Funding Available from USDA to Protect Groundwater

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service has funding available through its Source Water Protection Initiative to help landowners install conservation practices. Interested landowners have until March 13, 2020, to apply.

Craig Derickson, state conservationist for NRCS in Nebraska said, "Since nearly all Nebraskans get their drinking water from groundwater, it's important we work together to help protect this resource from contamination. This designated funding provides an opportunity for landowners to receive financial assistance to install conservation practices that help protect and improve water quality."

The Source Water Protection priority area consists of 522 wellhead protection areas across the state that are located around the public well sites supplying water for communities in Nebraska. In addition, the Phase 2-4 high nitrate areas and water quantity management areas that are managed by the NRDs have been included in this initiative.

"The Source Water Protection Initiative is an exciting opportunity to improve and protect groundwater resources in Nebraska," said Marty Link, Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy. "We look forward promoting this program with NRCS to help communities protect their drinking water supplies."

Agricultural land located in the source water protection priority areas (see map) may be eligible to receive financial assistance. Nebraska NRCS is now accepting applications for source water protection funding. Approved applicants can receive funding to install conservation practices used to address water quality, that include:

- **Nutrient management**

- **Irrigation water management**

- **Cover crops**

- **Conversion of flood to pivot or subsurface drip irrigation systems.**

NRCS field office staff can determine if applicants are eligible for SWP priority area financial assistance. Applications are accepted anytime, but to receive funding this year, applications must be received by March 13, 2020. Visit your <u>local NRCS field </u>office to learn more.