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NRCS Announces Sign-Up Dates

Agricultural producers located in three priority watersheds will be able to participate

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist Eric B. Banks announced continuation of the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) in Kansas for 2013. NRCS will manage the initiative and make financial and technical assistance available to farmers and forest landowners in order to improve water quality in priority watersheds. NRCS offered NWQI in three impaired Kansas watersheds in 2012, and will continue to accept additional applications for the same three watersheds in 2013. While NRCS accepts applications for financial assistance on a continuous basis, NRCS will use two application cutoff dates: **April 19 and May 17, 2013.**

Eligibility

Through this effort, producers in **Headwaters Grasshopper Creek** in the Delaware River Watershed in southcentral Brown County and small portions of Atchison and Jackson Counties; **Town of Munjor—Big Creek** in the Smoky Hill River Watershed in southeast Ellis County; and **City of Hesston—West Emma Creek** in the Little Arkansas Watershed in portions of Harvey and McPherson Counties may apply. Covering more than 84,000 acres, the selected watersheds were identified with help from Kansas state agencies, partners, and the NRCS Kansas Technical Committee (*see attached map*).

All three watersheds are identified as impaired, with degraded water quality issues. Using funds from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), NRCS will provide financial and technical assistance to producers interested in addressing resource concerns using conservation practices such as field borders, cover crops, waste storage facilities, heavy use area protection, and nutrient management.

EQIP offers financial and technical assistance to eligible participants to install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land. Conservation practices must be implemented to NRCS standards and specifications. In Kansas, socially disadvantaged, limited resource, and beginning farmers and ranchers will receive a higher payment rate for eligible conservation practices applied.

Information Available

For additional information specific to the National Water Quality Initiative, or to sign an application, stop by your U.S. Department of Agriculture Service Center and visit with the NRCS staff. For more information about other natural resources conservation programs, please contact your local NRCS office or conservation district office. The office is located at your local USDA Service Center (listed in the telephone book under United States Government or on the internet at offices.usda.gov). More information is also available on the Kansas Web site at www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov. Follow us on Twitter @NRCS_Kansas. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.