

# Conservation Conversation



## Kansas NRCS Announces Deadline for EQIP Funding

Salina, Kansas, September 19, 2016—The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced November 18, 2016, as the first cut-off date to apply for fiscal year 2017 funds through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

“EQIP provides Kansas agricultural producers a wide range of opportunities to improve the quality of natural resources on their land,” State Conservationist Eric B. Banks said.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program available for agricultural producers. Through EQIP, NRCS will provide financial and technical assistance to install conservation practices that reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, improve water and air quality, and create wildlife habitat.

The November 18 application deadline also applies to the following initiatives:

- High Tunnel System Initiative: NRCS will help producers implement high tunnels that extend growing seasons for high value crops in an environmentally safe manner.
  - Lesser Prairie-Chicken Initiative: NRCS will assist producers to implement conservation practices specifically targeted to improve the lesser prairie-chicken habitat while promoting the overall health of grazing lands.
  - Monarch Butterfly Habitat Development Project: NRCS will assist landowners to establish milkweed and other plants critical to the iconic Monarch Butterfly.
  - Ogallala Aquifer Initiative: NRCS will assist producers to reduce aquifer water use, improve water quality, and enhance the economic viability of croplands and rangelands.
  - On-Farm Energy Initiative: Producers work with an NRCS-approved Technical Service Provider to develop Agricultural Energy Management Plans or farm energy audits that assess energy consumption on an agricultural operation.
  - Organic Initiative: NRCS will assist producers with installation of conservation practices on agricultural operations related to organic production. Producers currently certified as organic, transitioning to organic, or producers who are exempt based on the National Organic Program will have access to a broad set of conservation practices to assist in treating their resource concerns.
- National Water Quality Initiative: Application cutoff date will be established at a later time.

NRCS accepts applications for all of its programs on a continuous basis, but applications must be filed for these programs by November 18 to be eligible for the next round of funding. Producers interested in EQIP should submit a signed application to the local NRCS field office.

EQIP also helps address the unique circumstances of socially disadvantaged, veteran, limited resource, and beginning farmers and ranchers, who have natural resource concerns that need to be addressed on their land," said Banks. Qualifying Kansas producers compete separately and receive higher payment rates.

For more information visit the Kansas NRCS Web site [www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs](http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs) or your local U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Service Center. To find a service center near you, check on the Internet at [offices.usda.gov](http://offices.usda.gov). Follow us on Twitter @NRCS\_Kansas. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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*The Barber County Conservation District regular board meetings are held  
the first Tuesday of each month.*

### Board of Supervisors

Ted Alexander..... Chairman  
Georgi Dawson.....Vice-Chairman  
Calvin Boyd.....Treasurer  
Matt Cantrell.....Member  
John Cook.....Member

### Conservation District Annual Meeting

January 14, 2017

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### Office Closings:

October 10: Columbus Day  
November 11: Veteran’s Day  
November 24: Thanksgiving Day  
December 26: Christmas Day  
(Observed Holiday)  
January 2: New Year’s Day  
(Observed Holiday)



## Top Three Time-Savings Advantages Using NRCS' Conservation Client Gateway

Farmers put in long days. Driving to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office every time paperwork needs to be signed is not always productive. With Conservation Client Gateway, a producer can do most of their business with NRCS online. Farmers using Conservation Client Gateway find these three things to be the most advantageous for them.

**Advantage 1—Sign documents electronically.** It is a secure way to sign contracts online. Viewing and printing documents at the farmer's convenience saves time. Plus, everything is logically organized and easy to find. For many farmers that have a long drive to the USDA office, or have multiple projects going on with no time to spare, this feature is a tremendous time saver.

**Advantage 2—Keep track of payments.** Everyone wants to know when they are getting paid. With Conservation Client Gateway, you can get payment status online without the need for a phone call or waiting for a call back.

**Advantage 3—Request conservation practice certification or technical assistance.** Submitting certification online speeds up the process—no need for a special trip to the USDA Service Center. And by asking technical questions online, NRCS is better able to reply with more detailed information that can be read online and available to go back to anytime.

“Many farmers in the surrounding states have really appreciated its time-saving features – use is growing in Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa, and Texas. Over 1,700 farmers are using this nationwide. We'd like to see Kansas farmers adopt this to help them get more time back in their day,” says Eric B. Banks, Kansas NRCS State Conservationist. We have new initiatives underway to get the word out and show how easy Conservation Client Gateway is to use. Farmers can expect to see more demonstrations at partner events and field demonstrations this year. Saving time, being more productive, and most of all convenience—we hope our farmers and ranchers explore the possibilities with this application.

Learn more about NRCS or find your local field office by visiting the Kansas NRCS Web site ([www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov)). Follow us on Twitter @NRCS\_Kansas. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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## Seeking Nominations for 2016 Banker's Awards

In an effort to stimulate a greater interest in the conservation of agricultural resources in Barber County, the Barber County Bankers' Association, Barber County Extension, and Barber County Conservation District are seeking nominations for the 2016 Banker's Conservation Award Program for soil conservation and a windbreak award.

