RC&D
RESOURCE
CONSERVATION
& DEVELOPMENT

Partnerships Serving America's Communities

USDA NRCS
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION

MAY 2010

Sustainable Production with Resource Conservation

An out-of-compliance piggery that utilized help from this project. Photo taken before renovation.

American Samoa RC&D
Pacific Islands Area

In partnership with the American Samoa Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), this RC&D took the lead in seeking a solution to manure management for American Samoa piggery owners. The project brought crucial agricultural engineering services to the territory, where such professional capacity is limited. Engineering assistance is provided to piggery owners facing regulatory action due to non-compliance, which results in contamination of local waters. Working with the Interagency Piggery Management Group, the RC&D and SWCD guide these farmers through the permitting process and help them obtain NRCS EQIP funds for piggery nutrient management. The project targets at least 78 farmers in priority watersheds, and it has resulted in business retention and water quality improvement.

Based on natural resource science, the RC&D program enables communities to develop strategies to conserve land and develop water resources while empowering sustainable agriculture production, which contributes to local economies.

Heart of Maine RC&D
Maine

Tilling the Soil of Opportunity

This RC&D worked with local coalitions and service providers to deliver business planning courses for farmers and value-added agricultural businesses. The resulting "Tilling the Soil of Opportunity" course is a step-by-step business planning program designed to help agricultural entrepreneurs begin, manage, and grow their businesses. The course is designed to help them test their ideas, explore new marketing opportunities, and develop business and marketing plans specific to their farms.

"'Tilling the Soil,' through excellent instruction, the aid of guest speakers, and the connection with other farmers, gave me the tools and confidence to tackle the business plan. I recommend that it be required of any farmer serious about running a successful business that is capable of lasting for the long run!"

Lisa Reilich, Painted Pepper Farm
Participant, NXLevel™ "Tilling the Soil of Opportunity," Ellsworth 2004

Other RC&D project snapshots from across the nation...

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New Venues

Limestone Valley RC&D
Georgia

In 2004, this RC&D established the Battlefield Farmer's Market to help promote sustainable agriculture in the area and to provide a venue where agricultural communities and urban communities can connect. Several other farmer's markets have branched from this one.

Threatened Habitats Project

North Central RC&D
South Dakota

A broad coalition of partners led by this RC&D and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) worked to restore, enhance, or create 174,000 acres of grassland, wetland, and riparian habitat on 424 privately owned tracts throughout South Dakota. These efforts helped improve wildlife habitat while implementing conservation on working farms and ranches. In total, $1.7 million of USFWS funds through two North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA) grants were effectively implemented for habitat practices, with a total of $2.5 million in matching non-Federal funds and services. The project area is a nearly contiguous tract of over 2,700 square miles of habitat that can host over 100 breeding duck pairs per square mile. Plus, it affords critical conservation benefits to the native bird communities dependent on the rapidly disappearing native grasslands and wetlands of central South Dakota.

Sustainable On-Farm Hydroelectricity

Northwest Oregon RC&D
Oregon

All photos courtesy of USDA unless otherwise noted.

Electricity and water have proven to be a cost-saving combination on Lucien and Juliette Gunderman's farm, located near McMinnville, Oregon. Their farm receives 46–50 inches of rain per year, which they collect from a 175-acre watershed to provide water to two hydroelectric turbines. The turbines run efficiently with both high and low volumes, with electric output ranging from 500 watts to 30 kilowatts. The system generates 96,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per year. Using this electricity for the Gundermans' farming operation has dramatically reduced overhead costs and improved sustainability. The water leaving the powerhouse runs into Baker Creek and eventually into the Willamette River. The RC&D facilitated the partnership and permit applications and assisted with the funding search.

Look for other fact sheets highlighting RC&D projects in the areas of:

- **Self-Sustaining Communities**
- **Resource Conservation**
- **Child Nutrition**
- **Job Creation & Retention**
- **Renewable Energy**

You can make a difference!

Get involved with an RC&D in your area.

To volunteer for projects with your local RC&D council, submit ideas of your own, or find an RC&D council near you, visit **http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/rcd** or **www.rcdnet.org**, or contact your local USDA Service Center.