



# Agricultural Water Enhancement Program

**BACKGROUND** – The Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP) is a voluntary conservation program that provides financial and technical assistance to assist agricultural producers. The assistance provided enables producers to implement agricultural water enhancement activities that are consistent with State water law on agricultural land for the purposes of conserving surface and ground water and improving water quality.

**PURPOSE** - The purpose of this document is to provide a Georgia Supplement to the national EQIP Program Manual. The Lower Flint Basin AWEP program operates as a subpart of EQIP and as such is within the EQIP Manual 440\_515 Subpart M. It is intended as a policy document and to provide additional technical criteria and program guidance, only when Georgia FOTG standards and job sheets do not provide sufficient detail to meet BOTH the technical standard and program requirements. NRCS-Georgia staff is directed to reference the FOTG on all practices contained within the AWEP practice list.

Contracts will be limited to a maximum of 4 years with the last year being for maintenance. Practices must be completed within the first 3 years of the contract.

## **515.51. GA.1 - PRODUCER ELIGIBILITY**

See EQIP Eligibility

## **515.81. GA.1 – ELIGIBLE AWEP PRACTICE LIST**

NRCS-Georgia, supporting the Lower Flint Basin AWEP proposal as approved by NHQ July 2009, has identified the following practices to be eligible for cost-share payments during fiscal year 2011:

- **328 Conservation Crop Rotation**
- **442 Irrigation Sprinkler System**
- **449 Irrigation Water Management**

**515.91-GA.1 – PAYMENT RATES** - NRCS-Georgia, with input from the State Technical Committee and Local Work Groups, has set a 75% EQIP payment rate limit within the Flint River SWCD for all structural practices. Following this, the Lower Flint River Basin AWEP has set a 75 % payment rate limit.

## **ADDITIONAL CRITERIA FOR PRACTICES**

**328- CONSERVATION CROP ROTATION-** The rotation sequence required by AWEP is a 4 year rotation consisting of 2 years of sod developing grasses followed by 2 years of row crops. Both irrigated and non-irrigated cropland actively engaged in production is eligible land. Organic matter lab samples must be taken and supplied to NRCS at the time of establishment of the sod based part of the rotation and at the conclusion of the 4 year rotation. CAP 100 acres.



**442 IRRIGATION SPRINKLER SYSTEM-** Requires conversion to low pressure (<60 psi) with drops hoses to lower nozzles below pivot pipe height, pressure regulators, and rotator or wobbler nozzles. 449, Irrigation water management is required in the contract on irrigated acres to be scheduled for the crop season following installation of sprinkler package.

**442 IRRIGATION WATER MANAGEMENT VARIABLE RATE IRRIGATION-** Installation of VRI controlled nozzles is NOT required on the total pivot system length. Controls must be zone based that allow variable application rates within each controlled zone. Zones must be developed using site specific resource inventory (soil texture, wet areas, non cropped areas, etc.) of irrigated acres. Each zone cannot exceed 50 linear feet of pivot length. Zones must be capable of operating independently. The controller must have capability to log run time and provide verification of system utilization. 449, Irrigation Water Management is required in the contract on irrigated acres to be scheduled for the crop season following installation of the Variable Rate Irrigation package.

**449 IRRIGATION WATER MANAGEMENT REMOTE SOIL MOISTURE MONITORING-** Soil moisture monitoring devices must be capable of taking reading at multiple depths in the crop rooting profile. The system must be capable of recording, logging, and transmitting real time data. The data must be transferred to an on-line available location accessible to the producer in an automated manner. Supporting documentation of utilizing the supplied data to schedule irrigation will be supplied to NRCS. 449, Irrigation Water Management is required in the contract on irrigated acres to be scheduled for the second crop season following installation of the Remote Soil Moisture Monitoring system.