

National Water Quality Initiative Focuses on Grasshopper Creek – Special Producer Meeting Scheduled for May 30

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently announced the launch of a new conservation program for the Grasshopper Creek Watershed in northeast Kansas. The National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) is a national program designed to assist farmers, ranchers and other landowners to conserve working lands in water quality impaired watersheds in rural America. Grasshopper Creek is one of only three watersheds in the state of Kansas to be selected for the program.

The Grasshopper Creek Watershed is located west/northwest of the city of Horton, or east/southeast of Powhattan (see map). The watershed, which is approximately 22,000 acres in size, lies primarily in Brown County with small portions also located in northeast Jackson and northwest Atchison Counties. The primary land use is agriculture.

Using funds from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), NRCS will provide financial and technical assistance to producers for implementing conservation practices such as cover crops, nutrient management, filter strips and terraces in the watershed area. Applicants for assistance will not need to compete with other areas or producers for funding of approved practices. Up to \$298,814 is allocated for implementation of conservation work each year for the next two years in Grasshopper Creek alone. In order to be considered for this fiscal year's funding opportunity, applications must be turned in to the NRCS field office by June 15, 2012.

A special NWQI informational meeting is scheduled for May 30 at 8:00 am at the Fisher Center in Hiawatha. All landowners and agricultural operators in the Grasshopper Creek Watershed are encouraged to attend. Coffee and breakfast rolls will be served during the meeting. For more information about the NWQI program or the May 30 meeting, call the Brown Co. NRCS office at 785-742-2012 or Delaware River WRAPS at 785-284-3422.