

March 16, 2012

**Ogallala Aquifer, Lesser Prairie Chicken, Sage Grouse Initiatives
Target Local Resource Concerns**
NRCS seeks applications for financial, technical assistance

Denver – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Colorado recently announced that funding is available to help farmers and ranchers implement conservation practices, as part of the Ogallala Aquifer, Lesser Prairie Chicken, and Sage Grouse initiatives. These initiatives target efforts to address local resource concerns for important Colorado wildlife species, and water quality and quantity.

NRCS accepts applications on an ongoing basis. There will be two funding cycles in 2012. The first funding cycle will be **March 30, 2012** and the second will be **June 1**.

“The Ogallala Aquifer, Lesser Prairie Chicken, and Sage Grouse initiatives are a few of several landscape conservation initiatives that maximize our conservation efforts to address some of Colorado’s most pressing natural resource challenges,” said Phyllis Ann Philipps, State Conservationist, NRCS, Colorado.

NRCS’ landscape conservation initiatives use a systems approach that focuses technical and financial assistance to implement a suite of conservation practices to address specific resource concerns. Through the Lesser Prairie Chicken and Sage Grouse initiatives, farmers and ranchers are incorporating conservation practices to improve healthy plant and animal communities by implementing practices such as prescribed grazing systems, fence marking, range plantings, brush/pinon-juniper management, and cross fencing into their agricultural operations. The Ogallala Aquifer Initiative will allow producers to install conservation practices that directly benefit water quality and water quantity issues.

Conservation assistance is available to producers through several 2008 Farm Bill conservation programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Producers interested in becoming a part of the Ogallala Aquifer, Lesser Prairie Chicken, or Sage Grouse initiative, or any other NRCS programs and services, should contact their local USDA Service Center, or visit www.co.nrcs.usda.gov for more information.

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