



EQIP Success Story

Utah NRCS

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Salinity Control Project Benefits Entire Community

A Salinity Irrigation EQIP project in Ferron, Utah, has not only benefited everyone in the community, but it has demonstrated an estimated annual savings of 48,000 tons of salt that could have entered the Colorado River and adversely effected persons as far away as Los Angeles.

The project was sponsored jointly by the Bureau of Reclamation and the USDA-NRCS EQIP Colorado River Salinity Control Project, with strong support from the Colorado River Salinity Control Forum. The Bureau of Reclamation sponsored the off-farm improvements and NRCS sponsored the on-farm improvements with EQIP funding and some Basin States Parallel Program funding.

For nearly 100 years farmers and ranchers in the Ferron area have been flood irrigating, which in this arid and mineral laden land has resulted in continual salt loading to Ferron Creek and salt damages to once productive agricultural soils. Today, a pressurized irrigation system allows water-saving sprinkler irrigation equipment to water nearly 10,000

acres of alfalfa, row crops and pastureland. It is estimated by many that their alfalfa yields have increased by 1-2 tons per acre. The increased yield allows some to export their crop.

Another big benefit to local producers is that their water supply has not been depleted by late August or early September as it has in past years. This year, irrigation water remained in the reservoirs until late November, and, indeed, not all was used. This is something that has never been seen by old timers in the community.

One of the most exciting aspects of this EQIP project is that nearly 100% of the producers in the area have agreed to sign on and participated in the program. According to program managers Roger Barton, a planner with the Utah Association of Conservation Districts, and Wayne Greenhalgh, a district conservationist with NRCS, this was not the case in the beginning, but as success was noted most everyone saw the benefits and wanted in. "It's a great example of cooperative conservation in a community," noted Barton.



View of Ferron, Utah, looking west. Note the salinity problem--salts surfacing in the foreground, right.



View of Ferron, Utah, looking south. Note the healthy vegetation in the riparian zone, that benefits from reduced salt loading. The community enjoys near 100% participation in the project.