

## NEWS RELEASE



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### State Receives Federal Dollars through Conservation Innovation Grants

INDIANAPOLIS, June 21, 2006 – Agriculture Under Secretary Mark Rey announced this week that USDA awarded nearly \$20 million in Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) to 38 states to fund 66 projects designed to develop and refine cutting-edge technologies and approaches that can help producers maintain viable agricultural operations.

“We are thrilled that five projects involving Indiana were selected to receive funding through these Conservation Innovation Grants,” said State Conservationist Jane Hardisty of USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). “These grants highlight cooperative conservation, leveraging private and federal dollars to help producers with their agriculture operations, and bring additional federal dollars into the state.”

CIG funds the development and adoption of innovative conservation approaches and technologies. The total value of the approved projects exceeds \$48 million, nationwide, after the grantees match at least 50 percent.

Grant recipients that affect Indiana include Agflex, Inc., Chicago Climate Exchange, Agricultural Drainage Management Coalition, and Purdue University (two projects). Federal dollars for these five *multi-state* projects total over \$2.8 million, with a portion benefiting Indiana. “The advances that these projects develop will have lasting effects for Indiana’s producers and our state’s economy,” Hardisty said.

As part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), NRCS administers CIG, which provides competitive grants to states and local governments, tribes, non-governmental organizations and individuals. Applicants from 45 states submitted 180 project proposals and requested about \$63 million.

Approved projects address traditional natural resource issues concerning agriculture such as water quality improvement, livestock nutrient management, grazing lands and forest health, and soil resource management. In addition, projects also address emerging natural resource issues including agricultural air emissions, energy conservation and market-based approaches to conservation.

Additional information about CIG, including summaries of approved projects, is available at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig>. A chart for a state listing of CIG projects can be found at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig/2006awards.html>.

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