



California

## **NEWS RELEASE**

United States Department of Agriculture · Natural Resources Conservation Service  
430 G Street #4164, Davis, CA 95616 · (530) 792-5600 · <http://www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov>

### **\$5 Million Available in Water Quality Funding for Eastern San Joaquin River**

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DAVIS, Calif., January 25, 2013—The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in California announced today that \$5 million is available to farmers and dairy producers east of the San Joaquin River in Merced and Stanislaus counties for water conservation and water quality improvements.

This financial assistance is being made available through the Bay Delta Initiative (BDI), which was created in 2011 to help farmers in California's Central Valley apply enhanced water quality-improvement practices on their land through a multi-year process. Additionally, this effort will support the work of Sustainable Conservation, Western United Dairymen, local Resource Conservation Districts and other partners to improve water quality and local wildlife habitat. BDI is one of a dozen national initiatives aimed at assisting farmers to put added conservation practices on the ground using a landscape-level approach. Applications are due February 15, 2013.

"This is a great opportunity to bring our partners in both the dairy industry and irrigated agriculture together to address this mutual need to reduce risks to shallow groundwater and surface water from pesticides and nutrients," said district conservationists Diana Waller and Malia Hildebrandt in a joint statement. "Typically these concerns are approached industry by industry, but in this case the partners are sharing time and resources to conserve and protect water and aquatic habitat on a landscape level." Waller, in Modesto, and Hildebrandt, in Merced, are the NRCS district conservationists who are teaming up with partners for this initiative in their joint watershed east of the San Joaquin River.

Approved practices for dairies will include structures and management to capture, store, measure and distribute manure nutrients in a safe and useful way. For irrigated cropland, farmers can receive technical and financial help for practices to conserve water and to protect surface and ground water quality. Examples of funded conservation work include hardware and management to improve irrigation efficiency, tail-water return systems, sediment basins, orchard cover crops, and pest and nutrient management. All systems aim to reduce deep percolation losses to ground water and reduce risks from run-off to surface water.

Eligible producers who submit applications and other required documents by close-of-business on February 15, 2013, will be considered for this fiscal year 2013 funding cycle. Funding decisions will be made according to the highest priority list of screened and ranked applications available at that time. Applications will continue to be accepted after this deadline, but ranking and funding decisions will be deferred until the next funding cycle.

Interested farmers in Merced County should visit the NRCS Service Center in Merced, located at 2926 G Street, Suite 102, Suite C, Merced, CA 95340, or call (209) 722-4119, ex. 3.

Interested farmers in Stanislaus County should visit the NRCS Service Center in Modesto, located at 3800 Cornucopia Way, Suite E, Modesto, CA 95358, or call (209) 491-9320.

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