

For: County Offices

**Source Water Protection Program**

Approved by: State Executive Director



**1 Overview**

**A Background**

On May 20, 2004, FSA entered into an agreement with the National Rural Water Association (NRWA) to implement the new Source Water Protection Program. The Source Water Protection Program is designed to help prevent source water pollution through voluntary practices installed by local producers.

**B Purpose**

This notice informs counties of the Source Water Protection Program and Program Technician.

**2 Source Water Protection Program**

**A Program Design**

FSA provided the NRWA in 33 states, including Oklahoma, funds for the two-year program, to hire a full-time Rural Source Water Technician. The Technician will create plans that identify priority areas where local pollution prevention efforts are needed. The Rural Source Water Protection plans will promote clean ground water and outline voluntary measures that producers can install on their land to prevent source water pollution.

Basically, the Rural Source Water Technician will be a promoter to producers of existing USDA programs that could be voluntarily implemented through program provisions such as continuous signup CRP and EQIP to prevent source water pollution. The Source Water Protection Program does not provide practice cost share or incentives to producers.

**Disposal Date:**

07-01-05

**Distribution:**

County Offices

**2 Source Water Protection Program (continued)**

**B Rural Source Water Technician**

The Oklahoma Rural Water Association has designated Scott Roberson as the Rural Source Water Technician. Mr. Roberson may be in contact with counties to work with the staff and producers of available programs and areas of source water concern.

**C Fact Sheet and Questions and Answers**

Exhibit one provides a fact sheet and questions and answers on the Source Water Protection Program. Additional information and fact sheets can be obtained from the FSA web site.

**D Developmental Meeting and Attendees**

The Oklahoma Rural Water Association will be hosting a meeting June 29, 2004, at their headquarters in Oklahoma City, to develop the Source Water Protection Program. FSA representatives designated to attend the meeting are:

- Losco Hunter, District Director
- Kevin Dale, Bryan County CED
- Jeff Wilson, Custer County CED

Additional information on the meeting will be forthcoming through the Oklahoma Rural Water Association.

**Farm Service Agency***Fact Sheet**May 2004***Source Water Protection Program****Overview**

The Source Water Protection Program, a joint project by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the nonprofit National Rural Water Association (NRWA), is designed to help prevent source water pollution in 33 states through voluntary practices installed by producers at local levels.

The program is authorized by amendments to Sec. 1240O of the 1985 Farm Bill that were included in Sec. 2502 of the 2002 Farm Bill. Funding for the two-year program is based on a \$1 million appropriation in 2003 and \$2.75 million in 2004.

Source water is surface and ground water that is consumed by rural residents. According to the NRWA, ground water is the primary source of drinking water for some 44,000 communities in the United States.

**How the Program Works**

NRWA is implementing the Source Water Protection Program, with oversight and assistance by FSA. Through the program, NRWA is hiring, for every participating state, full-time Rural Source Water technicians who possess knowledge and experience in rural issues. The technicians will work with FSA state executive directors, FSA county executive directors, and state conservation specialists with

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service to create operating plans that identify priority areas where local pollution prevention efforts are needed most in their respective states.

Working with State Rural Water Associations, technicians will also facilitate the creation of local teams comprised of citizens with diverse backgrounds from federal, state, local, and private entities. These teams will collaborate in the development of Rural Source Water Protection plans that promote clean ground water. The technicians will assist the teams in gathering local data and facilitate a planning workshop. The purpose of the workshop will be to create a plan that will include, but will not be limited to, developing the following:

- A map outlining the impacted area;
- An inventory of potential contaminant sources;
- A definition of areas that match up with entities and organizations;
- A definition of voluntary measures that may be initiated;
- Identification of public education initiatives; and
- Identification of entities and resources that will facilitate implementation of the plan and its sustainability.

