

*Agriculture Newsletter*  
*Spring - 2018*



**Farm Plan Writing Workshop**



**Thursday, March 15, 2018**

6:30pm—8:00pm

**At the Jefferson Conservation District**

Located 1/4 mile North of Exit 81 of I-80 on Route 28  
in front of the Jefferson County Fairgrounds

State regulations require farmers to have written plans to address soil and manure management. This workshop will provide an overview of these plans (The Manure Management Plan and the Agricultural Erosion and Sedimentation Control Plan).

Whether you just need a refresher on the regulations, or still need your plans written, we welcome you to join us!

**Free to attend; refreshments provided**



Free Soil Test Kits Available !!

**To register, please contact the District by  
March 13 at:**

**(814) 849-7463 or**

**[mmwhitlatch@windstream.net](mailto:mmwhitlatch@windstream.net)**

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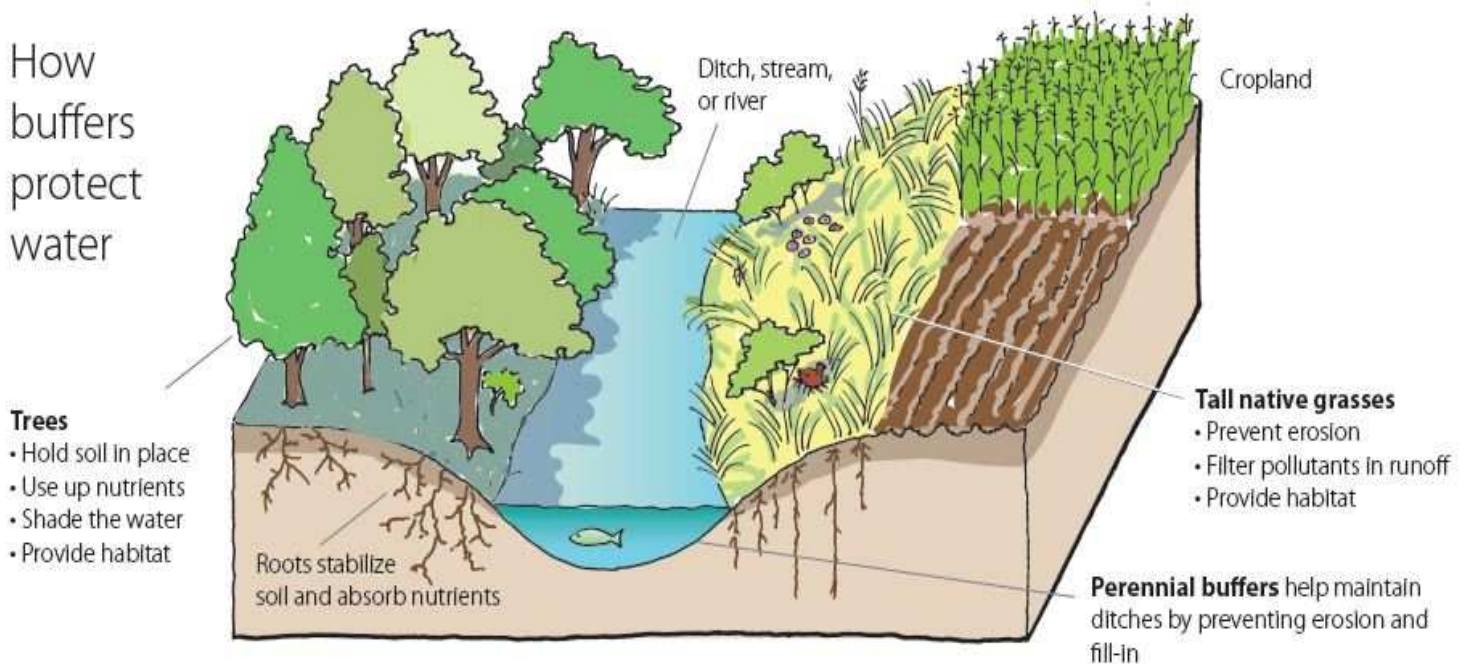
## Using Vegetative Buffers

Vegetative buffers are strips of permanent vegetation that are simple, low-cost, yet highly effective conservation practices that protect water quality by intercepting and filtering pollutants such as excess nutrients, sediment, and pesticides. They can also serve in providing wildlife habitat, reducing odors, noise and wind depending on the type of vegetation, and have aesthetic value.

Different buffer types include riparian buffers, filter strips, grassed waterways, field borders, contour buffer strips, alley cropping, shelter belts, and windbreaks.

The width of the buffer will depend on many factors such as the type of buffer being established, the land use surrounding the buffer, how much land can be reserved for buffer use, soil type, and the topography of the land. For instance, it is recommended that a minimum width of 35' should be used for field borders; 50' for riparian forest buffers in areas of high sediment and nutrient runoff; while contour buffer strip width can vary anywhere from 15' to 150'. In general, steeper slopes require a greater buffer width to adequately slow runoff and prevent pollutants from reaching a waterway.

