

FEATURE – WASHINGTON STATE FAMILY PROTECTS THE ENVIRONMENT

INTRO: A partnership between a Washington state farm family and the U.S. Department of Agriculture is yielding environmental benefits. The USDA's Bob Ellison has more. (1:33)

THIRTY YEARS AGO, RENE GARCIA PICKED APPLES AS A FARM WORKER IN WASHINGTON'S YAKIMA VALLEY. TODAY HE, HIS DAUGHTER AND HIS SON EACH RUN THEIR OWN ORCHARDS. TO HELP ENSURE EACH FARM'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, THE GARCIAS ENROLLED IN A U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE PROGRAM. THE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE'S CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM REWARDS PRODUCERS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PRACTICES.

Rene Garcia, Yakima, Washington producer: Learning the whole thing about conserving came from N-R-C-S about three years ago. We've always been a little on the conservative side, but now with N-R-C-S they really showed us that we should be doing all of these projects.

GARCIA'S SON SAYS THOSE PROJECTS INCLUDE WATER CONSERVATION, PESTICIDE REDUCTION AND RUNOFF PREVENTION.

Damen Garcia, Yakima, Washington producer: Ever since we started doing that we have better apples and pears and cut down the costs on the chemicals. Plus it's better for the environment and for the people out in the orchard that have to work around it.

GARCIA'S DAUGHTER SAYS SHE HOPES HER FAMILY'S CONSERVATION EFFORTS INSPIRE OTHER PRODUCERS.

Erica Garcia-Thomas, Yakima, Washington producer: Other people see what you are doing and it gives you that much better of a reputation and it makes you become a role model for people who are not part of the program.

Corey Bonsen, USDA NRCS: One of their goals is for conservation and that's helping the land and they're showing the neighbors what they can do to make the land better.

LEARN MORE ABOUT CONSERVATION PROGRAMS AT YOUR LOCAL USDA SERVICE CENTER OR AT NRCS DOT USDA DOT GOV. FOR THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M BOB ELLISON.