

Contact:
Joanna Pope, NRCS Public Affairs Officer
(402) 437-4123

USDA-NRCS Accepts Grant Applications for Conservation Innovation Efforts

Grant Program Links Public, Private Groups to Improve the Soil Health in Nebraska.

LINCOLN, April 15, 2014 – USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist Craig Derickson announced today the availability of \$150,000 in program funding through Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) to help improve soil health in Nebraska. Applications must be received by NRCS before the close of business on May 16, 2014.

The grant program enables NRCS to work with public and private partners to accelerate technology development and adopt promising approaches to address natural resource concerns. The natural resource concern Nebraska has chosen to place its focus on is soil health.

"This is an exciting opportunity for Nebraska. While Conservation Innovation Grants aren't intended to fund research projects, they instead link Federal and local resources to develop and adopt innovative conservation approaches and technologies for agriculture. With soil health being critical to the health and sustainability of agriculture, NRCS is looking forward to helping advance technology and innovation in this area," said Derickson.

Nebraska CIG project proposals will need to address at least one of several soil health topics, such as the effect cover crops have on erosion, soil moisture, grazing management and the impacts of no-till vs. conventional tillage systems.

Funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the grants are awarded through a competitive process. At least 50 percent of the total cost of grant projects must come from non-federal matching funds, including cash and in-kind contributions provided by the grant recipient. CIG will fund single and multi-year projects, not to exceed 3 years (anticipated project start date of September 1, 2014). **The maximum award amount for any project will not exceed \$75,000 in Fiscal Year 2014.**

For more on this grant opportunity, visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/cig/index.html>. To apply electronically, visit www.grants.gov.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service helps America's farmers and ranchers conserve the nation's soil, water, air and other natural resources. All programs are voluntary and offer science-based solutions that benefit both the landowner and the environment.

#

Helping People Help the Land