

Putting the Farm Bill to Work for Michigan Growers

New financial incentives for growers who want to implement integrated pest management

Fruit, vegetable, ornamental, and other growers have a new opportunity to receive incentive payments for using integrated pest management (IPM) practices. The 2002 Farm Bill increased federal conservation program support for growers to meet environmental challenges on their land. As a result, there are improved options for growers to get financial assistance for implementing IPM and other environmentally sound growing practices.

One important program for growers is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This voluntary program supports the use of conservation and land management practices such as IPM. EQIP offers growers per acre payments when they use IPM practices. EQIP Program support may pay for regular pest scouting or implementing a different pest management technique such as use of pheromones or ground covers. The Program is designed to help you use practices such as IPM that will help your production and address your environmental challenges. Another program is in development that rewards growers for continued use of these types of sound pest and environmental practices. The EQIP Program is available now, and growers can apply for the EQIP Program through their county office of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Cooperative effort to introduce new incentives

To assist growers, several groups have joined together to initiate the Putting the Farm Bill to Work Program. The Michigan Asparagus Advisory Board, Cherry Marketing Institute, and other grower-based organizations are joining with the Michigan State University IPM Program, Project GREEN, MSU Extension and the Center for Agricultural Partnerships to increase grower awareness about options for federal conservation program support. At the same time the Putting the Farm Bill to Work Program works with NRCS personnel at local, state and national levels to increase their understanding of growers' unique conservation and production needs for fruit, vegetables and other crops.

If you'd like more information on production and environmental benefits of using IPM on your farm and how EQIP and other conservation programs may assist, visit these websites:

www.ipm.msu.edu/farbill.htm and www.agcenter.org

Your local NRCS service center can provide you information on key resource concerns and the application process:

www.mi.nrcs.usda.gov/contact/directory/

Additional information will also be published in the MSU Crop Advisory Team (CAT) Alert newsletters (www.ipm.msu.edu/aboutcat.htm) and the newsletters of the Michigan Asparagus Advisory Board and Cherry Marketing Institute.

Watch for Putting the Farm Bill to Work activities throughout 2003-04

During 2003, special local activities are planned for the cherry and asparagus industry, working with NRCS district offices, MSU Extension county offices, and the Michigan Asparagus Advisory Board and the Cherry Marketing Institute. Putting the Farm Bill to Work will also develop a guide for growers who are interested in IPM and how conservation programs like EQIP can be used to implement IPM.

For information on EQIP,
visit these websites:

www.ipm.msu.edu/farbill.htm

www.agcenter.org

and contact your local NRCS
conservationist.

