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Dairies Reap Benefit of Critical Planning

Despite challenges and tight schedules, NRCS New Mexico was able to allocate funds for all viable animal feeding operation (AFOs) that applied this year under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). In New Mexico, these operations are primarily dairies. This amounted to 11 projects for a total of \$1.1 million.

“A lot of credit goes to folks who have vision,” said Norman Vigil, assistant state conservationist for programs. “Due to previous planning we were able to set aside enough money to meet the needs.”

The groundwork for this 2006 success was laid when NRCS began to gear up for the program and anticipated a large demand. It was the responsibility of NRCS New Mexico staff to interpret the rules and regulations, and outline a course of action.

There were initial challenges to overcome, and critical analysis required to match resources with workload. All of this was done while time constraints were important and involved in court action on rules.

“We are still working on balancing resources and demand,” said Vigil. “We cannot be over-confident because there is the potential for great need – and we certainly want to provide for that need and prepare ourselves to do so.”

In response to the needs Vigil notes, NRCS is still evaluating and analyzing its process.

“We are learning and evolving as we go on,” said Vigil.

Clearly, the staff working in this area has done a great job launching the program. We look forward to their continued efforts.

For information about AFO/CAFO assistance under the EQIP program contact the NRCS office nearest you.

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