

# *Soil Conservation News*

*May the Beauty of Nature  
Bring You Peace and Hope  
This Holiday Season, and May  
The Importance of its Conservation  
Help Guide Your Plans  
In the New Year.*

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

**SIGN UP FOR FY2012  
COST-SHARE FUNDS** PG.  
2

**WATER SENSE: MAK-  
ING EVERY DROP  
COUNT** PG.  
3

**The Board of Supervisors  
And Staff of the Morgan County Soil and Water  
Conservation District  
And the Natural Resources Conservation Service**

## ***Sign Up Underway for FY 2012 -2013 Cost-Share Funds***

The Morgan County Soil and Water Conservation District is currently holding sign ups for FY 2012 and FY 2013 cost-share funds. We have currently allocated 75% of our FY2012 (July 1, 2011 June 30, 2012) cost-share funds as well as an additional allocation we received in October; \$134,972.00 total.

Our cost-share funds are given to us in allocation groups and are given to landowners on a first come first served basis within each allocation group.

We do have some names on our commitment list we did not get to in this years allocation. These people will be the first ones offered cost-share funds when we receive our next allocation or as practices are completed and funds are released to be reobligated. If you are not sure if you are on the list and would like to be please call our office at 573-378-5822 ext. 101.

We will be receiving cost-share funds to address the following resource concerns.

### ***Sheet, Rill and Gully Erosion***

Sheet, rill and gully erosion is the unwanted removal of soil from the land surface or through incised channels by the action of rainfall or runoff.

If you see problems like this on your farm, you could; establish a good vegetative cover to stabilize the soil; build terraces to reduce the erosive force of water; use a no-till system; plant trees and shrubs at the edge of fields to help wind erosion; build a pond to catch sediment; develop diversions to direct rainwater, and plant sod forming grasses to efficiently transport rainfall.

### ***Grazing Management***

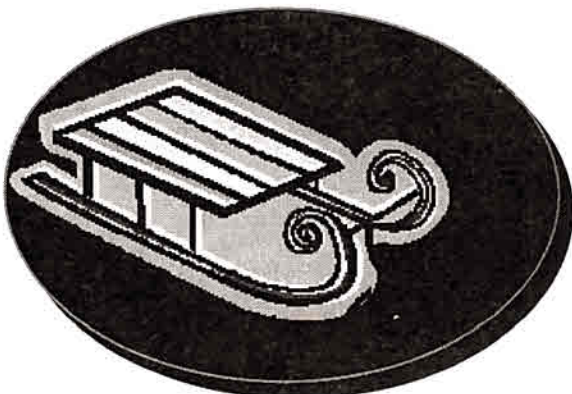
The steady use of an area by livestock can cause erosion problems and water quality.

You can make the best use of soil and water resources by: improving the vegetative cover on pastures; and developing a planned grazing system that may include developing water sources and water distribution, fencing to construct paddocks, lime to manage pH of the soil and the interseeding of legumes.

### ***Sensitive Areas***

Sensitive areas are areas of agricultural land where current management has impacted erosion, surface water and ground water.

For the protection of water quality in streams, you can: plant grass buffers or woody species along the edges of crop fields, or below cropland to trap runoff; plant trees or shrubs to reduce wind erosion; exclude livestock from streams; place large stones or anchored cedar trees to eroding stream banks. To protect groundwater you can establish buffers or exclusion around sinkholes, create spring collection points for livestock use and fill and seal abandoned wells.



### ***Nutrient and Pest Management***

Financial assistance is offered for building stack sheds and composters for manure and animal waste storage. Financial assistance is offered for nutrient and pest management.

## ***Water Sense: Making Every Drop Count***

You can save water and energy, help the environment and keep money in your pocket with a few simple changes to use water more efficiently. WaterSense — an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) program that seeks to protect the future of our nation's water supply — estimates the average American household spends up to \$500 per year on water and sewer bills. A few easy changes could save you about \$170 per year.

One of the easiest ways to save water is to install water-efficient products. The EPA WaterSense label helps you select water-efficient faucets, showerheads and toilets that are independently certified to use at least 20 percent less water and perform as well as, or better than, less efficient products.

WaterSense offers the following facts and simple steps to help you start saving water. **It's as easy as check, twist and replace.**

\* **Check** for leaks. A leaky toilet can waste 200 gallons of water a day. To check if your toilet has a leak, place a drop of food coloring in the tank and wait 10 minutes. If the color shows in the bowl without flushing, you have a leak. Fixing the leak may be as simple as replacing the toilet's flapper.

