

## Natural Resources

# March 31 marks deadline for cost-share application

**T**HE deadline to apply for up to \$5,000 in cost-share money through the Kansas Rural Center's Clean Water Farm-River Friendly Farms Project is March 31.

Farmers and ranchers in high-priority and identified Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy watersheds across Kansas are eligible to apply for technical and financial assistance to address water quality issues and assess environmental strengths and weaknesses. To be eligible to apply for cost-share funds, farmers and ranchers must complete the River Friendly Farm Plan, an environmental self-assessment.

The River Friendly Farm Plan assessment was developed by Kansas State University and the KRC to help farmers identify family and farm goals, water quality problems or potential problems, and a plan of action to solve these problems. The assessment consists of a notebook with questions to help farmers assess and score the status of soil conservation and the management of nutrients, pests and livestock waste on their farm. Upon completion of the assessment, farmers and ranchers are eligible for a \$250 payment. The KRC

### Key Points

- Deadline to apply for Clean Water Farm cost-share money is March 31.
- Those interested must first complete a self-assessment, listing goals, objectives.
- Since 1995, the Kansas Rural Center has assisted 122 producers in 35 counties.

has four field organizers throughout the state who aid farmers in completing the assessment, developing an action plan and applying for cost-share funds.

Once an assessment is done, farmers and ranchers can apply for cost-share, which can be used to implement water quality improvements such as alternative livestock watering systems, legume-based crop rotations, cover cropping, regular soil testing, grass buffer strips along streams and roadways, conversion of cropland to grasses, and adoption of Management-intensive Grazing.

### A direction to turn

"The assessment is an educational tool that helps farmers and ranchers better determine where to put their money and their energy. It helps them evaluate their farms, prioritize work

needed to improve water quality, and identify available assistance programs, whether ours or other federal and state programs," says Mary Fund, project coordinator.

"Plus, CWF-RFFP funds can also be used in conjunction with federal EQIP [Environmental Quality Incentives Program] dollars and/or State Conservation Commission cost-share programs," Fund adds. "But we also work with a lot of farmers who for one reason or another, such as ineligibility or lack of funds, do not participate in other federal or state conservation programs, so our funds can do a lot of good for producers. Pending receipt of funds early this spring, our advisory committee will be reviewing applications and making decisions in April."

### Widespread assistance

Since 1995, CWF-RFFP has assisted 122 farmers and ranchers in at least 35 Kansas counties, with projects in at least eight of Kansas' 12 major river basins. Thus far, the project has provided almost \$500,000 in producer grants. The KRC is also active in at least 18 to 20 WRAPS watersheds in the state.

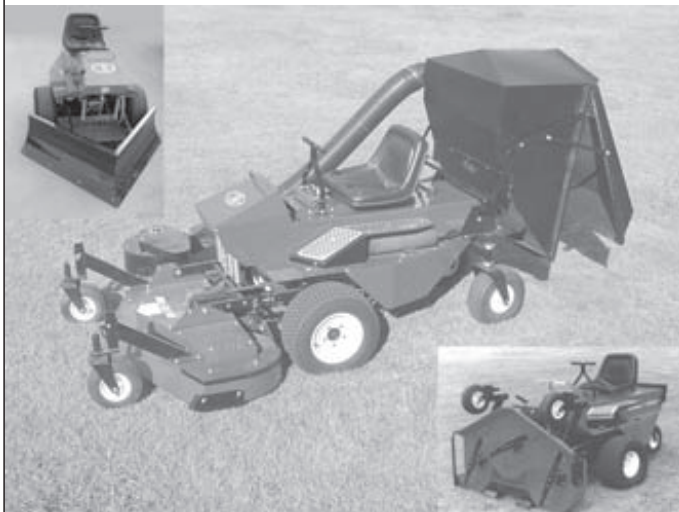


The project is funded by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Section 319 funds through the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and administered by the KRC, a non-profit research, education and advocacy organization located in Whiting.

For more information, call the Kansas Rural Center at 784-873-3431 or e-mail [ksrc@rainbowtel.net](mailto:ksrc@rainbowtel.net). Or, check out the center's Web site, [www.kansasruralcenter.org/CWFP.htm](http://www.kansasruralcenter.org/CWFP.htm) for a copy of the RFFP assessment, cost-share application, a map of the WRAPS watersheds, and a list of eligible cost-share practices.



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## Kansas NRCS announces funding for Conservation Innovation Grants

**T**HE Kansas Natural Resources Conservation Service has \$200,000 available for funding new technology under the Conservation Innovation Grants, announced state conservationist Harold Klaege in February.

The Conservation Innovation Grants program is an effort to address some of the state's most pressing natural resource conservation needs. It is a component of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

"These grants offer an opportunity

to promote public-private partnerships and support the agency's agenda to provide innovative technologies and approaches to environmental enhancement and protection on working agriculture lands," Klaege says.

State, tribal and local governmental entities; nongovernmental organizations; and individuals may apply.

### Expected results

Project proposals should demonstrate the use of innovative technologies or approaches to address a natural resource concern. Project results are expected to improve and create the transfer of conservation technologies, management systems and innovative approaches (such as market-based systems) into NRCS technical manuals or guides or to the private sector.

Applications are due in the Kansas NRCS state office by April 2. Project proposals will be evaluated with the assistance of the Kansas Technical Committee based on the criteria identified in the announcement of fiscal year 2007 program funding. Selected applicants may receive grants up to 50% of the total project cost, not to exceed \$50,000. Applicants must provide nonfederal matching funds for at least 50% of the project cost, of which 50% may be from in-kind contributions. Projects may be single or multi-year, not to exceed three years.



### CONSERVATION COMMITTED:

Harold Klaege, state NRCS conservationist, says Conservation Innovation Grants can be used by producers to help alleviate pressing environmental needs.

### More info

Additional information, the request for proposals and related forms are located on the Internet at [www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/index.html](http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/index.html) and at [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov).