



For Immediate Release

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**Conservation Funding Available for Farmers to
Enhance Soil Health**

NRCS Program Deadline is March 15, 2013

Spokane, WA. (Feb. 14, 2013) — Private landowners and tribes working to increase crop residues, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and improve soil health on their farm, may apply for conservation financial and technical assistance, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced today.

Funding is available through NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program in certain counties across Oregon, Washington and Idaho. In Washington; Adams, Benton, Columbia, Douglas, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Klickitat, Lincoln, Spokane, Walla Walla, and Whitman counties have the option to participate. Producers who are working to improve soil health by installing conservation practices such as no-till/strip-till, direct seeding, mulch till, cover crops or conservation crop rotation, may apply.

The deadline to apply is March 15, 2013.

EQIP is one of several voluntary conservation programs designed to help farmers, ranchers, and non-industrial forestland owners improve and enhance the condition of water, soil, and other natural resources on private working lands. Additional assistance for beginning, historically underserved and limited resource farmers, ranchers and forestry owners is also available through these programs.

Producers that receive an EQIP contract under this program will also have the opportunity to work with Applied Ecological Services (AES), a private organization, to participate in a study to measure and quantify soil carbon on their fields through soil sampling. This is optional, and not a requirement for participation..

“NRCS awarded a Conservation Innovative Grant (CIG) to AES to measure and quantify soil carbon in the Palouse region,” said Jeff Harlow, assistant state conservationist for programs. “Their goal is to use soil sampling to document the benefits of carbon accrual through the use of no-till and minimum tillage practices.”

Producers who are interested in this program are urged to visit their [local USDA Service Center](#) by March 15, 2013. Landowners new to USDA programs are encouraged to contact their local NRCS field office as soon as possible to ensure they have the time needed to make informed decisions and complete the application process.

Additional information on these and other conservation programs may be found on the NRCS Washington web site at www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov.

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Originally established by Congress in 1935 as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), [NRCS](#) has expanded to become a conservation leader for all natural resources, ensuring private lands are conserved, restored, and more resilient to environmental challenges. The NRCS works with landowners through conservation planning and assistance designed to benefit the soil, water, air, plants, and animals that result in productive lands and healthy ecosystems.

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Local contact information is located in the telephone book under the federal government listing or can be found online at: www.wa.nrcs.usda.gov.