

Eligibility

BMP CHALLENGE works in thirteen states to reduce run-off of nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium and sediments/topsoil. In each of these states, BMP CHALLENGE uses the same criteria to manage participant eligibility.

To be eligible for participation in the BMP CHALLENGE program, farmers must:

Work with a crop advisor – Crop advisors should help farmers determine their nutrient and tillage needs and opportunities. Crop advisors do receive an incentive payment following the growing season. Payments are currently \$3.25 per acre for Nutrient BMP CHALLENGE and \$6 per acre for Reduced Tillage BMP CHALLENGE.

Sign-up prior to any nutrient or tillage activity – Because we ask participants to work with a crop advisor, we ask them to refrain from any practices until they are confirmed with their advisor. In most situations, this does not allow for fall commercial nitrogen application or tillage activity.

Grow corn for grain or silage – BMP CHALLENGE does not allow sweet corn, popcorn or corn grown for wildlife.

Grow corn within a project state – Programs are available for thirteen states, including Delaware, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Nebraska, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin. Missouri is being added, but is not currently involved in the project.

Maintain Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) eligibility – Participants must qualify for the USDA-NRCS program. Conditions include not receiving more than \$450,000 in Farm Bill appropriated funds (between 2002-2007), not having an adjusted gross income of greater than \$2.5 million for three tax years following an Farm Bill is approved and complying with highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions of the 1985 Farm Bill. More information on the EQIP can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/PROGRAMS/EQIP/>.

Enroll in no more than 160 acres per farm – BMP CHALLENGE will cover no more than 160 acres per farm. This may include multiple, smaller fields, but is capped at a combined total of 160 acres.

Note: Farmers are allowed and encouraged to receive additional funding for their practices, i.e. through a watershed district program's 319 grant-funding.