



NEWS RELEASE

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Free Online Program Helps Farmers and Ranchers with Conservation Efforts

As winter weather continues to hit large areas of Texas, the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) wants to remind farmers, ranchers and others about the ease and convenience of using the agency's online Conservation Client Gateway to work with NRCS personnel and local field offices.

"The Conservation Client Gateway web based tool came about because the Natural Resources Conservation Service saw an opportunity using web based technology to be able to expand its client base and not only that, but to facilitate opportunities for our clients and non NRCS clients to have easier access to NRCS services and programs," says Salvador Salinas, Texas NRCS state conservationist.

For farmers and ranchers who do not live close to their local NRCS office, the Conservation Client Gateway offers numerous benefits. For instance, producers can go online and see all their NRCS contracts. They can also digitally sign their contracts online through the secure Conservation Client Gateway website. And, technical assistance from an NRCS employee is just a click away 24 hours a day, seven days a week online.

Rick Castello of Fayette County was one of the first NRCS producers to adopt the Conservation Client Gateway technology.

"The ability to use this website and to go online and find the forms and make things happen that way allows me to save in many cases 280 miles, which is a lot of time and with the gas prices the way they were, a lot of money, so there is a significant savings monetarily and timewise from it," says Castello. "The other part is it allows me to get things done quicker and frankly more accurately because it's on paper and we know what we are trying to go do."

Castello farms in Fayette County, but lives near Houston and travels for work. He has found that using Conservation Client Gateway not only saves him time and money, but when he travels it allows him to sign paperwork on the go, to access his conservation plans and financial contracts and track payments easily. He can also message the local office if he has questions or needs to set up an appointment during times that he will be at the farm.

For more information about Conservation Client Gateway, visit your NRCS office at your local USDA Service Center or visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/cgate>

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