

For Immediate Release

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***Deadline April 20, 2012***

## **USDA-NRCSs Now Accepting Applications For The Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP)**

ATHENS, GA, (April 2, 2012)—State Conservationist James E. Tillman Sr., of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), announced today that about \$1.3 million in financial assistance was approved for the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) in the Lower Flint River Basin project. NRCS offices will be taking applications through April 20, 2012.

This project will improve water efficiency by deploying advanced irrigation management practices across 27 counties in Southwest Georgia. Funded practices include low pressure drop nozzle irrigation retrofits with end gun shut-offs, remote soil moisture monitoring, sod based rotation and variable rate irrigation.

The AWEP promotes ground and surface water conservation and improves water quality by helping farmers and ranchers implement agricultural water enhancement activities. These include:

- Water quality or water conservation plan development, including resource condition assessment and modeling;
- Water conservation restoration or enhancement projects, including conversion to the production of less water-intensive agricultural commodities or dry land farming;
- Water quality or quantity restoration or enhancement projects;
- Irrigation system improvement or irrigation efficiency enhancement;
- Activities designed to mitigate the effects of drought; and
- Other related activities to help achieve water quality or water conservation benefits on agricultural land.

The AWEP was established by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) and funding comes from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The NRCS administers the program for USDA. NRCS implements AWEP by entering into EQIP contracts directly with agricultural producers.

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Helping People Help the Land

Everyone receiving assistance through AWEP must meet EQIP eligibility requirements.

More information about specific AWEP projects visit: <http://www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov>, or visit the nearest USDA Service Center in your area.