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FARM BILL PROGRAM APPLICATIONS DUE JANUARY 15

Utah agricultural landowners and operators are encouraged to submit 2010 applications by January 15 to USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for participation in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)



and Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Program. These programs are offered through a continuous signup but NRCS periodically makes funding selections as program dollars allow. In the accompanying photo, Area III Agronomist Tony Beals advises a Wellington area farmer.

EQIP, WHIP and AMA were originally established under the 1996 Farm Bill and are reauthorized in the 2008 Farm Bill. These programs provide technical and financial assistance to landowners to voluntarily address soil, water and related natural resource concerns on agricultural lands. Congress included new provisions in the 2008 Farm Bill setting aside 5 percent of EQIP financial assistance dollars to assist beginning farmers and another 5 percent to assist socially disadvantaged farmers.

Historically underserved producers, such as a member of a Socially Disadvantaged Group (American Indians, Blacks, Asians, Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics), beginning or limited resource farmers, and Indian tribes may be eligible for up to 90 percent of the average cost of practices. For more information about EQIP, visit your local USDA Service Center or go online to www.ut.nrcs.usda.gov.

 *Periodic news reports from NRCS Utah*

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Sylvia Gillen, State Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service