Rural Source Water Protection plans will outline voluntary

measures that farmers, ranchers, and other producers can install on their lands to prevent source water pollution. Voluntary measures may range from producers storing herbicides, pesticides, or other substances in more secure containers to relocating waste lagoons. By working at the grassroots level, local team members will inform and educate producers about source water protection measures that benefit their neighbors and communities. Additionally, the plans will establish steering committees to evaluate voluntary practices implemented by local producers. FSA will monitor the overall performance of the program.

**Participating States**

The program is being implemented in the following states: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.

The 33 states participating in the Source Water Protection Program were chosen based on objective technical criteria relating to water quality and population.

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**Who Can Participate**

Farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural producers in the aforementioned states are encouraged to participate in the Source Water Protection Program. They can take part in the program by administering voluntary practices on their land and/or by becoming team members responsible for the development of Rural Source Water Protection plans. Citizens from federal, state, local, and private entities also can serve on local teams.

**Information about NRWA**

The NRWA was established in 1976 as a nonprofit, utility membership, trade association, representing rural and small community water and wastewater systems. Today, NRWA is the largest utility member-based organization in the country serving in 48 contiguous states, as well as Alaska and Puerto Rico with more than 23,500 members.

**For More Information**

For more information about FSA programs, visit: [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)

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## Questions and Answers Source Water Protection Program

What is the Source Water Protection Program?

The Source Water Protection Program is a joint project by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the nonprofit National Rural Water Association (NRWA). The two-year program is designed to help prevent source water pollution in 33 states by encouraging producers to install voluntary practices at local levels.

How is the program authorized?

The program is authorized by amendments to Sec. 1240O of the 1985 Farm Bill that were included in Sec. 2502 of the 2002 Farm Bill.

What is source water?

Source water is surface or ground water that is consumed by rural residents.

How does the program work?

Through the program, NRWA will hire, for every participating state, full-time Rural Source Water technicians who possess knowledge and experience in rural issues. With assistance from FSA state executive directors, FSA county executive directors, and state conservation specialists with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, technicians will create operating plans that identify priority areas where local pollution prevention efforts are needed most in their respective states. Working with State Rural Water Associations, technicians will also help create local teams comprised of citizens with diverse backgrounds. These teams will collaborate in the development of Rural Source Water Protection plans that promote clean ground water and may utilize data and resources from other federal, state, and local entities.

Rural Source Water Protection plans will outline voluntary measures that farmers, ranchers, and other producers can install on their lands to prevent source water pollution. By working at the grassroots level, local team members will inform and educate producers about source water protection measures that benefit their neighbors and communities. Additionally, the plans will establish steering committees to evaluate voluntary practices implemented by local producers.

What are the roles of NRWA and FSA?

NRWA will implement the Source Water Protection Program. FSA will provide oversight and assistance, as well as monitor overall performance of the program.

What types of voluntary measures might producers be encouraged to practice?

There are a variety of voluntary practices that participating producers could install. For example, farmers, ranchers, and other producers may be encouraged to relocate waste lagoons to help protect ground or surface water. Storing herbicides, pesticides, or other substances in more secure containers is another example.

Where will the program be implemented?

The program will be implemented in the following states: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.

How were the states chosen?

The 33 states participating in the Source Water Protection Program were selected based on objective technical criteria relating to water quality and population.

Who can participate in the Source Water Protection Program?

Farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural producers in all 33 states can participate. They can take part in the program by administering voluntary practices on their land and/or by becoming team members responsible for the development of Rural Source Water Protection plans. Citizens from federal, state, local, and private entities also can serve on local teams.

What is the NRWA?

The NRWA was established in 1976 as a nonprofit, utility membership, trade association, representing rural and small community water and wastewater systems. Today, NRWA is the largest utility member-based organization in the country serving in 48 contiguous states, as well as Alaska and Puerto Rico with more than 23,500 members.

What is FSA?

FSA ensures the well-being of American agriculture, the environment and the American public through efficient and equitable administration of farm commodity programs; farm ownership, operating and emergency loans; conservation and environmental programs; emergency and disaster assistance; domestic and international food assistance and international export credit programs.