The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is a technical agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

NRCS was established in 1935 as the Soil Conservation Service to carry out a continuing program of soil and water conservation.
NRCS Mission

Helping People Help the Land

- NRCS provides services that enable people to be good stewards of the Nation’s soil, water and related natural resources.
- Maintain condition of the land.
- Prevent damage to the land: potential degradation
- Enhance the land: future productivity and health
- Restore the land to health where damaged.
NRCS Programs

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)
- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
- Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Resource Conservation & Development Program (RCD)
- Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP)
Application Process

- **Open Enrollment:** Internet, Office, Mail
  www.al.nrcs.usda.gov

- **Farm Service Agency:** Required Documents
  - Farm and Tract #
  - 1026 Highly Erodible Lands (HEL) and Adjusted Gross Income (AGI)
  - 901 if LLC or other association

- 1199 – Direct Deposit Form
**Limited Resource Producer** – A person with direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than $155,200 in each of the previous two years. Also, with a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous two years.

Must self certify on application can use the Limited Resource Self-Determination Tool to determine eligibility at: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/smlfarmer V2/help.htm
Socially Disadvantaged Farmer - A farmer or rancher who has been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudices because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. Those groups include African Americans, American Indians or Alaskan natives, Hispanics, and Asians or Pacific Islanders.
A New and Beginning Farmer or Rancher means an individual or entity who:

• Has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years. This requirement applies to all members of an entity,
• Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch.
• In the case of a contract with an individual, individually or with the immediate family, material and substantial participation requires that the individual provide substantial day-to-day labor and management of the farm or ranch, consistent with the practices in the county or State where the farm is located.

• In the case of a contract with an entity, all members must materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch. Material and substantial participation requires that each of the members provide some amount of the management, or labor and management necessary for day-to-day activities, such that if each of the members did not provide these inputs, operation of the farm or ranch would be seriously impaired.
Contract Signing

- Agree to complete the contract within the 2 year timeline
- Agree to complete at least one practice within the first 12 months
- Complete Conservation Practices according to Standards and Specifications
- If participant fails to carry out the terms and conditions of contract the contract will be terminated and Cost of Recovery will be assessed.
EQIP:
Water Well, Pipeline, Heavy Use Area, Protection, Watering Facility
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

(EQIP) is a USDA program that provides payments to participants to address significant natural resource concerns on agricultural lands.

- Financial Assistance on 64 conservation practices
- Agricultural Lands – crop, pasture, hay, woods, headquarters
- Higher financial assistance rate for Historically Underserved participants
- County and Statewide funding pools
Special Projects for Statewide Resource Concerns

- Limited Resource Farm Project
- Socially Disadvantaged Farmer
- Beginning Farmer/Rancher
- Conservation Activity Plans
- Organic
Hugh Hammond Bennett (father of SCS) “...land must be nurtured; not plundered and wasted”
Non-Description Statements

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