

USDA INITIATIVE WILL CREATE STATEWIDE DEMONSTRATION FARMS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is establishing a soil health initiative in Nebraska. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will lead a state-wide effort to enhance the adoption of soil health management systems through the Soil Health Demonstration Farms Initiative.

This initiative will establish 12 demonstration farms across the state to showcase soil health practices and related cropping system comparisons. Farmers are encouraged to apply for funding to establish demonstration farms to test soil health practices. Landowners interested in applying for funding should submit their application to NRCS by June 17, 2016.

According to NRCS, the purpose of this initiative is to demonstrate soil health management systems applicable to various regions of Nebraska. The goal is to establish two demonstration farms per region. There are 17 counties in the region of southeast Nebraska that we are a part of.

Producers approved under this initiative will be compensated for conducting strip trials of various cover crops, crop rotations, and management techniques. Producers will receive \$121 per acre, up to a maximum of \$15,000 per year, to conduct these strip trials, host field days and collect information about soil health.

NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) will be used to fund this initiative. Producers selected can receive this EQIP funding for 3-5 years. For more information on the Soil Health Demonstration Farms Initiative, visit NRCS at the USDA Service Center or www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov

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