

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Frequently Asked Questions

What is RCPP?

The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) is an initiative of the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, which allows partnership efforts to apply for a dedicated pot of conservation program funding. Money awarded through RCPP goes directly to farmers through the traditional NRCS enrollment process, but farmers who apply to the RCPP may be more likely to receive funding because they are competing in smaller pool of applicants.

Who are the project partners?

Project partners include Environmental Defense Fund, Smithfield Hog Production Division, NC Soy Growers Association, NC Pork Council, NC Small Grains Growers, NC Corn Growers, NC State University, and the University of North Carolina.

What is Smithfield Agronomics (SmithfieldGro)?

SmithfieldGro is a program begun by Smithfield Hog Production Division and Environmental Defense Fund to assist grain farmers improve their productivity, profitability, and sustainability. The program provides free agronomic advice and other services to interested grain growers who are using commercial fertilizer as a primary source of nitrogen. Priority practices include the efficient use of commercial nitrogen fertilizer, cover crops, and conservation tillage. Farmers are not required to sell their grain to Smithfield to participate.

The RCPP is a new addition to SmithfieldGro, and will assist some farmers in participating in the program who might not have otherwise. Farmers who are interested in SmithfieldGro, whether they intend to apply for RCPP or not, are encouraged to contact Rachel Grantham, SmithfieldGro Agronomist, at 910-284-1761.

Who is eligible to participate?

Grain growers in Pitt, Greene, Lenoir, Wayne, Duplin, Sampson, and Robeson Counties are encouraged to enquire at their local NRCS office.

What practices are eligible for funding?

EQIP practices eligible for funding in 2016 are: Nutrient Management Conservation Activity Plan (104), Conservation Cover (327), Conservation Crop Rotation (328), Residue & Tillage Management – No Till (329), Cover Crop (340), and Nutrient Management (590).

How can farmers apply?

Interested farmers should go to their local NRCS to submit an EQIP application, and specify that they want to be screened and ranked for the SmithfieldGro RCPP fund. **For more information:**

Farmers interested in participating in SmithfieldGro and/or the SmithfieldGro RCPP:
Rachel Grantham, SmithfieldGro Agronomist, 910-284-1761 or rgrantham@smithfield.com

Others interested in learning more about the project:

Maggie Monast, Environmental Defense Fund, mmonast@edf.org
Dawn Williamson, Smithfield Hog Production, dwilliamson@smithfield.com