

## NEWS RELEASE



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### Help for Irrigators and Producers Who Manage Drainage Water

INDIANAPOLIS, February 7, 2007—USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering a new opportunity to Indiana producers who use irrigation systems, or are willing to manage their drainage water. Beginning this year, the agency has a special allocation in the name of Ground and Surface Water Conservation, and through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and can offer financial assistance for improving irrigation system efficiency and establishing a Drainage Water Management system.

"We think this will be attractive to Indiana farmers who use irrigation for high level production, specialty crops, organic crops, vineyards, orchards and other situations," says Xavier Montoya, (Acting) State Conservationist for NRCS. "This is a way for us to help irrigators make their systems more efficient. In the long run, this can reduce the amount of water pumped from the aquifer, plus reduce energy use and operating costs."

NRCS has also posted an Energy Estimator for Irrigation systems on line at <http://ipat.sc.egov.usda.gov/>. It is a quick and easy way for producers to evaluate their irrigation system, and see where alternatives can save energy and money.

"This initiative can also help producers who want to manage drainage water. Drainage Water Management reduces the potential for sediments, nutrients and other chemicals from leaving the farm and entering waterways," says Montoya. Drainage Water Management is a relatively new approach to managing tile system water with a water control structure to control the water table in a field. With the capability of managing the water table, water can be retained on the field when drainage is not needed (for example in the winter). Studies show that total amounts of nitrogen leaving a field utilizing Drainage Water Management are lower than when the tile system continues to drain. There is also the possibility that during dry periods, producers can retain sub-surface water so that more moisture is available to the crop during the growing season, thus reducing the need for additional irrigation, as well as controlling outflow of nutrients and sediments.

Producers can apply now under EQIP Ground and Surface Water Conservation. To find out more, contact NRCS at the nearest USDA Service Center.

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