

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 8, 2009

NEARLY A MILLION DOLLARS AVAILABLE TO ENCOURAGE MORE ORGANIC FARMING IN TENNESSEE

Applications Accepted May 11-29, 2009

(NASHVILLE)— State Conservationist Kevin Brown of the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced today that \$970,000 has been provided to Tennessee for a new initiative to encourage more organic agriculture production. Funding for the initiative is being made available as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Nationally, \$50 million has been set aside for organic producers and those transitioning to organic production. Organic producers may also apply for assistance under general EQIP.

"There is an increasing demand for organic products in Tennessee and across the nation," Brown said. "We hope this initiative will encourage more organic farm production in the state."

Under the National Organic Initiative, required minimum core conservation practices will be determined by specific resource concerns. The practices are: Conservation Crop Rotation; Cover Crop; Nutrient Management; Pest Management; Prescribed Grazing; and Forage Harvest Management. Tennessee will add other applicable practices that meet the state's organic producer resource needs.

Applications received from organic producers or producers in transition to organic farming will be accepted between May 11 and May 29. Applications will be ranked at that time.

To assist with eligibility questions there are two separate National Screening Tools for applicants (one for producers transitioning to organic production and one for certified organic producers). Ranking criteria has been established based on resource concerns that link to the National Organic Program (NOP) objectives and the core conservation practices. NOP is administered by the USDA-Agricultural Marketing Service.

The 2009 National Organic Initiative is being administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Interested producers should visit their nearest USDA Service Center to determine eligibility. Additional information on the 2009 EQIP Organic Initiative is available at: www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/. NRCS is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

X X X

Helping People Help the Land

An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer