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Financial Assistance Programs Division

U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

1400 Independence Avenue, SW. Room 5237S

Washington, DC 20250-2890

4/17/09

Re: Docket Number NRCS- IFR-08005" Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Final Rules

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

Our country must stand up for family farmers and encourage best agricultural practices.

Please ensure that the USDA will stop using taxpayer dollars to bailout factory farms and help support sustainable and organic farmers that protect the environment and build strong rural communities.

The USDA needs to ensure that the EQIP rule be clarified, in accordance with the 2008 Farm Bill, and that EQIP assistance is available to all farmers and ranchers for comprehensive whole farm conservation planning.

The final EQIP rule must also require NRCS State Conservationists to rank and process applications for organic conversion assistance in a separate funding pool that makes clear that the limit of \$80,000 over a 4-year period applies only to organic conversion payments and not all EQIP payments made to organic farmers and ranchers.

The EQIP rule should be amended to prohibit the use of EQIP funding for animal waste storage, treatment or transportation for new or expanding CAFOs and the EQIP rule must not allow waivers to increase assistance to CAFOs above the \$300,000 payment limit.

CAFOs have negative impacts on water quality, decrease the value of their neighbor's property, and harbor antibiotic-resistant bacteria that threaten human health.

Please stand up for independent family farmers and accept these recommendations.

Sincerely,
Sandra Reynolds
32 Hillside Avenue
Montclair, NJ 07042