

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

The WSU *Pest Management Transition Project* offers educational assistance to help growers successfully transition from broad-spectrum insecticides to mating disruption and new IPM technologies. EQIP can provide qualified growers with the financial assistance to help make this transition. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering growers financial assistance, through EQIP, for the

2009 season as an incentive to implement the use of Integrated Pest Management. EQIP is a voluntary conservation program and funding is limited. In 2008, over \$500,000 was awarded to qualified orchardists in Washington. **This year's sign up deadline is July 15, 2008.** NRCS encourages applicants to submit application materials prior to July 15 to allow time for an on-site visit with an NRCS conservationist.

To sign up please contact your local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office:

Wenatchee: 664-0275
Yakima: 454-5743
Waterville: 745-8362 Ext. 3
Zillah: 829-3003
Okanogan: 422-2750 Ext. 3
Prosser: 786-1923
Ephrata: 754-2463 Ext. 3

New Considerations for 2009

The following orchard pest management practices may qualify for EQIP assistance (payment/year for up to 3 years):

- CM mating disruption: \$125/acre.
- Reduced risk pesticides: \$75/acre.
- Conversion to low-volume precision sprayers: \$50/acre.
- Pest management plan – including orchard scouting: \$1,000 per contract.

For the first time, in three NRCS service areas, orchardists will be considered for financial assistance, through EQIP, for costs associated with implementing integrated pest management practices without applying for an irrigation system upgrade. These service areas include: North Central (Chelan, Douglas, and Okanogan counties), Big Bend (Grant, Adams, and Kittitas counties) and South Cen-

tral (Yakima, Benton, and Klickitat counties).

Growers who have applied for EQIP assistance previously, but were not awarded contracts, are encouraged to re-apply.

The combined cap on pest management component payments is \$25,000 per contract.

Who Can Qualify for Assistance?

- Agricultural producers who make at least \$1,000 in gross farm sales.
- Applicant must control the land for the contract period (may own or lease).
- Individuals or entities that have an average adjusted gross income (AGI) of less than \$2.5 million for the three tax years

immediately preceding the year the contract is approved.

- Growers with an AGI above \$2.5 million can qualify if 75 percent of the AGI is derived from farming, ranching, or forestry operation.
- An owner with multiple entities or management units can apply for separate contracts

for those units within the same fiscal year.

Farm information must be provided to the USDA Farm Services Agency in order to determine eligibility. Eligible land includes cropland, rangeland, pasture, forestland, and other farm or ranch lands where the program is delivered. Organic and transition to organic orchards are eligible.

Applying for EQIP Assistance

Visit the Farm Services Agency (FSA), in the same building as NRCS, to update your farm information in their database to ensure your eligibility for EQIP.

Applications must be made in person, since you will need the assistance of an NRCS staff person.

Call or visit NRCS and ask to apply for EQIP. A farm visit may be included, or you may request one, so that the NRCS conservationist can help you identify other projects on your property that qualify for assistance – such as eroding access roads.

NRCS encourages farmers to develop a plan for conservation of all natural resources on their farms: water, soil, air quality, and wildlife.

EQIP applications are ranked on the natural resource benefits provided. In addition to adopting pest management practices that reduce environmental risk, other conservation practices valuable in and around orchards include:

- Irrigation system improvements that result in reduced water use and erosion.
- Soil moisture monitoring for

irrigation scheduling.

- Soil testing that will help gauge the soil's current chemical balance and assist growers in conserving resources such as water quality.
- Improving soil condition by increasing organic matter with composts.
- Providing food, water, or shelter for wildlife, beneficial insects, or native pollinators.
- Use of fabric mulch (weed barrier) to reduce herbicide use and moisture loss.

For More Information about EQIP

If you are interested in learning more about the EQIP program, call:

Naná Simone, Tree Fruit EQIP Coordinator,

Phone: 509-667-9557 or **cell** 630-2067.

Email: nanas@nwi.net. (Se habla español).

For specific information on ranking criteria for applications, eligible practices, and payment limits, visit:

http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/FY09/eqip_packets.html

For more information on the EQIP program for orchardists, visit the PMTP website: <http://pmtp.wsu.edu/EQIP.html>

Visit PMTP online at:
<http://pmtp.wsu.edu>

Pest Management Transition Project
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