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NRCS State Conservationist Announces Grantees for Conservation Innovation Grants

*Eight Grantees Offer to Accelerate Technology Transfer and Adoption of
Promising Technologies for Most Pressing Natural Resource Concerns*

ALBUQUERQUE – USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) state conservationist, Dennis Alexander, announced today NRCS is granting \$274,976 to eight non-Federal governmental entities, non-governmental organizations, and individuals in New Mexico to stimulate the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies.

“We must invest in environmental enhancement and protection, in conjunction with agricultural production,” said Alexander. “Under the Conservation Incentives Grant program, we are awarding competitive grants that will benefit agricultural producers by providing more options for environmental enhancement and compliance with Federal, State, and local regulations.”

The following projects will receive support from the Conservation Innovation Grants:

Anaerobic Digester/Constructed Wetlands System for Dairy Wastewater Treatment and Reuse

Raymond L. Jarrett - \$64,686

This innovative project combines technologies to improve wastewater nutrient management on dairies, while conserving water by making it available for reuse for irrigation, direct aquifer recharge, or other purposes as needed. In addition, the project will address concerns of pathogen concentration in feedstuffs when effluent is distributed on forage areas.

Tracking Soil Moisture and Alluvial Water Response Before and After Brush Treatments in the Burro Mountains

Black Range Resource Conservation & Development, Inc. - \$70,886.00

This project will assist landowners and land managers to design effective tree/brush thinning projects in historic savanna regions to enhance soil moisture and alluvial water storage. It will provide accurate long-term records of the response of herbaceous cover, soil moisture, alluvial groundwater, and spring flow to a brush thinning project on a 220-acre watershed in the Burro Mountains. Project data and evaluation will be supplied to the land managers and owners, disseminated to regional landowners, and applied in future brush reduction efforts.

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Wireless Monitoring System

David Ramos - \$25,400.00

This project will demonstrate a wireless monitoring system that will allow producers to find an optimal moisture percentage in crops irrigated by drip and center pivot sprinkler systems, and test how to effectively apply that data to avoid unwanted over and under watering.

Black River Biomass/Erosion Control Demonstration

Carlsbad Soil and Water Conservation District - \$14,500

This project will use bagged composted mulch in strategic locations to reduce erosion from road turnout drainages, thereby trapping sediment and improving rangeland habitat. This will demonstrate how an inexpensive method of erosion control can be used in a rangeland setting with soils that are prone to erosion. Monitoring will be done to assess sediment reduction and erosion control performance.

Renewable Energy Turbine Wind Scoop

Donald Fitzner - \$24,000.00

This project will develop a portable wind scoop prototype that will turn a turbine which can be use as a mobile electricity source for rural residents. Farmers and ranchers who have remote well sites for irrigation or cattle water, as well as many other distant sites, can benefit from this development.

Yarbrough Farms Renewable Energy Project

Dianne M. Yarbrough - \$27,690.00

This project will demonstrate a hybrid solar and wind generator developed by New Mexico Institute of Mining & Technology in use as a power source for a submersible pump and center pivot irrigation system.

Evapotranspiration in the Mesilla Valley

Desert Sense Development LLC - \$37,500.00

This project will demonstrate evapotranspiration (ETMV) as a method through which surface based weather data is collected hourly, compiled, and transmitted to fields. Electronic devices in the fields will receive this information and calculate an evapotranspiration value and start and stop times for an irrigation controller. Producers will use the evapotranspiration value to optimize and conserve water resources through efficient water management.

A Nitrogen/Insect Model for Precision Crop Production

New Mexico State University - \$75,000

This project will implement a new precision technology with biological control techniques that incorporate automated fast analysis of crop stress with infrared reflectance from growing plants, and sample or computer count predator/prey insect species, to determine the timing and optional application rates of water, nitrogen, and insect control strategies to generate the highest profit in sustainable agricultural systems.

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