AWEP Implementation in Madison County

September 18, 2013

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With financial assistance through the Natural Resources Conservation Services’s (NRCS’s) Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP), an irrigation pond is being constructed in Madison County on the property of Lee Sublett, a row crop farmer.

The pond will be around 10 acres in size and will be used to irrigate about 400 acres of cropland during the dry summer months. During the winter, water will be pumped from a nearby stream to the pond for storage; water from the pond will be pumped to center pivots located in the field during the growing season.

AWEP, a program under NRCS’s Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), gives financial assistance to help farmers implement water activities that will improve water quality on farms while conserving ground and surface water.

AWEP applications are competitively selected with higher priority given to applicants that are located in areas with a high percentage of agricultural land and producers. Priority is also given to producers who will show a significant increase in agricultural activity, along with several other factors.

Activities to ease the effect of drought are some of the enhancement activities that are implemented under the AWEP program.

Mr. Sublett’s pond will help him see a definite ease from the effect of drought. Land irrigated during dry months will produce a much higher yield than non-irrigated land. Also, the storage of water during winter months helps conserve water, another enhancement activity supported through AWEP.