



A Quality Environment

DICKINSON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

SPIRIT LAKE, IOWA 51360 712-336-3782, EXT. 3

JANUARY 2009

EQIP Signup Continues for Dickinson County Ag Producers

Signup continues for Dickinson County agricultural producers to receive financial and technical assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), a voluntary program for farmers who face threats to soil, water, air and related natural resources on their land.

EQIP applications are accepted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), located at the USDA Service Center, 2412 17th Street in Spirit Lake. Through the 2008 Farm Bill, NRCS provides financial incentives to producers to promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals, optimize environmental benefits, and help farmers meet environmental regulations.

Conservation plans must be developed for the entire area included in an EQIP contract. NRCS provides technical assistance and financial payments to producers who apply practices based on conservation plans.

EQIP practices include, but are not limited to: **grassed waterways, livestock waste management facilities, livestock mortality facilities, grazing management systems and equipment, composting facilities, grade stabilization structures, pest and nutrient management, no-till and biofilters.**

District Conservationist Carroll Oskvig says EQIP applications are accepted on a continuous basis. Cutoff dates to rank applications are set and

advertised periodically as funds become available. Oskvig says early applications allow for more thorough conservation planning. "If you apply early, a conservation plan can be developed to identify all natural resource concerns and treatment options," he says. "Early application also ensures that all eligibility issues are in order."

If you are interested in more information or to set up an appointment to sign up for EQIP, please contact the Spirit Lake USDA Service Center at 712-336-3782, Ext. 3.

Windbreaks and Shelterbelts



Windbreaks and shelterbelts can reduce wind-induced erosion and save on heating and cooling costs associated with farmsteads. When properly placed to shield farm buildings from strong winds, windbreaks can lower heating and cooling costs by up to 20 percent.

If you are interested in a new windbreak or a windbreak renovation, a number of cost-share programs for windbreaks and shelterbelts are available.

District Commissioners

Mark Ingwersen Chris Hoffman Scott Mitchell
John Myhre Curt Smith

Assistant Commissioners

Orville Berg Earl Muilenburg Phyllis Nielsen
Keith Van Kleek

District Mission Statement

The Dickinson SWCD will serve its customers and the needs of the District's natural resources through education, promotion, and demonstration.

State cost-share usually provides for 50% or 75% of actual costs, depending on the practice and the location within the county.

Some other practices include **waterways, terraces, sediment basins, grade stabilization structures, Diversions, as well as farmstead windbreaks, and field windbreaks.**

A **no-till, ridge-till or strip-till incentive** is offered on a one-time only, per producer basis, with a maximum of 80 acres at \$10 per acre.

For more information on cost-share programs or to request technical assistance, contact the USDA Service Center at 2412 17th Street, Spirit Lake, or call 712-336-3782, Ext. 3.

Silver Lake Watershed Project

The Dickinson Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD), the Osceola Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD), and the Silver Lake Park Improvement Association (SLPIA), have come together to form a unique partnership geared toward improving the water quality of Silver Lake. The initial focus of the Silver Lake Watershed Improvement Project will be reducing sediment and nutrient loading to the lake via wetland restoration upstream of Silver Lake.

In 2008, the Osceola SWCD was presented with a nearly half million dollar grant from the State of Iowa Watershed Improvement Review Board (WIRB). **This grant was earmarked to provide incentive payments to landowners in the Silver Lake Watershed for enrolling existing wetlands, or restoring farmable wetlands into the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP).** The Silver Lake Township in Dickinson County, and the Fairview Township in Osceola County, comprises about 90 percent of the Silver Lake Watershed. Smaller portions of the watershed are located in Excelsior Township, Dickinson County, and Jackson County, Minnesota.

The Osceola and Dickinson SWCD's recently hired Harris native Ryan Ransom as coordinator of the Silver Lake Watershed Improvement Project. Ransom stated they have a 3-year goal of enrolling 250 acres into the WRP program. The Silver Lake Watershed is expected to become a Priority Area for WRP projects in the state of Iowa, which will enhance opportunity for enrollment into a program that has traditionally been very competitive. **Landowners will be offered full cropland value for enrolling their acres in WRP permanent easement agreements.** This value is based upon the Corn Suitability Rating (CSR) of the acres in question. A combination of federal easement payments and incentive payments from the WIRB grant should make the WRP program an attractive option for landowners in the watershed, Ransom said.



A public meeting for property owners in the Silver Lake Watershed will be held at the Lake Park Community Center at 2:00 pm on Wednesday, January 28, 2009. This will be an informative meeting geared towards explaining opportunities provided by the Silver Lake Watershed Project. Local SWCD and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff will be on hand to field any questions and explain the benefits and options of WRP. This staff will also be available after the informative session to facilitate questions and concerns from individual landowners. Any individuals who are not able to attend, or have questions prior to the meeting may contact Ryan Ransom at 712-336-3782, Ext. 3.

Check out the Clean Water Alliance website at www.cleanwateralliance.net for news and updates on current and on-going projects.

NRCS Staff:

Carroll Oskvig, District Conservationist
Tim Moran, Soil Conservation Technician
Betty Romero, Soil Conservation Technician

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Maxine Butler, State Secretary

District Staff:

Steve Anderson, Urban Conservationist
John Wills, CWA Coordinator
Ryan Ransom, Silver Lake Coordinator

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