

Division 4
West Cassia SWCD
ID Soil & Water Conservation Commission - Technical Assistance Request
For FY2015

Narrative of Projects: *Mini-Cassia Nitrate Priority Areas CCPI Project*

Include Local support, Plans for publicizing, Permitting, and maintaining the project.

The project addresses 2 priorities: water resources and irrigated cropland. Funding for this project was awarded in May 2011. Four producers within the West Cassia SWCD currently have CCPI-EQIP contracts with NRCS. Documentation of support consists of 4 contracts with landowners, plus commitments by the SWC and NRCS (in the original grant application) to provide financial and technical resources. NRCS and SWC personnel have been providing technical assistance in the form of conservation planning, nutrient management planning, and irrigation water management planning. The West Cassia SWCD has provided outreach for the project in the form of newsletters, workshops, and county fair displays. An overall reduction in nitrogen and phosphorus of 25 per cent is expected as a result of this project. This will benefit ground water by reducing nitrates (the Cassia County Nitrate Priority Area is ranked 1st in the state) and reducing phosphorus runoff into the Lake Walcott subbasin, thus helping to attain the established TMDL targets for the watershed. Water savings are also expected as a result of high intensity irrigation water management. This will be particularly helpful for producers within the Oakley-Kenyon, Oakley Fan, Cottonwood, and Artesian City Critical Ground Water Areas who rely on well water for irrigation. One of the goals of this project is to demonstrate to farmers the economic and environmental benefits of implementing high intensity nutrient management, precision ag, and irrigation water management. By working closely with project participants, the West Cassia SWCD can increase outreach efforts to publicize the benefits of these BMPs, and hopefully encourage other farmers to adopt these BMPs on their own. This grant was awarded with the understanding that the SWC would provide technical assistance, in partnership with NRCS.

Engineering Requests

Include Surveying, Design, and Construction Inspections.

No engineering requests at this time.

| Project or Tasks: | Hours needed without Travel |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Technical | |
| Technical Assistance for CCPI project | 80 |
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| | |
| Total hours | 80 |
| Engineering Tasks | |
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| | |
| Total hours | 80 |

Division 4
 Technical Assistance Request: West Cassia SWCD
 For FY2015

Narrative of Projects:

Include Local support, Plans for publicizing, Permitting, and maintaining the project.

The purpose of our project is to expose our landowners to the use of direct seed farming and use of cover crops to grow crops without disturbing the soil, increase the amount of water and organic matter (nutrients) in the soil, decrease erosion, control weeds and increase nutrients in the soil by using legumes or by using plants with long roots to pull mobile nutrients back up to the surface from lower layers of the soil. Together, the three Soil and Water Conservation Districts within the Mini-Cassia area (East Cassia, West Cassia, and Minidoka), will have two drills available to farmers to rent for test plots. Amount of acres that drill can be rented for will be a predetermined amount set by the districts based on the demand for the drill. With the cost of equipment and using farm practices that have been proven to work, farmers can be wary of trying new farm practices. With the drill available to rent at a reasonable rate, farmers will be able to test direct seed and cover crop practices without the risk of equipment overhead costs and unknown crop production results. By purchasing direct seed drills and establishing an on-demand cover crop fund for farmers within the two counties, it gives the districts a unique opportunity to set up multiple unique demonstration sites on farms to show how cover crops will work with diverse and unique crop rotations. It will also give farmers access to direct seed drills, which currently are not available in the Mini-Cassia area. Farmers will be able to purchase cover crop seed directly from the districts, giving them instant access to seed, which will give farmers the ability to seed test plots in an efficient timely manner. This project is focusing on farmers who are conventionally tilling and are wanting to get into minimal till/direct seed farming practices. Districts would like to promote practices transitioning from high till-low residue, to low till-high residue. These drills are not to be used in conventional tillage practices. For this project, East Cassia is requesting technical assistance to help with conservation planning and writing seeding plans.

Engineering Requests

Include Surveying, Design, and Construction Inspections.

No engineering requests at this time.

| Project or Tasks: | Hours needed without Travel |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Technical | |
| Technical Assistance for Direct Seeding project | 20 |
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| | |
| Total hours | 20 |
| Engineering Tasks | |
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| Total hours | 20 |