

381  
4/17/09

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

Re: Docket Number NRCS-IFR-080053  
Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) Final Rules

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

Much is at risk if we don't insist upon best agricultural practices for our environment and for our forgotten national treasures, our small farmers!

It is imperative that the USDA stops using tax dollars to bailout factory farms that do so much harm to the environment and the livelihood of small farmers.

The EQIP rule needs clarification so that assistance is available to all farmers and ranchers for comprehensive whole farm conservation planning

Also, the processing of applications for organic conversion assistance needs to be separated so 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.

As for funding for animal waste storage, treatment or transportation for new or expanding CAFO's this should be prohibited as this is counter-intuitive to good farming practices! Numerous studies have proven conclusively that corporate CAFO's have negative impacts on water quality, decrease the value to their neighbor's property, and harbor antibiotic-resistant bacteria that threatens human life!!!! Assitance should not be increased past the \$300,000 as assistance to CAFO's

Organic farmers and ranchers deserve fair treatment and to be on equal footing when being given assistance. This can be achieved if the USDA protects the people and collective resources over the interests of giant corporate agribusinesses.

Please use your authority to make the right choice where family farmers and ranchers are concerned.

Sincerely,

*Suzanne Hays, 4, 16, 2009*

Suzanne Fontaine-Hays  
12509 NE 80<sup>th</sup> Pl.  
Kirkland, WA 98033  
Suzannehays@yahoo.com