

For Immediate Release

For more information
Mary Ann McQuinn
State Public Affairs Specialist
706 546-2069
mary.mcquinn@ga.usda.gov

Applications due December 10, 2010 for funding consideration

USDA-NRCS ANNOUNCES APPLICATION PERIOD FOR FARM AND RANCH LANDS PROTECTION PROGRAM

ATHENS, GA, November 8, 2010--James E. Tillman, Sr., State Conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Georgia today announced that the NRCS has is accepting applications for financial assistance through the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, (FRPP). Although participants can apply at any time, in order to be considered for funding during this fiscal year, applications must be received by December 10, 2010.

The FRPP is a voluntary program designed to protect agricultural use and related conservation values of eligible land by limiting non-agricultural uses of the land. The program provides matching funds to state, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations with existing farm and ranch land protection programs to purchase conservation easements for the purpose of protecting the agricultural use and limiting non-agricultural uses of the land.

NRCS enters into cooperative agreements with eligible entities that have active farm and ranch land protection programs to acquire conservation easements. The entity must be authorized to hold conservation easements. Some examples of eligible entities include county Board of Commissioners, Land Trusts, and Land Conservancies.

NRCS is authorized to facilitate and provide matching funds (up to 50%) for the purchase of conservation easements on eligible land that is subject to a pending offer from an eligible entity. These permanent conservation easements prohibit the conversion of farm and ranch land to nonagricultural uses, and ensure that the agricultural capacity of the soils remains viable for future generations.

The FRPP is a voluntary program that helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture. FRPP is a competitive program, where farms are ranked based on national and state ranking criteria. Funding levels vary every year.

To apply for the FRPP, contact a local eligible entity or your local NRCS office to find out more. Or for more information on eligibility or how to apply please visit our Web site www.ga.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp.html

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