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News Release

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Southern Ohio Appalachian Special Project, Improve Pasture Quality and Protect Natural Resources

Application Deadline is January 15, 2021

COLUMBUS, OH, Dec. 9, 2021 –Farmers in 20 Ohio Appalachian counties have taken advantage of the Southern Ohio Appalachian Special Project to create grazing plans aimed at improving pasture quality and protecting natural resources.

In the rolling southern Appalachian region, grazing animals can cause erosion. Rotational grazing, moving grazing animals from one pasture to another, allows pastures to regrow, improving the quality of pasture forages while also protecting the soil from exposure and erosion due to overgrazing. Creating these separate grazing areas requires either fixed or portable fencing, which may be included in the EQIP contract. Access roads, water pipelines and storage tanks, stream crossings, and heavy use area protection are other conservation practices frequently included in grazing management plans. The Southern Ohio Appalachian Special Project funds help successful applicants cover a part of the cost of implementing these and other conservation practices in grazing management plans.

Eligible farmers in Adams, Athens, Coshocton, Gallia, Guernsey, Harrison, Highland, Jackson, Jefferson, Lawrence, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pike, Scioto, Vinton, and Washington Counties can apply for the Southern Ohio Appalachian Special Project. All applicants must either have an existing grazing management plan or include developing a grazing management plan as part of their contract if they are selected for funding. Grazing management plans lay out which conservation practices to include in the plan and a schedule for implementing those practices over time, depending on the farmers' goals and the natural resource issues present.

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Since southern Ohio drains to the Mississippi River, soil erosion can affect water quality not only in Ohio's lakes and rivers, but in places as far away as the Gulf of Mexico. The conservation practices offered through the Southern Ohio Appalachian Special Project help prevent this from happening, while creating healthier soil, forages, and livestock right here in Ohio.

This project will utilize Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding. EQIP is a voluntary conservation program that helps agricultural producers protect the environment while promoting agricultural production. With EQIP, NRCS conservation experts provide technical assistance to implement environmentally beneficial conservation practices on working agricultural land.

Individuals interested in applying for the Southern Ohio Appalachian Special Project should contact their [local NRCS conservationist](#) as soon as possible. Be sure to check the status of your Service Center when you reach out to us. For offices with restrictions on in-person appointments, we are still available by phone, email, and through other digital tools. Your Service Center's status is available at <https://www.farmers.gov/coronavirus/service-center-status>.

Applications signed and submitted to NRCS by the January 15, 2021 deadline will be evaluated for fiscal year 2021 funding. Visit Ohio NRCS website under "[EQIP Funding Categories](#)" for more details. To learn more about EQIP or other technical and financial assistance available through NRCS conservation programs, visit [Get Started with NRCS](#) or contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).

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