Be sure to maintain buffers to ensure they function for their intended purposes. Eradicate any noxious and invasive weeds that may establish, reseed portions of the buffer that become damaged through severe rainstorm events/excessive vehicle use/wildlife use or other, remove any debris that could impact the effectiveness of the buffer, and replace any dead trees/shrubs. Native vegetation is recommended.

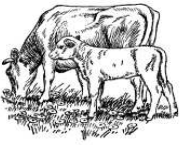


*Illustration: <http://www.kanabecswcd.org/>*

### Resources:

[www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)

[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)



## 21st Annual Western PA Grazing Conference

There is still time to register for the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Western PA Grazing Conference to be held March 21 and March 22, 2018 at the Trinity Point Church of God in Clarion, PA. Speakers include Teddy Gentry, of Bent Tree Cattle Co. , and Greg Judy, of Green Pasture Farms. Cost is \$45.00 to attend either day, or \$85.00 to attend both days (which includes a bonus evening session with Greg Judy on March 21). A continental breakfast and a hot buffet lunch is included both days. **To register by the March 14 deadline, contact Headwaters RC&D Council at (814) 503-8653 or visit their website, [www.headwaterspa.org](http://www.headwaterspa.org).**



## Erosion & Sedimentation Control in our Forests Workshop

This workshop is for foresters, loggers, and contractors. Topics to be covered include: The Importance of Protecting Waterways, Chapter 105: Stream and Wetland Permitting, Insects and Forest Health, Preparing a site, and more. It will be held at the Jefferson Conservation District on **Thursday, April 19, 2018** from 8:00 am-12:00 pm. Cost is \$10.00 to attend (includes materials and morning refreshments). **SFI Continuing Education Credits available.** To register, or for more information, contact Dana Grabowski at (814) 849-7463 or [dmgrabowski@windstream.net](mailto:dmgrabowski@windstream.net).



## USDA Microloans

### ***USDA Microloans Help Farmers Purchase Farmland and Improve Property***

Producers, including Beginning and Underserved Farmers, have a new option to gain access to land. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is offering farm ownership microloans, creating a new financing avenue for farmers to buy and improve property. These microloans are especially helpful to beginning or underserved farmers, U.S. veterans looking for a career in farming, and those who have small and mid-sized farming operations.

The microloan program has been hugely successful, providing more than 16,800 low-interest loans, totaling over \$373 million to producers across the country. Microloans have helped farmers and ranchers with operating costs, such as feed, fertilizer, tools, fencing, equipment, and living expenses since 2013. Seventy percent of loans have gone to new farmers.

Now, microloans will be available to help with farmland and building purchases, and soil and water conservation improvements. FSA designed the expanded program to simplify the application process, expand eligibility requirements and expedite smaller real estate loans to help farmers strengthen their operations. Microloans provide up to \$50,000 to qualified producers, and can be issued to the applicant directly from the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA). To learn more about the FSA microloan program visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/microloans), or contact your local FSA office. Jefferson County Residents can contact FSA in DuBois at (814) 913-3237.



## NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program

### **About**

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), administered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), is a voluntary conservation program that helps agricultural producers in a manner that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, agricultural producers receive financial and technical assistance to implement structural and management conservation practices that optimize environmental benefits on working agricultural land.

### **Eligibility**

Agricultural producers and owners of non-industrial private forestland are eligible to apply for EQIP. Eligible land includes cropland, pastureland, non-industrial private forestland and other farm lands.

Applicants must:

- Control or own eligible land
- Comply with adjusted gross income limitation (AGI) provisions
- Be in compliance with the highly erodible land and wetland conservation requirements
- Develop an NRCS EQIP plan of operations

Starting a practice or engaging the services of a [Technical Service Provider \(TSP\)](#) before a contract is finalized makes that practice or service ineligible for reimbursement by NRCS, unless a written waiver has been approved.

### **Participant Responsibilities**

Applicants are responsible for completing and filing all application and eligibility paperwork as required. If approved for funding, participants sign a contract and agree to implement the planned conservation practices to NRCS standards and specifications as scheduled.

### **Applications**

EQIP applications are accepted on a continuous basis; however, NRCS establishes application "cut-off" or submission deadline dates for evaluation, ranking and approval of eligible applications. EQIP is open to all eligible agricultural producers including operators of non-industrial private forestland, or landowners of these lands. Submitted applications may be considered or evaluated in multiple funding pool opportunities.

To learn how to get started with NRCS, visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov/getstarted](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getstarted).

To apply for EQIP, Jefferson County residents should contact the NRCS DuBois Service Center at (814) 913-3238.