

## **New opportunity for financial assistance for Fruit Growers**

Fruit growers in Washington can now sign up for a program that provides financial assistance to support the additional cost of using environmentally sound farming practices such as IPM.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) that provides payments to eligible growers for the use of a wide range of practices on their farms. Growers can receive incentive payments to implement practices such as advanced integrated pest management and nutrient management. Cost-share payments are also available to assist with installation of structural practices such as irrigation system improvements.

Fruit growers understand better than most people the value of practices that conserve natural resources and protect the environment. They also face an increasing array of environmental and regulatory challenges from water quality to endangered species. However, implementing those practices can also be expensive for growers. This program is a new and important opportunity for much-needed financial assistance to growers who want support for the additional costs of using environmentally sound farming practices.

To sign up or get more information, contact your local NRCS staff. Look in your phone book under United States Government – Agriculture Dept. – Natural Resources Conservation Service. Or, you can find the NRCS office in your county at: <http://www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov/about/>. Click “Find a service center” on the bottom of the left column on the webpage, to access the directory. **Sign ups for 2007 close on November 17.**