



NEWS RELEASE

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

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USDA Announces Initiative to Improve Agricultural Energy Conservation and Efficiency

Application Deadline Feb. 11, 2011

LITTLE ROCK, Ark., – USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service State Conservationist Mike Sullivan announced sign up for the On-Farm Energy Audit/ Implementation Initiative designed to help agricultural producers transition to more energy efficient operations ends Feb. 11, 2011, for funding consideration this year. This initiative is designed to save both money and energy when fully implemented.

The initiative, which is offered through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), will continue to offer an Agriculture Energy Management, Conservation Activity Plan (AgEMP CAP) to producers who have not yet had an on-farm energy audit performed. The initiative also offers financial assistance to producers who have had an on-farm energy audit conducted that meets or exceeds the criteria for an EQIP AgEMP and wish to implement recommendations provided in the on-farm energy audit.

The practices included under this initiative include:

- 1) Agriculture Energy Management, Conservation Activity Plan - for Agriculture Landscapes or Operation Facilities Headquarters. Applications that are approved for funding will require a Conservation Activity Plan to be developed by a certified Technical Service Provider.
- 2) On-farm Equipment Efficiency Improvements – offers opportunities for individuals with an approved AgEMP to implement available components identified in this practice for replacement of existing low efficiency heaters and lighting, improved ventilation and improved insulation to side walls and ceilings.

Agricultural producers in Arkansas have until February 11 to submit an application to their local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office.

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“USDA and agriculture producers have a common interest in improving sustainability of their agricultural operations through the promotion of on-farm energy audit evaluations as well as assistance in the implementation of energy conservation and efficiency measures,” Sullivan said.

Implementation will occur in stages beginning with the short-term immediate goal of providing the on-farm energy audits to help identify how the operations can become more energy efficient. Longer term goals will involve development of agricultural energy management plans for cost-effective implementation of the recommendations provided in their on-farm energy audits. More information about agricultural energy management plans is available at: www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/cap.html. For Arkansas specific information visit: <http://www.ar.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/agemp.html>.

The 2008 Farm Bill provides authority to use EQIP financial assistance funds for payment of practices and conservation activities involving the development of an AgEMP appropriate for the eligible land of a program participant. The Farm Bill statute allows EQIP payments for up to 75 percent of the estimated incurred cost of practice implementation for the development of an AgEMP meeting agency standards and requirements. Eligible producers in the above listed states may apply for the AgEMP through application at their local NRCS office. EQIP payments are made directly to program participants for development of an AgEMP by a certified Technical Service Provider (TSP) <http://techreg.usda.gov/CustLocateTSP.aspx>.

Dairy, beef, poultry, swine, and other agricultural operations are included in this energy efficiency initiative.

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