

November 28, 2011

Colorado NRCS Announces Funding Opportunities for 2008 Farm Bill Programs

DENVER -- Phyllis Philipps, Colorado State Conservationist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced funding opportunities for its conservation programs. Authorized under the 2008 Farm Bill, these federal programs will provide financial and technical assistance to private landowners to better manage soil, water, and other natural resources under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP).

Applications are accepted on a continuous basis from interested landowners. All completed applications ***received by January 15, 2012*** will be batched and ranked for fiscal year 2012 General EQIP and WHIP funding. For an application to be considered complete, all land and producer eligibility requirements must have been met and a conservation plan identifying conservation practices must be finalized for the enrolled land to be included for proposed funding.

“Incomplete applications will be deferred to the next ranking period,” said Philipps. *“We strongly encourage landowners to work with their local NRCS field office staff early to ensure they don’t miss any opportunities.”*

Four national initiatives will also be available with fiscal year 2012 EQIP funds. These include the following initiatives: Organic, Seasonal High Tunnel, On-Farm Energy, and Air Quality. Applicants compete among other landowners in the same funding pools.

NRCS will offer two ranking periods for the **Air Quality Initiative**: February 3, 2012 and March 30, 2012. The **Organic, Seasonal High Tunnel, and On-Farm Energy initiatives** will offer three ranking periods: February 3, 2012, March 30, 2012, and June 1, 2012.

The 2008 Farm Bill provides additional incentives for farmers and ranchers, who are just beginning, have limited resources, or who are socially disadvantaged because they belong to racial or ethnic groups that have been historically subjected to prejudice. Such farmers can receive up to 90 percent of the costs associated with planning and implementing conservation measures; up to 30 percent of expected costs may be provided in advance.

For more information, please visit the following website: www.co.nrcs.usda.gov/programs.

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