

## NRCS National Funding FY 2012 \* (in Millions)

### Discretionary funding:

Conservation Technical Assistance	\$762
All Other Conservation Operations Programs	\$137
<b>Total, Conservation Operations</b>	<b>\$899</b>

### Mandatory funding:

Total, Farm Bill Programs	\$3,648
<b>Total, NRCS Programs</b>	<b>\$4,547</b>

\*rounded to the nearest million

Seventy percent of the land in the United States is privately owned. Farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, tribes and others who own rural lands make daily decisions about natural resource use and management, impacting soil, water, and air quality and wildlife habitat. NRCS provides technical assistance and offers financial assistance to producers who install conservation practices through Farm Bill programs.

NRCS technical assistance is supported with discretionary and mandatory funds. Discretionary funding, provided annually through the Conservation Technical Assistance Program (CTA), is pivotal to NRCS' success. CTA supports everyday operations, scientific research, technology transfer, and is key to the development of individual conservation plans. The land user, in consultation with NRCS specialists, develops a conservation plan that is suited to his or her individual operation. Once a producer has a conservation plan, he or she can implement it with or without further assistance from NRCS.

Financial assistance is available to eligible applicants to implement their conservation plans. Mandatory funds provided through Farm Bill programs are used to cover the costs of detailed planning needed to implement conservation practices and provide financial assistance to help defray some of the costs of conservation practices installation.

The table above describes NRCS' national discretionary and mandatory funding in fiscal year 2012. Farm Bill Program funding details specific to Michigan are on page 4.



Farmstead in Marquette County, Michigan.

## Michigan NRCS Service Centers



### Michigan Quick Facts:

Number of NRCS Employees = 185

Number of NRCS Field Offices = 57

Acres of Cropland = 7.8 million or 24% of the state

Acres of forestland = 16.6 million



Tony Andrejczuk (left) and his brother Eddie next to an agrichemical handling facility they built with assistance from NRCS. Improvement to their land completed with NRCS assistance have addressed resource concerns and made farming easier for Tony who lost the use of his legs.

### Able to Farm: Heavy use area protection makes it easier for disabled farmer to get

When he decided to get back into farming five years ago, Tony Andrejczuk faced more challenges than most farmers. Andrejczuk lost the use of his legs after a work accident in 1997, and being able to access his family's entire farm is one of his biggest obstacles.

Andrejczuk grew up farming with his father and brother on their orchard and field crop farm near Lawrence, Mich. He studied crops and soil science at Michigan State University and planned to return to the family farm to work—but a tough economy forced him to choose a different career. He joined the military and later started a tree business; the accident ended that career.

About five years ago, Andrejczuk helped one of his sons plant a few acres of corn on the farm; they did it for fun, and planned to leave the corn for wildlife. Instead, a neighbor offered to harvest it for them and even paid them for the crop.

That initial success was enough to get Andrejczuk back into farming, together with his brother, Ed. Everything Andrejczuk does on the farm is from a vehicle, whether it's a tractor or a utility vehicle, so accessibility is very important. He built a lift to get on and off the tractor and

can plant and do other fieldwork—but has difficulty getting to some areas of the farm because of erosion.

To help address this problem, Andrejczuk has been working with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to stabilize areas of the farm where ruts have developed, reducing erosion and making them passable for farm equipment.

NRCS has also helped Andrejczuk install an agrichemical handling facility, which was designed so that he has room to maneuver a wheel chair around pallets stored in the building and can mix chemicals at floor level.

With additional NRCS assistance, Andrejczuk plans to install windbreaks and incorporate additional nutrient and pest management practices.

In the short time Andrejczuk has been back at farming, yields have increased, and he believes he has improved soil quality on the farm.

"I see the farm as where I'm going to retire," he says. "Whatever Eddie and I build, we'll leave as a viable entity for someone else in the family to take over."



Monroe County, Michigan farmer Doug Darling utilized USDA conservation programs to help reduce his farm's environmental impact on the Great Lakes.

