

# United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service Program Sign – Up 2012

Hello my name is Joseph Heller, District Conservationist administering USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service programs in Orange and Rockland counties. I have recently been selected for this exciting position and I'm eager to meet with landowners, citizens, environmental groups, educators and elected officials to promote USDA-NRCS opportunities. We look forward to getting involved with efforts to conserve Hudson Valley's farms, abundant natural, cultural and historic resources. I am available to meet with you individually or to present information in a group setting, feel free to contact me at:

**Joseph Heller**

**District Conservationist**

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Now is the time for landowners, farmers, and forestland owners to apply for 2012 conservation program funding. The programs include the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA), and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP).

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) offers funding assistance in the form of engineered structures, such as manure handling facilities, and conservation practices such as grassed waterways. EQIP also includes several special initiatives such as organic production and High Tunnels. Private forestland owners have opportunities to improve forest health and productivity under the woodland program focus area.

The Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA) focuses on improving irrigation efficiency.

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) focuses on improving habitat for at-risk shrub-dwelling birds. Another focus within the program is establishing and enhancing grassland habitat for declining bird species, pollinators, and other wildlife.

Applications for EQIP, AMA, and WHIP are competitive and ranked based on national, state, and locally identified resource priorities, and their overall benefit to the environment. If you are interested in signing up for any of the above programs or would like additional information, please contact me or Robert Merrill, Soil Conservationist at the **Middletown Field Office at (845) 343-1872 Extension 110**.

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