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AUDIO: Central Valley farmers offered help to try sustainable ag

SAN FRANCISCO
July 9, 2009 12:02am



- **Could lead to better profits, healthier environment**
- **'It's a real opportunity for farmers in the Central Valley to try new, innovative, methods of farming'**

Some farmers in the Central Valley may be able to get a financial backstop when they try certain sustainable agricultural practices, thanks to a partnership between Sustainable Conservation and American Farmland Trust.



Ladi Asgill

They are sponsoring the "Best Management Practices (BMP) Challenge." It's to promote farming practices like reducing fertilizer use and using less-intensive cultivation practices to promote clean water and air throughout the Central Valley.

But with the Great Recession, farmers, who normally have a thin bottom line, are more reluctant to experiment with different practices because of the possibility of failure.

The Challenge reimburses farmers for crop and revenue losses that may result from implementing beneficial practices on their land.

"It's a real opportunity for farmers in the Central Valley to try new, innovative, methods of farming," says Ladi Asgill, senior project manager for Sustainable Conservation. "If they embark on a practice like conservation tillage where there is an increased risk of yield reductions, the program would step in and help compensation for their loss in yields."

(Mr. Asgill talks about the BMP Challenge in a CVBT Audio Interview. Please left-click on the link below to listen now or right-click to download the MP3 audio file for later listening.)

Mr. Asgill says that with the Challenge, farmers have nothing to lose in helping clean up California and promote the financial health of their operations.

Sustainable Conservation hopes to sign up at least 10 Central Valley farmers by August.

Drilldown

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- » For more information: <http://www.suscon.org/>
- » For more information: <http://www.farmland.org/programs/environment/solutions/bmp-challenge.asp>



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