Winners of the soil conservation award will be selected on the following criteria: (1) use of land according to its capabilities; (2) completeness of an applied farm plan; (3) balance of farm enterprise; (4) quality of conservation work and maintenance of practices; and (5) special practices unique to the farming operation.

Considerations for the windbreak award include windbreak design, management, location, density and length. The windbreak needs to be at least three years old.

If you know of a Barber County landowner who you think should be recognized for his/her outstanding conservation efforts, contact Tim Marshall, K-State Research and Extension Agent, at 620-886-3971, or the conservation office at 620-886-5311.



## Cut And Stuff by Jess Crockford

Controlling large Red Cedars with fire can be difficult but producers are employing a new technique to improve their success. Fire kills most cedars less than 4 feet tall given adequate fuel and proper prescribed burning conditions. In order to kill larger cedars, land managers need to provide ladder fuels which allows the flames to reach into the canopies of taller trees.

*Ladder fuels are live or dead fuels that allow a fire to climb from the ground into the tree canopy. Common ladder fuels include tall grasses, shrubs, cut trees, and tree branches, both living and dead.*

Ladder fuels can be created by cutting cedars from surrounding areas and stuffing them in and around pockets of cedars that are inaccessible to cutting equipment. When creating ladder fuels, to be most effective, material should be placed on the upwind side and at lower elevation of the uncut trees to take advantage of fire behavior. Creating this continuity in fuel from ground to the tree canopy is an important task. Cedars cut from firebreaks and fence lines are a good source of ladder fuels.

Burning cedars can throw embers a significant distance depending on relative humidity and wind speed, therefore, this practice should not be used within 500 feet of the firebreak. Stuffed cedars should be cut and placed under live trees 1 to 9 months ahead of the planned burn date. Areas inaccessible to machinery can be treated by cutting trees with a chain saw on the perimeter of dense groves and letting them fall and/or rolling them into position. The cut cedars should be tightly stuffed against standing cedars to increase the effectiveness of the prescribed burn.

The resulting “cut and stuff” prescribed burn technique can render significant damage to large cedars in areas where fire normally would not have had much impact. Even though the cedars may not be completely consumed during the burn, the trees will be scorched significantly and are killed by the enhanced heat provided by the “cut and stuff” cedar trees. Planning considerations should address concerns over the extreme heat and significant smoke produced with this technique. Follow up burns in subsequent years will be needed to treat the proliferation of new seedlings that will come from the seed bank in the soil.

This effort is just one example of the work being completed by the Kansas Prescribed Fire Council. The Council organized in 2008 and is an educational non-profit that promotes the safe and effective use of prescribed fire. If you are interested in learning more about prescribe fire or burn associations, contact your local Conservation District or Natural Resources Conservation Service office at 620-886-5311, or the Kansas Prescribed Fire Council at 785-532-3316.



## SAM Scam Warning

As of October 1, 2010, all farmers and ranchers that participate in USDA/NRCS programs and operate as an entity, trust or LLC and file taxes using an entity identification number (EIN) must register with DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) and SAM (System for Awards Management). Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS is a unique nine digit identification number used as a means of identifying business entities. System for Awards Management (SAM) is a government-wide registry for vendors doing business with the federal government. Prior to 2013, SAM was called the Central Contractor Registry (CCR).

Recently we have been made aware of several scams floating around in the form of letters, emails, phone calls, etc., stating that entities or individuals representing DUNS or SAM will update/renew your registration for a nominal fee. Both DUNS and SAM registrations are **FREE** and at no time should you pay to receive a DUNS number, register with SAM or renew a SAM registration. Please be cautious if contacted by an individual offering to provide these services for a fee. More than likely it's a scam; again, there is no charge for signing up, registering or renewing a registration for either of these services.

You can obtain a DUNS number by phone at: 1-866-705-5711 or complete the application online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. After you have a DUNS number you will need to register with SAM. You will have to complete your SAM registration online at <http://www.sam.gov>. Once you've registered with SAM you will be required to update your SAM registration on an annual basis. SAM will send email notifications reminding you that it's time to update your SAM registration. These will come 60, 30 and 15 days prior to your SAM registration expiring.

### ATTENTION: Contract Holders

EQIP and state contract holders are encouraged to notify their conservation office of practice completion as soon a practice is completed. This enables field verification and practice certification to be completed in a timely manner, and may avoid unnecessary delays in the payment process due to contract modifications and extensions.

### Ownership and Name Changes

Please notify NRCS if you sell land that is under an EQIP or CSP contract, or if the land has been transferred to a trust, LLC, or partnership. Contract transfer paperwork needs to be completed for any of these changes to avoid contract violations and payment delays.

Direct deposit banking information also needs to be updated if there have been any changes. Even if FSA has been notified, you will still need to let NRCS know of any changes as well.