

## Fact Sheet

February 2006

## ***Natural Resources Conservation Service***

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### ***Helping People Help the Land***

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance to help agricultural producers and others care for the land. The assistance we provide is based on an understanding that the land – the landscape as a whole – must be the focus of conservation. Using this comprehensive approach, the people we help are able to help the land function as a living sustainable system that provides a high standard of living and a quality of life for today and for future generations.

### ***A Partnership Approach***

Since the Dust Bowl of the 1930's, NRCS has worked through conservation districts and others throughout the U.S. to help landowners, as well as Federal, State, tribal, and local governments and community groups conserve natural resources on private lands.

NRCS has six mission goals that include high quality, productive soils; clean and abundant water; healthy plant and animal communities; clean air; an adequate energy supply; and working farms and ranchlands. To achieve these goals, the Agency implements three strategies.

- Cooperative conservation: seeking and promoting cooperative efforts to achieve conservation goals.
- Watershed approach: providing information and assistance to encourage and enable locally-led, watershed-scale conservation.
- Market-based approach: facilitating the growth of market-based opportunities that encourage the private sector to invest in conservation on private lands.

### ***Conservation Assistance***

NRCS provides conservation assistance through a nationwide network of conservation districts and local offices. Our locally-based NRCS staff

works directly with farmers and ranchers to provide technical and financial conservation assistance.

NRCS helps landowners develop conservation plans and provides advice on the design, layout, construction, management, operation, maintenance, and evaluation of the recommended, voluntary conservation practices. NRCS's programs and other Federal, State, or local cost-share programs may be available to help producers implement conservation practices, as well as provide incentives to qualified landowners to protect their natural resources.

NRCS works on a variety of activities that include farmland protection, upstream flood prevention, emergency watershed protection, urban conservation, and local community projects designed to improve social, economic, and environmental conditions.

NRCS conducts soil surveys, conservation needs assessments, and the National Resources Inventory to provide a basis for resource conservation planning activities and to provide an accurate natural resource assessment of the condition of the Nation's private lands.

As the leading source of technology as it applies to natural resources conservation on private lands, NRCS develops technical guides and other Web-based tools for use by landowners, NRCS staff, private consultants, conservation districts and other Federal, State and local conservation agencies to help enhance their natural resource conservation efforts.

### ***For More Information***

Please contact NRCS at your local USDA Service Center, listed in phone directories under U.S. Government, or visit our Web site at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>.