

AMENDMENT NO. _____ Calendar No. _____

Purpose: To authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a micro-EQIP pilot program under the environmental quality incentives program.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES—115th Cong., 2d Sess.

S. _____

To provide for the reform and continuation of agricultural and other programs of the Department of Agriculture through fiscal year 2023, and for other purposes.

Referred to the Committee on _____ and
ordered to be printed

Ordered to lie on the table and to be printed

AMENDMENTS intended to be proposed by Mr. BENNET

Viz:

1 On page 115, line 25, strike “and”.

2 On page 116, line 19, strike the period at the end
3 and insert “; and”.

4 On page 116, between lines 19 and 20, insert the fol-
5 lowing:

6 (6) by adding at the end the following:

7 “(j) MICRO-EQIP PILOT PROGRAM.—

8 “(1) IN GENERAL.—On request of not more
9 than 10 States, the Secretary may establish under

1 the environmental quality incentives program a pilot
2 program in that State under which the Secretary
3 may—

4 “(A) provide financial and technical assist-
5 ance to small-scale agricultural producers, in-
6 cluding beginning farmers and ranchers and
7 limited resource producers, that enter into con-
8 tracts with the Secretary under the pilot pro-
9 gram to address natural resource concerns re-
10 lating to production on small-scale agricultural
11 operations; and

12 “(B) conduct outreach to small-scale agri-
13 cultural producers to increase participation in
14 the pilot program.

15 “(2) PAYMENTS.—

16 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall
17 determine whether a small-scale agricultural
18 producer is eligible to receive payments under
19 this subsection—

20 “(i) on a State-by-State basis;

21 “(ii) in consultation with the technical
22 committee established under section
23 1261(a) of the State in which the small-
24 scale agricultural producer is located; and

1 “(iii) based on factors that may in-
2 clude—

3 “(I) the operations of a small-
4 scale agricultural producer, including
5 with respect to adjusted gross income
6 and gross sales;

7 “(II) demographic data relating
8 to small-scale agricultural producers
9 compiled by the National Agricultural
10 Statistics Service; and

11 “(III) other relevant information,
12 as determined by the Secretary.

13 “(B) AMOUNT.—The Secretary shall pro-
14 vide payments under this subsection to a pro-
15 ducer that is eligible for the payments under
16 subparagraph (A) in an amount that the Sec-
17 retary determines is necessary to achieve the
18 purpose described in paragraph (1)(A).

19 “(3) APPLICATIONS.—

20 “(A) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to re-
21 ceive financial and technical assistance under
22 this subsection, a producer that is eligible for
23 the assistance under paragraph (2)(A) shall
24 submit to the Secretary an application at such

1 time, in such manner, and containing such in-
2 formation as the Secretary may require.

3 “(B) ADMINISTRATION.—To the maximum
4 extent practicable, the Secretary shall limit the
5 administrative burdens, and the regulatory bar-
6 riers that contribute to administrative burdens,
7 on producers applying for payments under this
8 subsection, including by streamlining the appli-
9 cation and approval processes for payments.

10 “(4) PILOT PROGRAM COORDINATOR.—The Sec-
11 retary may designate a pilot program coordinator in
12 each State who—

13 “(A) at the time of designation is an em-
14 ployee of the Natural Resources Conservation
15 Service in that State; and

16 “(B) shall be responsible for—

17 “(i) public outreach relating to the
18 pilot program under this subsection;

19 “(ii) assisting producers in the sub-
20 mission of applications under the pilot pro-
21 gram; and

22 “(iii) distributing financial and tech-
23 nical assistance under this subsection in
24 that State.

1 “(5) REPORT.—Not later than May 1, 2022,
2 the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Ag-
3 riculture of the House of Representatives and the
4 Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
5 of the Senate a report describing the results of the
6 pilot program under this subsection, including—

7 “(A) steps taken under paragraph (3)(B)
8 to limit administrative burdens and regulatory
9 barriers; and

10 “(B) to the maximum extent practicable,
11 demographic information about each small-scale
12 agricultural producer participating in the pilot
13 program.”.