

**USDA NRCS - Non-Successful Program Participants-EQIP  
Customer Satisfaction Survey  
FINAL VERSION**

**Verify Respondent**

Intro1. Hello. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has hired my company, [Data Collection Company], to call on their behalf to conduct a brief survey about the services they provide. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. May I please speak with \_\_\_\_\_?

**WAIT FOR RESPONSE**

1. Correct Person on Phone (**GO TO INTRO**)
2. Not correct person, but Person is available (**HOLD UNTIL RESPONDENT ANSWERS AND READ BELOW**)

Intro2. Hello. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has hired my company, [Data Collection Company], to call on their behalf. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. (**GO TO INTRO**)

1. If Person not available (**Schedule a call back**)
2. If No Such Person **"Thank you and have a nice day!"**
3. Refusal/Hung Up

**Introduction**

**IF SPEAKING WITH CORRECT PERSON CONTINUE BELOW**

**The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) [pronounced E-KWIP] that provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to promote agricultural production and environmental quality and to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land to make sound natural resource decisions and promote conservation.**

We ask on behalf of NRCS for your participation in a short survey that asks about your satisfaction with the services it provides to you and other landowners and operators. This survey will take approximately 12 minutes of your time. This survey is authorized by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget Control No. 1505-0191.

(NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: IF THE RESPONDENT HAS ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SURVEY PLEASE RECORD THE NATURE OF THEIR QUESTION AND HAVE THEM CONTACT MAGGIE RHODES 202-690-2264 or maggie.rhodes@wdc.usda.gov)

Intro1. ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM FROM THE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)?

1. Yes (Skip to Intro 4)
2. No/Don't Know (IF NO/DON'T KNOW PLEASE READ BELOW **IN BOLD**)

Intro2. Just to confirm, have you applied for EQIP financial assistance but did NOT receive approval for

## EQIP

funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service in the past TWO years?

1. Yes (Continue)
2. No (Terminate) **“Thank you and have a nice day!”**
3. Don't Know (Terminate) **“Thank you and have a nice day!”**

Intro3. Is now a good time?

1. Yes (Continue)
2. No “Can we schedule a time that is more convenient for you?”

(For all questions, please include choices 98 = Don't Know and 99 = Refused/Hung Up)

Now, I would like you to think about the initial stages of applying for a contract through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. I want to ask you specifically about some of the processes leading up to your applying for a contract through the EQIP program...

- Q1. Once you learned about the possibility of receiving conservation cost sharing through EQIP and made initial contact, how helpful were personnel in explaining the nature of the program? Again, we will use a 10-point scale on which "1" means "not at all helpful" and "10" means "very helpful". How helpful were the personnel in explaining the nature of the program?
- Q2. How easy was the process of applying for EQIP assistance through the NRCS, in terms of the amount of paperwork to be completed, the clarity of this paperwork and the time it took to complete this paperwork? Again, we will use a 10-point scale on which "1" means "not at all easy" and "10" means "very easy". How easy was the process of applying for a contract through the EQIP program?
- Q3. How clear and understandable was the NRCS ranking process used to determine which applications will be selected for funding? Using a 10-point scale on which "1" now means "not at all clear and understandable" and "10" means "very clear and understandable", how clear and understandable were the point and prioritization systems?

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#### Application Process/Submission/Evaluation

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Please think about the application submission process for EQIP.

Q4a. Did you have assistance in filling out the application?

1. Yes (Ask Q4b)
2. No (Skip to Q5)
3. Don't Know (Skip to Q5)

Q4b. Who assisted you in filling out the application?

Q5. Was a conservation plan developed before or after your application for EQIP funding?

1. Before
2. After
3. Don't Know

## EQIP

Again, thinking about the application submission process for EQIP. On a scale from "1" to "10," where "1" is "poor" and "10" is "excellent," please rate the following. If a question does not apply, please answer "does not apply":

Q6. Ease of understanding the terms of the program

Q7a. Ease of filling out application

*ASK Q7b if Q7a = 6 or lower*

Q7b. What suggestions do you have for improving the application process?

Q8. Clarity of eligibility requirements

Q9. Did NRCS explain the application Ranking Tool and criteria on selection process?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

Q10. Did NRCS give an explanation of why you were not funded?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

Q11. Were you advised on appeal rights for you application denial?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

Q12. Were you informed your application would be in the next round for consideration for funding?

