highest ranked applications will be funded until the money is exhausted. If your application is not funded, you may reapply each year or you can request to defer your application to the following program year.

(All requirements are subject to change with the approval of the next Farm Bill.)

For additional information on NRCS programs and services, please visit Delaware NRCS online or contact your local USDA Service Center.

• **Dover Field Office**
 Serving Kent County
 800 Bay Rd.
 Dover, DE 19901
 302-741-2600 ext. 3

• **Georgetown Field Office**
 Serving Sussex County
 21315 Berlin Rd., Unit 3
 Georgetown, DE 19947
 302-856-3990 ext. 3

• **Newark Field Office**
 Serving New Castle County
 2430 Old County Rd.
 Newark, DE 19702
 302-832-3100 ext. 3



NRCS District Conservationist Marianne Hardesty reviews a conservation plan with Delaware farmer Jahtenny Leda.