## Great Lakes Initiative Targets Natural Resource Concerns in Michigan

A lot has changed since the Darling family started farming in 1833. Michigan became a state and large cities cropped up not far away. Fortunately, Doug Darling and his father Elgin are not afraid of change.

"We've paid our tuition, we're not afraid to try new things," said Doug Darling.

The Darlings farm about 1,500 acres of land near Willis, in Monroe County, where they grow row crops including corn, soybeans and wheat. The farm is adjacent to Stony Creek, which empties into Lake Erie, so the conservation choices they've made also benefit the Great Lakes.

Conservation practices like no-till and nutrient management help improve water quality but also make economic sense for Darling. No-till is environmentally friendly, but more importantly, it is more profitable, said Darling. Doug and Elgin Darling first experimented with no-till by planting three acres of no-till corn in 1981.

"We were being chicken," said Elgin Darling, of their tentative step into no-till.

Today, the Darlings use no-till on almost all of the land they farm, without sacrificing yields. They have gotten

away from broadcasting fertilizer, instead they side dress after the crops emerge. Applying fertilizer only where it is needed, along with soil testing, helps Darling make the most of every dollar he spends on chemicals.

In the Spring of 2012, Darling applied for USDA funds available through a conservation initiative for the Western Lake Erie Basin. The Darlings applied for funds to install a filter strip along a county drain. The filter strip is part of a hayfield they recently purchased that will be converted into row crops. The filter strip will help prevent sediment and fertilizers from entering the drain and eventually Lake Erie.

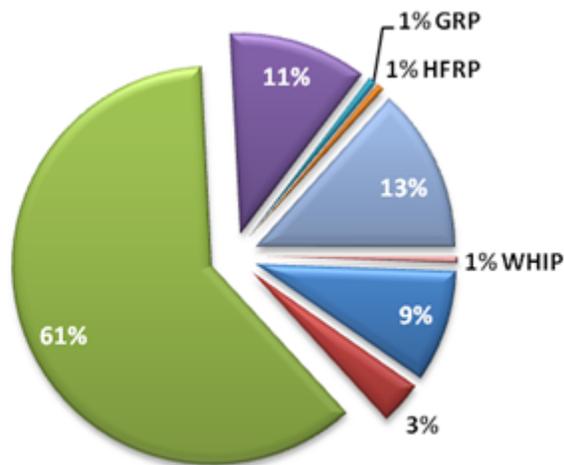
Some other conservation practices they utilize are cover crops and filter strips. The conservation practices they implemented helped the Darlings enroll their land into the NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program and qualify for the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program. Even with all of these accomplishments, Darling recognizes that staying on the cutting edge of agriculture and conservation is an on-going effort.

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**NRCS FY 2012 Percentage of Financial Assistance to Michigan Participants by Program**

- Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)
- Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)
- Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)
- Healthy Forest Reserve Program (HFRP)
- Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
- Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)



**FY 2011 and FY 2012 Contracts and Financial Assistance to Michigan Participants by Program**

Program	Number of Contracts/Agreements		Financial Assistance to Producers	
	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2011	FY 2012
CSP	186	120	\$1,683,000	\$1,009,000
EQIP	624	778	\$19,497,000	\$17,434,000
FRPP	13	20	\$2,012,000	\$3,201,000
GRP	3	2	\$911,000	\$195,000
WRP	14	13	\$3,160,000	\$3,814,000
WHIP	44	61	\$466,000	\$154,000
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>\$27,729,000</b>	<b>\$25,807,000</b>

Discretionary funds through the Conservation Technical Assistance for Michigan in FY 2012 was \$9.5 million

Sources: FMMI, ProTracts 10/2/2012 and NEST 10/4/2012

NRCS strives to provide current and correct information in a timely manner. Please contact your state conservationist or an NRCS legislative specialist if you need assistance. You can reach NRCS Legislative Affairs Division at (202) 720-2771.