



Massachusetts State Office

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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On-farm energy audits help Massachusetts farmers improve energy conservation and efficiency

USDA assistance available to producers to conduct and implement energy audits

AMHERST, Mass. (February 3, 2011) – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has announced the expansion of an initiative to help local farmers conduct energy audits and improve their overall energy efficiency.

On-farm energy audits are tailored to each agricultural operation's primary energy uses. The audits help farmers determine the amount of energy used by the entire operation and also identify short- and long-term measures farmers can implement to conserve energy and achieve greater energy efficiencies.

Interested farmers should contact their local NRCS office as soon as possible for more information and to start the application process. NRCS Service Center contact information is available on the Web at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov>.

"On-farm energy audits provide farmers with the opportunity to assess their energy usage and make needed improvements can save money while also benefitting the environment and reducing greenhouse gas emissions," said Christine Clarke, NRCS State Conservationist for Massachusetts.

The on-farm energy audits, which are offered through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) as Agricultural Energy Management Plans, must be conducted by certified technical service providers. Farmers who have had an on-farm energy audit conducted that meets or exceeds the criteria of an EQIP Agricultural Energy Management Plan may apply for technical and financial assistance to implement the audit's recommendations.

In order for NRCS in Massachusetts to consider funding energy conservation, efficiency or renewable projects, an On-Farm Energy Audit is an essential prerequisite. Information on the EQIP program is available on the NRCS Massachusetts website at www.ma.nrcs.usda.gov.

NRCS has offices in Greenfield, Hadley, Holden, Hyannis, Pittsfield, Westford, and West Wareham, which work with local conservation districts and other partners to serve farmers and landowners throughout the commonwealth.

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NOTE TO EDITORS/REPORTERS: If you would like to include local contact information, please use the office below that serves your area.

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