



MINNESOTA MILK PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION

413 SOUTH 28TH AVENUE, WAITE PARK, MN 56387

PHONE: 320-203-8336 * FAX: 320-203-8322

E-MAIL: mnmilk@cloudnet.com * WEB: www.mnmilk.org

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

EQA PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The EQA program provides incentive funding (up to \$5000 per farm) to help Minnesota dairy producers achieve environmental quality standards on their farms that help assure the community and environmental regulators that EQA Certified dairies represent “Excellence in Environmental Stewardship”.

Steps in the Process to Achieve “FIVE-STAR EQA CERTIFICATION”:

Step 1: Send in Your Application. Minnesota Milk’s EQA Program is a voluntary program and enrollment is limited. Call Minnesota Milk today for more information, toll-free 1 (877) 577-0741.

Step 2: Develop Your Environmental Action Plan. Locally-based EQA Technicians have been trained to help you assess your farm’s environmental situation using EQA Certification Standards that were developed by Minnesota Milk to help producers develop an Environmental Action Plan and funding strategies to achieve EQA Certification.

You and your EQA Technician will determine your farms environmental score and identify areas where you could improve your score – those areas become your Environmental Action Plan (any work that improves your score is eligible for cost-share).

Your EQA Technician will send your Action Plan to Minnesota Milk for approval and authorization of cost-sharing based on your proposed Action Plan.

Minnesota Milk’s EQA Review Team meets monthly to review and approve Action Plans and to authorize cost-share commitments (note: cost-share funding is

on a first come, first served basis, a 1:1 match is required, maximum cost-sharing under this program is \$5,000). You will be notified by mail of project approval and of the amount of cost-share authorized for your project.

Your EQA Technician will also help you access other sources of local, state, and federal funding to achieve your environmental goals.

Step 3: Implement Your Plan. As soon as the work to accomplish your Approved Action Plan has been completed, send proof of payment for work completed to Minnesota Milk and you will be reimbursed for up to 50% of the total project cost, not to exceed the amount authorized by Minnesota Milk's EQA Review Team (step 2).

Step 4: Achieve EQA Certification. In order to receive EQA Certification, your farm must achieve certification in all five (5) evaluation areas (water quality, odor and air quality, soil quality and nutrient management, habitat quality and diversity, and community image). EQA Certified farms will receive a sign recognizing their accomplishment and will become part of Minnesota Milk's promotion of positive examples of Environmental Excellence.

Step 5: Continue to be a Positive Example of Excellence in Environmental Stewardship. Minnesota Milk's EQA Program is being developed to provide for periodic review of participating farms to help assure that EQA Certification Standards are being maintained and to help producers continue to receive financial incentives for environmental stewardship through USDA's new Conservation Security Program (beginning in 2003).

For more information contact Minnesota Milk, toll-free, at (877)577-0741, enrollment is limited, don't miss out on this exciting opportunity to be an environmental leader in your community.

In Southeast Minnesota, contact may be made directly with Chuck Schwartau, Regional Extension Educator at 651-385-3100, 800-385-3101 or e-mail to cschwart@umn.edu.