

# CONSERVATION CONNECTIONS

a quarterly publication of the Dickinson County Conservation District



## Cost-Share Funding Update

Each year, the Dickinson County Conservation District administers cost-share funds provided by the Kansas Department of Agriculture through appropriation from the Kansas Water Plan Fund. This funding helps county landowners implement conservation practices that benefit all Kansans by providing cleaner water, more productive crop and grazing lands, and improved wildlife habitat.

Beginning July 1, 2019, the Dickinson County Conservation District received allocations for two programs: \$19,697 for Water Resources Cost-Share Program (WR) and \$14,497 for Non-Point Source Pollution Control Program (NPS). All funding received through these programs goes directly to area landowners. None of this funding is used for Conservation District administrative expenses.

To date, \$19,249 in WR funding is under contract with area landowners. Conservation practices implemented under this program include gradient terraces and grassed waterways.

The Conservation District still has funding of \$6,247 available through the NPS program. This program helps area landowners replace failed septic systems and plug abandoned wells, which represent potential sources of groundwater contamination as well as physical hazards to animals and children.

Contact the Conservation District to apply for NPS cost-share funding.

**USDA Service Center**  
328 NE 14th Street  
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**Conservation District/NRCS—785-263-2787**  
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Funding for some programs provided by the Division of Conservation, Kansas Department of Agriculture through appropriation from the Kansas Water Plan Fund.

The Dickinson County Conservation District prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status.

# 2019 Conservation Award Nominees Sought

Know a farmer? Nominate a farmer!

Our farmers are one of Dickinson County's most valuable resources. Why? We're glad you asked!

Each U.S. farmer produces food and fiber for 168 people each year. That's 2,207,504,580,000 pounds of food and fiber in all. That's not two million, billion, or trillion pounds. Two quadrillion!

We use agricultural products every single day. Without our farmers, we would not have everyday items like baseball bats, shoes, paper, ink, tires, shampoo, toothpaste, lumber, or crayons. What else? Oh, that's right. Food.

And we pay very little for our food. Because our farmers are so productive Americans spend only 10% of their annual income on food. Compare that to the Philippines where citizens spend up to 38% of their annual income on food.

Farmers also receive a very small portion of our total food cost. For every retail dollar spent on food eaten at home and away from home, farmers receive only about 19 cents. In 1980, farmers received about 31 cents.

Farmers are conservation-minded. They implement farming practices that conserve soil, clean the air, conserve and protect local water supplies, prevent

soil erosion, preserve wetland areas, and provide and protect wildlife habitat.

Help us celebrate farmers in Dickinson County!

Each year, the Dickinson County Conservation District presents awards to county land owners for implementing conservation practices that exemplify a commitment to stewardship of our natural resources.

Awards are presented at the Annual Meeting in February and recipients are recognized in a special supplement to the Abilene Reflector-Chronicle. Each of the awards is dedicated to a conservation practice that strives to conserve and promote healthy soils, water, forests, and wildlife.

Award winners are selected from a group of landowners nominated by the Dickinson County Board of Supervisors, partner organizations, and other area landowners. To be eligible to win the award, nominee must implement one or more specific conservation practices in Dickinson County, must own land in Dickinson County, and must not have been a winner the prior year.

Nominate your favorite farmer today! Nomination may be made by phone at 785-263-2787 extension 332, by email to [cindy.montgomery@ks.nacdnet.net](mailto:cindy.montgomery@ks.nacdnet.net) or by submitting a form on the website homepage: [www.dkcoconservation.com](http://www.dkcoconservation.com)

Source: [agfoundation.org](http://agfoundation.org)



## Dickinson County Cost Share Funding History

The following represents actual dollars of cost-share funding paid to landowners from 2015 to 2019 (Not all 2019 contracts are implemented. \$13,361 for WR and \$6,510 for NPS are contracted but not implemented.)

