

### EQIP Initiatives Sign-up Deadline

U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist Eric B. Banks has announced a second application cutoff date, April 19, 2013, for the On-Farm Energy Initiative, Organic Initiative, and the Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative.

These initiatives are funded through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and offer technical and financial assistance to eligible participants to install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land. Conservation practices must be implemented to NRCS standards and specifications.

Through the On-Farm Energy Initiative, NRCS helps producers work with an NRCS-approved Technical Service Provider (TSP) to develop Agricultural Energy Management Plans or farm energy audits that assess energy consumption on an operation. NRCS may also provide assistance to implement various recommended measures identified in the energy audit through the use of conservation practice standards offered through this initiative.

Through the Organic Initiative, NRCS assists producers with installation of conservation practices on agricultural operations related to organic production. Producers currently certified as organic, transitioning to organic, or National Organic Program exempt will have access to a broad set of conservation practices to assist in treating their resource concerns while fulfilling many of the requirements in an Organic System Plan.

Through the Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative, NRCS helps producers implement high tunnels that extend growing seasons for high value crops in an environmentally safe manner. High tunnel benefits include better plant and soil quality and fewer nutrients and pesticides in the environment.

In Kansas, socially disadvantaged, limited resource, and beginning farmers and ranchers will receive a higher payment rate for eligible conservation practices applied.

Interested producers should contact their local NRCS office soon to see if they are eligible for these programs.

If you need more information, visit the Kansas NRCS web page at <http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/> or contact your local USDA Service Center (listed in the telephone book under United States Government or on the internet at [offices.usda.gov](http://offices.usda.gov)).