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NRCS Receives Funding for Organics Initiative

TOLLAND, CT— Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist for Connecticut Douglas L. Zehner today announced that Connecticut has received more than \$310,000 for an initiative to encourage more organic agricultural production. Funding is being made available as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). This is the second year for this initiative. (Approximately \$248,000 was obligated statewide through this initiative in FY2009.)

“The 2008 Farm Bill provided funding specifically to help organic farmers and those agricultural producers transitioning to organic farming,” said Zehner. “This initiative will help make organic food producers eligible to compete for EQIP funds.”

Successful applicants will receive funding to implement priority conservation practices designed to improve natural resource conditions. Not only do these practices offer significant environmental benefits, they are also important to growers. Practices include crop rotation, cover crop, nutrient management, pest management, and prescribed grazing.

Applications will be accepted under this initiative until March 12, 2010; applications will be ranked at that time. If you are a certified organic producer, you must submit an Organic System Plan (OSP) at the time of application, along with proof of farm ownership. If you are a producer in transition to organic farming, you must provide proof of farm ownership and written, self-certification agreeing to develop an OSP and implement conservation practices consistent with EQIP statute and the OSP.

Note that applications are always accepted for this and any other NRCS program; however, only applications received by March 12, 2010, will be considered for this year’s funding.

Interested producers should visit their nearest USDA Service Center (listed below) to determine eligibility. Additional information on the EQIP Organic Initiative is available at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/.

Brooklyn Service Center
(860) 774-0224, Ext. 102

Torrington Service Center
(860) 626-8258, Ext. 200

Windsor Service Center
(860) 688-7725, Ext. 139

Norwich Service Center
(860) 887-3604, Ext. 300

Wallingford Service Center
(203) 269-7509, Ext. 205

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