1. Yes (Continue to Q13 and Q14)
2. No (Skip to Q15)
3. Don't Know

Q13. Do you intend to pursue funding?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

Q14. Have you been able to schedule an appointment to improve your application?

1. Yes (Skip to Q16)
2. No (Skip to Q16)

## EQIP

3. Don't Know (Skip to Q16)

Q15. Were you given an opportunity to or information to improve your application?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

Q16. Have you been able to improve your application?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

Q17. Have you been denied funding more than once?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

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### Response

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Now think about the response that you received from NRCS on your application.

Q18. Please rate how clearly the information about your score and the reason why you did not get funding was communicated to you. Use a scale where "1" means "not very clearly" and "10" means "very clearly."

Think about the response that you received regarding the application you submitted to EQIP. On a scale from "1" to "10," where "1" is "poor" and "10" is "excellent," please rate the following:

Q19. Timeliness of response

Q20. Clarity of explanation of status of application and next steps in the process

Q21. Why you were not selected for funding at this time? (*NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Do not read answer choices. Capture verbatim comments and code answer*)

1. Lack of available funding
2. Limited conservation benefits
3. Implementation too costly
4. Practice not eligible for funding
5. Other
6. Unknown/Don't Know

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### Communication

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Q22. How did you hear about the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service? (*NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Do not read answer choices. Capture verbatim comments and code answer*)

1. Referral from another Government agency
2. Referral from Non-government organization (NGO)
3. Workshop/Information session

4. Direct visit from staff
5. From USDA or NRCS website
6. Other

Q23. How do you prefer to receive information?

1. In-person
2. Printed materials and newsletters
3. Online
4. Direct mailings
5. Other (Specify)

Q24. Would you complete an EQIP application online?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

Q25. Did you receive conservation planning assistance before the application process?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

Q26. Were potential improvements and identified resource concerns discussed in the planning process?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

Q27. What thing(s) can NRCS do to let more producers know about the programs and technical assistance it provides?

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### ACSI Benchmark Questions

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Now we are going to ask you to please consider your experiences with the assistance you have received from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in answering the following.

Q28. First, please consider all your experiences to date in getting assistance from NRCS. Using a 10-point scale on which "1" means "Very dissatisfied" and "10" means "Very satisfied," how satisfied are you with the assistance that you have received from NRCS?

Q29. To what extent has the assistance you have received from NRCS fallen short of your expectations or exceeded your expectations? Please use a 10-point scale on which "1" now means "Falls short of your expectations" and "10" means "Exceeds your expectations."

Q30. Forget about the assistance that you have received from NRCS a moment. Now, imagine what an ideal provider of this type of assistance may be like.

## EQIP

How well do you think assistance from NRCS compares with that ideal? Please use a 10-point scale on which "1" means "Not very close to the ideal" and "10" means "Very close to the ideal."

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**Outcomes**


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Q31. How likely are you to return to NRCS for assistance in the future? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where "1" means "not very likely" and "10" means "very likely."

Q32. How likely are you to recommend USDA NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program to others? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where "1" means "not very likely" and "10" means "very likely."

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**Open-Ends**


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Q33. How has your farming operations changed since you were notified that you were not eligible for funding from NRCS?

Q34. How do you expect the new Farm Bill to impact you and your farming operations?

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**Demographics**


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Now, I have a few last questions that will help us in grouping your responses with other producers that are similar to you.

QD1. What is your age, please?

[RECORD NUMBER OF YEARS]

Don't Know

REFUSED

QD2. Are you farming as an individual or as a family farm, or are you farming as a member of a business entity? (Interview Read: A Business entity would include corporations, partnerships, estates, trusts, and other types of businesses.)

1. Individual/Family Farm

2. Member of Business Entity

3. Both Individual/Family and Member of Business Entity

98. Don't Know

99. Refused

(Family farm: A family farm is defined as a farm not operated by a hired manager and that is organized as a sole or family proprietorship.)

QD3. What was your total annual income in 2007 before taxes? (*READ CODES 1-7 AS NECESSARY*)

1. Less than \$10,000

2. Between \$10,000 and \$24,999

3. Between \$25,000 and \$99,999

4. Between \$100,000 and \$249,999

5. \$250,000 or more

6. Don't Know

7. Refused

QD4. Gender (By Observation)

1. Male

2. Female

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Closing

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The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) would like to thank you for your time and participation today. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.