

Wheat Profitability: NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program

For those who are not yet convinced enough to use Sensor Based Nitrogen Recommendations there is yet one more incentive, the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). The Nutrient Management EQIP program that promotes sensor use is not completely new, in fact in the 2008 there was 20 times the Calibration strips were included in contracts in Beaver Co., 3 in Cimarron Co., 30 in Harmon Co., and 15 in Jackson Co.

EQIP programs are determined by each county, so at this time your county may not have nutrient management as a top priority. This means if you are interested in participating you need to visit your local USDA-NRCS field office and express your desire. When more interest is shown in a particular program the ranking increases.

EQIP is a program that is used to promote adoption, so if you are already implementing the management practice you are not eligible for the incentive. The 2008 EQIP allowed for the use of Calibration Strips (N-rich or Ramp Calibration Strip) with the GreenSeeker™ sensor. The 2008 payment was set at \$6.46/ac with a cap on 640 acres for a period of one, two, or three years. This equates to \$4,134.40 per year in payments if 640 acres are enrolled, that means \$12,403.2 if the contract is set for three years. Precision application is also on the EQIP program list. This would require the purchase of the RT-200 variable rate N system. The 2008 payment was set at \$11.17/ ac with a cap on 640 acres for a period of one, two, or three years. This calculates to \$4,134.40 per year in payments if 640 acres are enrolled. This equates to \$7,148.80 per year in payments if 640 acres are enrolled, with a three year contract that sum comes to \$21,446.40. These values could change with the 2009 contract year but they are not expected to change by much. The numbers quoted for the 2008 contracts are under practice code 590 – Nutrient Management. Since EQIP is locally led, this cost list is actually published on each county's web page for EQIP 2008. You have to pull up each county and read the description and ranking criteria. http://www.ok.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip_CoDesc08/index.html. An explanation of the EQIP program is available at

<http://www.ok.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/index.html>.

Keep in mind that several years of research has shown that on average a wheat producer can save \$10.00/ ac by implementing the Reference Strip program. So with the prices of nitrogen as high as they are the question is; can you afford not to implement this?

For more information on using Reference Strips visit www.nue.okstate.edu. And if you want more information on the variable rate applicators visit the OSU NUE site or N-Tech industries (maker of the GreenSeeker™ Sensor) <http://www.ntechindustries.com/> or Red Ball (distributors of the RT 200 variable rate applicator) <http://www.redballproducts.com/>.