NRCS in Vermont Announces New Incentives Promoting Grazing

Through the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI), dairy producers throughout Vermont are eligible for incentive payments to implement or expand managed grazing starting this season. CCPI provides for funding through a partnership agreement, in this case between USDA-NRCS and the Vermont Grass Farmers Association (VGFA), to realize mutually beneficial environmental goals. VGFA and NRCS would like to encourage and support farmers choosing to reduce production costs, energy use, and water pollution by adopting or expanding managed grazing. Under this new partnership, eligible farmers may apply and, if accepted for funding, enter into long term contracts with NRCS to implement these new management techniques and install necessary infrastructure. Eligible practices include but are not limited to fencing, watering systems, pasture and hayland planting as well as prescribed grazing. Payments to producers, made through the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), will vary depending on the practice(s) to be implemented. Historically underserved producers will be eligible for enhanced payments. Applications for the 2009 program will be accepted from June 22-July 2. Farmers converting annually tilled land to a grazing system in the Otter Creek or Missisquoi watersheds will receive priority for funding. However, farmers statewide are eligible and encouraged to apply, including those with existing grazing systems who are prepared to make significant enhancements. To apply, please visit your local USDA Service Center by July 2.

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