MIDWEST ORGANIC
& Sustainable Education Service
MOSES

201

March 9, 2009

Financial Assistance Programs Division
U S Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
1400 Independence Avenue, SW. Room 5237S
Washington, DC 20250-2890

RE: Docket Number **NRCS- IFR-08005**

The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) is in full support of efforts to make EQIP more inclusive of organic agriculture practices - including implementing a new provision that assists farmers converting to organic farming systems and rewarding the conservation benefits of organic farming.

Additionally:

1. Organic agriculture needs to be acknowledged as a new National Priority for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), as mandated by Congress in the 2008 Farm Bill. The Chief of NRCS should issue a Directive to all State Conservationists reinforcing this change
2. Clarify that the $80,000 cap for Organic Conversion Support contracts applies *only to organic conversion plans,* and does not cover all organic operations applying to EQIP. Also, clarify that the regular cap of $300,000 applies to organic operators who are not seeking conversion support.
3. The Organic Conversion Support should be available in all 50 states.
4. The Organic Conversion Support applications should be ranked and processed as a separate subcategory

The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) educational outreach organization working to promote sustainable and organic agriculture in the upper Midwest. MOSES organizes the annual Organic Farming Conference, held in La Crosse, Wisconsin, and provides trainings to farmers and agricultural professionals throughout the year. We publish *The Organic Broadcaster*, a bi-monthly newspaper, *The Upper Midwest Organic Resource Directory* and other organic farming resources. MOSES also sells books and supports farmers via a toll-free information hotline.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Faye Jones

Faye Jones
faye@mosesorganic.org