



Natural Resources
Conservation Service

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NEWS RELEASE

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USDA-NRCS ANNOUNCES FUNDING FOR THE AGRICULTURAL WATER ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM FOR THE RUSSIAN RIVER AND NAVARRO Application Due Date: March 1, 2011

PETALUMA, CA, February 3, 2011-The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is announcing application cut-off dates for the Agricultural Water Enhancement Program (AWEP). Applications for the AWEP program must be received by the NRCS Petaluma Field Office by close of business March 1, 2011 so that ranking of applications can begin. AWEP offers cost sharing of 50% of the total cost to install water conservation practices. A 75% cost share is offered to producers who meet the definition of a “beginning farmer” or “limited resource” farmer as defined by NRCS.

The primary objective of this AWEP is to increase the reliability of agricultural water supplies and to improve in-stream flows to benefit federal and state listed salmon and steelhead trout. Projects that reduce the amount of stream diversions or improve management of frost control water will be given high priority if they are in the Russian River or Navarro River watersheds.

The construction of off-stream water storage ponds are identified as a high priority where they reduce instantaneous drawdown of river flows during frost control and/or irrigation operations and where the necessary water rights and permits have been acquired to store water. The program encourages the development of alternative sources of water or methods for frost control as well as infrastructure improvements that allow for flexibility in water management or increased efficiency. Irrigation water management is also targeted with this program and producers interested in installing weather stations and/or soil moisture monitoring devices are encouraged to apply. Eligible practices include but are not limited to off stream ponds, pond liners, pumping stations, pipelines, “disconnected” wells that pump to ponds for frost protection, wind machines, sprinkler head replacements and roof gutters for rainwater collection.

Producers have until **March 1, 2011** to apply and submit the required documentation to be considered for this fiscal year’s funding cycle. To make an appointment to apply, please call Felicia Hanley at (707) 794-1242 ext 125. For general program questions, please contact Charlette Epifanio at (707) 794-1242 ext 105. The Petaluma NRCS is located at 1301 Redwood Way, Ste. 170, Petaluma, CA 94954.

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The Natural Resources Conservation Service provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment.

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