- **Twist** on a WaterSense-labeled bathroom faucet aerator to use 30 percent less water without a noticeable difference in flow.
- **Replace** a showerhead with a WaterSense-labeled model that uses 20 percent less water, but provides strong flow and spray. In a year, you could save more than 2,300 gallons and up to 300 kilowatt hours on water heating. If every U.S. household installed WaterSense showerheads, in one year we could save more than 250 billion gallons of water and about \$2.5 billion in energy costs for heating the water.
- **Benefits of water efficiency:**
  - \* **Save money:** If every household installed WaterSense faucets, showerheads and toilets, the country would save more than 3 trillion gallons of water and more than \$18 billion dollars a year by reducing the need for costly water infrastructure and treatment plants.
  - **Save energy:** It takes energy to heat water, but it also takes a great deal of energy to treat and deliver water to U.S. households — enough electricity to power more than 5 million homes for a year.
  - **Help the environment:** If one in every 100 American homes replaced old fixtures with energy-efficient ones, the savings of 100 million kilowatt hours of electricity per year would save 80,000 tons of greenhouse gases, the equivalent to removing 15,000 cars from the road for a year.

### **Tips to save water and money:**

\* **Don't flush your money down the drain!** Toilets use the most water in the home. If your toilet was made before 1992, it probably uses at least 3.5 to 7 gallons per flush. WaterSense toilets use less than 1.28 gallons per flush and can save a family of four more than \$90 annually on their water bill. If every American home with older toilets replaced them with WaterSense labeled toilets, we could save nearly 640 billion gallons of water per year.

- **Small leaks add up quickly.** A faucet leak of one drip per second can waste more than 3,000 gallons of water per year. An average home wastes more than 10,000 gallons of water a year because of dripping faucets and other household leaks, enough to fill a backyard swimming pool.
- **Turn it off!** The average bathroom faucet flows at a rate of 2 gallons per minute. Turn off the tap while brushing your teeth to save up to 8 gallons per day or 240 gallons of water a month.

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***"Return Service Requested"***

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# News

*For Immediate Release*  
December 1, 2011

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## **NRCS Announces Ranking Dates for Major Conservation Programs and Initiatives**

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) today announced ranking dates for its major conservation programs and initiatives that offer technical and financial assistance to Missouri farmers and ranchers.

NRCS accepts applications for financial assistance on a continuous basis throughout the year. However, NRCS establishes ranking periods for its programs that allow it to rank submitted proposals for funding consideration. NRCS then notifies all applicants of the results of the rankings and begins developing contracts with selected applicants.

The ranking period cutoff dates for the major conservation programs and initiatives that apply in Missouri are:

February 3, 2012

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)
- On-Farm Energy Initiative
- Organic Initiative
- Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative

March 30, 2012

- On-Farm Energy Initiative
- Organic Initiative
- Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative

June 1, 2012

- On-Farm Energy Initiative
- Organic Initiative
- Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative

Moving to multiple ranking dates instead of just one annually will make it easier for more producers to apply for the three initiatives and help them get started with implementing the practices they need to benefit the natural resources on their operations, State Conservationist J.R. Flores says.

"This change will also give Missouri's agriculture producers more time to make sure they choose the initiatives that are right for their operations," Flores says.

Flores adds that additional ranking periods for EQIP and WHIP could be established at a later date depending upon Missouri's funding allocation.

## **Program and Initiative Overviews**

Environmental Quality Incentives Program: EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to install and implement structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program: WHIP provides financial and technical assistance on private agricultural land, nonindustrial private forest land and Indian land to assist eligible producers establish and manage fish and wildlife habitat.

On-Farm Energy Initiative: NRCS and producers develop Agricultural Energy Management Plans (AgEMP) or farm energy audits that assess energy consumption on an operation. NRCS then uses audit data to develop energy conservation recommendations. Each AgEMP has a landscape component that assesses equipment and farming processes and a farm headquarters component that assesses power usage and efficiencies in livestock buildings, grain handling operations, and similar facilities to support the farm operation.

Organic Initiative: NRCS helps certified organic growers and producers working to achieve organic certification install conservation practices for organic production. New for fiscal year 2012, applicants will be evaluated continuously during the ranking periods. Applications meeting or exceeding a threshold score may be approved for an EQIP contract before the end of the ranking period. Applications rating below the threshold score will be deferred to the next period. A new threshold score will be established at the beginning of each ranking period. This new scoring process allows organic producers to implement conservation practices in a timelier manner.

Seasonal High Tunnel Pilot Initiative: NRCS helps producers plan and implement the steel-framed, polyethylene-covered structures that extend growing seasons in an environmentally safe manner. High tunnel benefits include better plant and soil quality, fewer nutrients and pesticides in the environment, and better air quality due to fewer vehicles being needed to transport crops.

Visit the [NRCS National Web site](#) for more information on how to apply for these initiatives and connect with an NRCS office near you.