### Water Resources Program

2015	\$ 18,780.92
2016	\$ 16,106.05
2017	\$ 16,160.63
2018	\$ 15,281.25
2019	\$ 5,582.92

### Non-Point Source Pollution Program

2015	\$ 12,684.42
2016	\$ 11,973.10
2017	\$ 15,300.00
2018	\$ 11,610.00
2019	\$ 9,000.00

# KANSAS PLANT MATERIALS CENTER IN MANHATTAN

The Plant Materials Program (PMP) was created in 1935 as the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) Division of Nurseries. Over the years, the PMP has evolved into the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Plant Materials Program.

In 1936, the Manhattan Plant Materials Center (PMC) was established. The PMC consists of 169 acres located south of Manhattan, Kansas. The Center offers services to diverse regions of the heartland, including northeastern Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, and northern Oklahoma. The primary purpose has been to develop plant materials and technology for conservation innovation.

Since the establishment in 1936, the PMC has selected and released 19 native grass varieties, 9 native forbs, 3 shrubs, and 1 tree. Some of the best known grass releases include: Kaw big bluestem, El Reno sideoats grama, Bend sand lovegrass, Blackwell switchgrass, Cheyenne Indiangrass, and Aldous little bluestem. Forb releases include: Riley showy partridge pea, Kaneb purple prairie clover, Reno Germplasm Illinois bundleflower, and Prairie Gold Maximilian sunflower. A complete list of plant releases, along with information for each, can be found at: [www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/pmreleases/plantmaterials/pmc/central/kspmc/cp/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/pmreleases/plantmaterials/pmc/central/kspmc/cp/).

Several years ago, the primary purpose of the PMC shifted from selecting plants for conservation purposes and producing foundation seed to soil health activities. Currently, the PMC has several ongoing soil health studies. Initially, the PMC

planted a variety of cover crop species to study plant characteristics and soil health properties. Photos of these plants and root systems are displayed on the Kansas NRCS Web site, under "Soil Health" (top, right) then click "Kansas Plant Materials Center Cover Crop Study." Current studies include, but are not limited to: a cover crop variety study, a cover crop interseeding into row crops study, and a native grass study.



Additional information about PMC activities, along with contact information, can be found on the Web site at [www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/plantmaterials/pmc/central/kspmc/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/plantmaterials/pmc/central/kspmc/).

Please contact your local NRCS office or conservation district office located at your local county U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Service Center (listed in the telephone book under United States Government or on the internet at [offices.usda.gov](http://offices.usda.gov)) for assistance. More information is also available on the Kansas NRCS Web site at [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.

# Funding Helps Farmers, Rural Small Businesses, and Ag Producers Cut Energy Costs

USDA Has More Than \$400 Million Still Available for Renewable Energy System and Energy Efficiency Loan Guarantees

WASHINGTON, July 18, 2019— Acting Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Joel Baxley today encouraged farmers, rural small businesses and agricultural producers to apply for financing in a key U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program that provides loan guarantees to help rural



small businesses lower their energy costs.

“Under the leadership of President Trump and Agriculture Secretary Perdue, USDA is committed to increasing economic development in rural communities across the country through strong partnerships with rural businesses,” Baxley said. “USDA’s Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) is an important tool to help strengthen and grow the rural economy.”

USDA accepts applications for REAP funding year-round. Potential applicants should contact their state USDA Rural Development office for additional information.

REAP funding can be used for renewable energy systems such as anaerobic digesters, biomass, geothermal, hydro-power, wind and solar. It also can be used to make energy efficiency improvements to heating, ventilation and cooling systems; insulation; and lighting and refrigeration. Below are some examples of USDA’s REAP investments.

- Edgehill Farms, an ag tourism center in Oakland, Ky., received a \$34,596 loan guarantee to install a 34.8-kilowatt photovoltaic array system on the roof of its ham processing facility. The system will generate approximately 45,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) annually that will be sold directly to the local utility, earning \$4,448 for the firm annually.
- In Magnolia, N.C., Optima KV received a \$6.5 million loan guarantee for an anaerobic digester that will help hog producers dispose of waste by converting it to energy. The project aggregates multiple biogas streams at a refinery. The resulting natural gas is then transported via pipeline to a power plant to generate electricity. The digester produces additional revenue for hog producers and a cleaner environment.

