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LAKE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION

DISTRICT NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 4 — OCTOBER 2007

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Environmental Quality Incentives Program **EQIP**

EQIP is a U.S. Department of Agriculture program that provides federal cost-share funds to working farms and ranches for conservation improvements.

What it takes to be eligible for EQIP

1. Enrolled land must currently be used to produce an agricultural commodity or livestock for food/fiber, AND produce \$1,000 of agricultural products produced and sold, or that normally would have been sold for 2 out of the last 5 years OR IRS Schedule F form showing profit or loss from farming operations.
2. You must have control of your land for the contract period (between 2 to 10 years).
3. EQIP must address resource concerns such as Water Quality, Water Quantity, Soil Erosion, Plant and Animal Health, Air Quality, and Wildlife and Forestry.
4. EQIP has an AGI requirement that states at the time of application, average adjusted gross income is \$2.5 million or less for the preceding 3 years.
5. The entire cost of the practice(s) installed under your contract must be paid by you up front until the practice has been certified by NRCS and the EQIP cost-share reimbursement payment is authorized.
6. Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may be required.
7. If your contract addresses the management of animal waste from a confined livestock operation, you must be willing to develop and implement a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan.
8. All irrigation related practices require written proof of irrigation 2 out of the last 5 years.

9. "Cost Recovery" and/or "Liquidated Damages" may apply if a contract is terminated without a legitimate State Office approved hardship and/or no Successor-in-Interest.

The application deadline for EQIP under the 2002 Farm Bill is November 13th.

Meeting eligibility requirements are ultimately the responsibility of the applicant and shall be completed within 30 days of filing application for program benefits. Applications that have not cleared program eligibility within 60 days of the end of the batching period may be cancelled and will not be considered for funding.

For more information about EQIP, contact Kesha Martin, District Conservationist, at 352-343-2481, ext. 3 or Chakesha.Martin@fl.usda.gov.

Check out the web site to obtain forms and additional details: <http://www.fl.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip.html>

Tropical Soda Apple

A Noxious Weed



Tropical Soda Apple Plant



Immature Fruit



Flower Petals Curve Backward

Farmers and Ranchers are utilizing EQIP cost-share funds to treat Tropical Soda Apple infestation. This weed has the potential to infest millions of acres of pastures, crops, forests, and natural areas. If left undisturbed, tropical soda apple can grow into a large bushy plant up to 6 ft. in height.

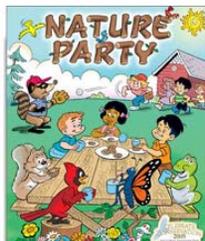
**\$1,000
Grant Received**

Wal-Mart provides Environmental Grant

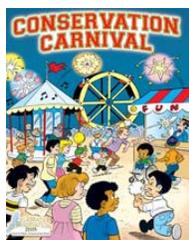
Lake Soil and Water Conservation District received \$1,000 from Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. to be used to purchase environmental activity books, handouts, and to produce and copy various word puzzles and other interesting activity worksheets for school children in kindergarten through sixth grade.

Staff and elected Supervisors take the conservation message to thousands of citizens each year through classroom presentations on soil and water conservation, during special annual events held by the District, and participating in other community events.

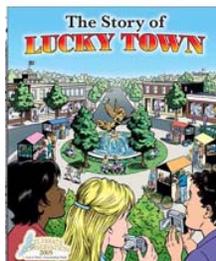
We appreciate Wal-Mart's generosity and support of environmental education.



Pre-K to 1st Grade



2nd to 3rd Grade



4th to 5th Grade

Upcoming Educational Events

November 14, 2007

Speech Contest - 6th through 12th grade
Topic: What is the future of Florida's renewable energies?

November 14, 2007

Poster Contest - all Lake County students
Topic: Water is Life

February 12, 2008

Envirothon - High School students

March 2008 (day tbd)

Land Judging - FFA students

Acting Secretary of Agriculture Named

On September 19, Mike Johanns resigned as Secretary of Agriculture. Charles (Chuck) Conner was named Acting Secretary of Agriculture.

Charles Conner was sworn in as Deputy Secretary of Agriculture on May 2, 2005.



Charles F. Conner

USDA Launches New 2007 Census of Agriculture Website

This year for the first time ever, producers will have the option of filling out their forms for the 2007 Census of Agriculture online. This option has been made possible by the newly launched Census of Agriculture website, created by the USDA National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS). In addition to the online form feature, the Census of Agriculture website contains the latest news and information about the upcoming Census, as well as frequently asked questions and data from previous counts dating back to 1840.

NASS will mail out Census forms in December to collect data for the 2007 calendar year. This mailing will include instructions on how to log in and respond to the Census online. Whether submitting online or by mail, the deadline for producers to return completed forms is February 4, 2008. Information on the 2007 Census of Agriculture and a draft of the Census form are available online at the new Census of Agriculture website, www.agcensus.usda.gov. To read the full USDA press release, go to http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Newsroom/2007/09_10_2007.asp.

Mobile Irrigation Lab

Training

On September 20th, the MIL team, Bobby Brown and James Joiner, along with Brad Russ, District Resource Conservationist, and Kesha Martin, District Conservationist, went to Palmetto, Florida for Irrigation Water Management - Tensiometer Training on September 20th.

Tensiometers measure the tension with which water is held in the soil. High moisture content produces low tension and, as the soil dries, the soil tension increases. The tensiometer is filled with water. The porous ceramic tip is in contact with the soil and produces a vacuum in the tensiometer, indicating the soil moisture tension.

Tensiometers are only one tool used for irrigation scheduling. Plant wilt, appearance of the soil, amount of irrigation water applied, and rainfall should also be closely checked.

Call the Mobile Irrigation Lab for assistance in developing an irrigation water management plan and for installation of the tensiometers. Cost-share assistance to purchase the tensiometers may be available through EQIP.

352-343-2481, ext 6

Voluntary Non-regulatory Free public service Confidential



James Joiner and Bobby Brown



Brad Russ and Kesha Martin



Tensiometers installed in a citrus grove

Three types of tensiometers (soil moisture sensors)



Time-domain reflectometry (TDR)

Electronic soil moisture monitor

Radio Program



The Lake County Mobile Irrigation Lab team, and District Conservationist, Kesha Martin, was interviewed by the Southeast AgNet Radio Network on September 25th.

The MIL team, Bobby Brown and James Joiner, gave information on the MIL Program and the working relationship with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Kesha Martin further explained how the MIL provides services for the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service by performing pre and post irrigation evaluations on irrigation systems for landowners in Lake County.

Southeast AgNet is an agriculture media company that airs radio programs over 65-plus stations in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. The radio interview will run in a series of 3 interviews that will be available on the radio and via the internet link.

The interview is expected to be available by mid October at: <http://agnetonline.com/category/usda-nrcs/>

Upcoming Events—2007

October

24 - Lake Soil & Water Conservation District Meeting - 2:00 p.m.

November

11 - Veterans Day
14 - Speech and Poster Contest
22 - Thanksgiving

December

5 - Lake Soil & Water Conservation District Meeting - 2:00 p.m.
25 - Christmas

Newsletter Distribution

The Lake Soil and Water Conservation District Newsletter is available on the web at [lakegovernment.com/Lake Soil & Water](http://lakegovernment.com/Lake%20Soil%20&%20Water). Send an email to:

Patty.Fletcher@fl.nacdnet.net or call **352-343-2481, ext. 6**, and we will add you to our mailing list.



Look for Tree Give-Away information in our next issue.



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