

NRCS NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Natural Resources Conservation Service
375 Jackson Street • Suite 600 St. Paul, MN 55101-1854 • (651) 602-7900
Web: <http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov>

Contact:

[Julie MacSwain](#) State Public Affairs Specialist, (651) 602-7859

Agricultural Water Enhancement Program funding for Minnesota

ST. PAUL, MN, January 19, 2012-In an effort to improve water quality in flood prone areas, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is targeting \$1,825,859 in financial assistance through Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for the installation of “ring dikes” around farmsteads and other conservation practices such as Prescribed Grazing and Drainage Water Management.

The funding for this program comes from the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP). This is a voluntary conservation initiative that provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to implement agricultural water enhancement activities on agricultural land for the purposes of conserving surface and ground water and improving water quality. Since 2009, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota have received a special allocation of financial assistance to aid flood prone areas in the Red River Basin.

As part of the EQIP, AWEP operates through program contracts with producers to plan and implement conservation practices to promote ground and surface water conservation or improve water quality on agricultural lands.

“These conservation practices through AWEP will protect farmland from overland flooding, hence reducing potential chemical, hydrocarbons, and ag wastes from entering flood waters, and therefore, impairing water quality,” said Don Baloun, Minnesota NRCS State Conservationist.

The first step in seeking NRCS assistance is to call your local USDA Service Center and make an appointment with NRCS staff that will help you identify the natural resource problems and opportunities on your farm, define your conservation objectives, and inventory your soil, water, air, plant and animal resources.

For additional information about EQIP, contact your local NRCS office or visit <http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov>

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