In April 2017, President Donald J. Trump established the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity to identify legislative, regulatory and policy changes that could



promote agriculture and prosperity in rural communities. In January 2018, Secretary Perdue presented the Task Force’s findings to President Trump. These findings included 31 recommendations to align the federal government with state, local and tribal governments to take advantage of opportunities that exist in rural America. Supporting the rural workforce was a cornerstone recommendation of the task force.

To view the report in its entirety, please view the Report to the President of the United States from the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity. In addition, to view the categories of the recommendations, please view the Rural Prosperity infographic (PDF, 190 KB) (PDF, 190 KB).

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit [www.rd.usda.gov](http://www.rd.usda.gov).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

# Poster, Limerick, and Essay Contest

The Dickinson County Conservation District invites Dickinson County students to participate in the annual youth poster, limerick, and essay contest – “Where Would We Bee Without Pollinators?”

The poster contest is open to public, private, or home school students in Dickinson County. Students will compete in poster categories by grade: K-1; 2-3; 4-6; 7-9; 10-12. One winner from each of the grade categories will be



selected and honored at the Dickinson County Conservation District Annual Meeting in February 2020.

The winning poster in each grade category will be entered into the statewide poster contest. Winning entries in the state contest in each category will be entered into the national contest and will be eligible for cash prizes.

Ask your child’s teacher if the class is participating in the contest or stop in at the Dickinson County Conservation District office, 328 NE 14th Street in Abilene for complete rules and an entry form. All students are eligible to participate in the contest, even if their school is not participating. For more information, contact Cindy Montgomery, 263-2787 extension 332.



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# Conservation District Services

## Equipment Rental and Sales

The Dickinson County Conservation District provides conservation equipment rental service to area landowners. Contact Cindy Dooley at 785-263-2787 extension 332 to schedule your rental.

### **Great Plains No Till Drill**

Delivered: \$50 Delivery Fee + \$15/Acre  
First 1/2 Acre Free  
Customer Pickup: \$15/Acre  
\$80 Minimum

### **Truax Grass Seed Drill**

Delivered: \$40 Delivery Fee + \$11/Acre  
First 1 Acre Free  
Customer Pickup: \$11/Acre  
\$40 Minimum

### **Drip Torch**

\$100 Deposit  
\$5/Day 1st 3 Days  
\$25/Day After 3 Days

### **CoCoRaHS Rain Gauge—\$32**

### **30" Wire Stem Marking Flags—Fluorescent Pink**

100 for \$10.00 or 1000 for \$100.00  
(\$10 minimum)

## NOTARY PUBLIC SERVICE AVAILABLE

Funding to produce this newsletter is provided in part by the Division of Conservation through appropriation from the Kansas Water Plan.

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## CALENDAR

OCTOBER 7—REGULAR BOARD MEETING

OCTOBER 14—COLUMBUS DAY (OFFICE CLOSED)

NOVEMBER 11—VETERANS DAY (OFFICE CLOSED)

NOVEMBER 12—REGULAR BOARD MEETING

NOVEMBER 28—THANKSGIVING DAY (OFFICE CLOSED)

DECEMBER 9—REGULAR BOARD MEETING

DECEMBER 25—CHRISTMAS DAY (OFFICE CLOSED)

JANUARY 13—REGULAR BOARD MEETING

JANUARY 20—MARTIN LUTHER KING JR BIRTHDAY (OFFICE CLOSED)

FEBRUARY 6—REGULAR BOARD MEETING

FEBRUARY 6—ANNUAL MEETING



Dickinson County Conservation District  
328 NE 14th Street  
Abilene, KS 67410