

Colorado Named as a USDA 2012 StrikeForce State

DENVER, CO, June 14, 2012 - The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced Colorado as one of its 2012 StrikeForce Initiative States. The StrikeForce initiative is designed to better serve persistent poverty communities and socially disadvantaged farmers through the coordination of activities among USDA agencies and the use of Community Based Organizations (CBO). The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Colorado has identified 35 Counties as high priority areas for which it will focus its efforts.

Strikeforce allows USDA to illustrate its commitment to improving access to USDA programs while enhancing the visibility and profitability of small farms and ranches, beginning farmers and ranchers, and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. It also provides the opportunity to promote and assist in the development and sustainability of rural communities, recognizing that 90% of all persistently impoverished communities are in rural areas.

The initiative will work to provide technical expertise about USDA's programs, regulations, and criteria in addition to notify communities of new and updated programs to bring about quality applications for enrollment into technical and financial assistance programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Technical Assistance Program (CTA) both managed and administered by the NRCS.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program that supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, agricultural producers may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land. While the CTA program is also a voluntary that provides technical assistance supported by science-based technology and tools to help people conserve, maintain, and improve their natural resources.

NRCS' Strikeforce priority areas include: Adams, Alamosa, Arapahoe, Archuleta, Baca, Bent, Boulder, Conejos, Costilla, Crowley, Delta, Dolores, Douglas, Elbert, El Paso, Fremont, Garfield, Huerfano, La Plata, Larimer, Las Animas, Logan, Mesa, Montezuma, Montrose, Morgan, Otero, Prowers, Pueblo, Rio Blanco, Rio Grande, Saquache, Washington, Weld, and Yuma

For additional information about the USDA StrikeForce Initiative, please contact Omelia Madison, NRCS Outreach Coordinator at Omelia.Madison@co.usda.gov or 720-544-2826.

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