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July 24, 2017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HARNETT SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT ACCEPTING AGRICULTURE COST SHARE APPLICATIONS

A major cause of water quality problems in North Carolina and throughout the United States is nonpoint source pollution which comes from many sources including construction sites, cities and towns, and agriculture. To assist in conserving our natural resources locally, the Harnett Soil & Water Conservation District is currently accepting applications for the North Carolina Agriculture Cost Share Program. The Agriculture Cost Share Program (ACSP) is a voluntary incentive based program for farmers or agricultural landowners that assists them in being proactive against nonpoint source pollution by implementing best management practices (BMP's) to assist with natural resource concerns on the land.

By utilizing BMP's in agricultural areas, water resources can be protected from sedimentation as a result of soil erosion, excess nutrients, animal waste contamination, in addition to the potential accidental spill of agricultural chemicals. The ACSP, allows farmers and agricultural landowners to apply for cost share funding in order to implement more than 60 approved BMP's that work to prevent agricultural nonpoint source pollution. Available BMP's address sediment/nutrient losses, animal waste management, agrichemical pollution prevention, stream protection, and erosion/nutrient reduction.

ACSP applicants must be landowners or renters of existing agricultural operations that have been operating a bona fide for more than three years. Once submitted, applications are ranked based on resource concerns in the County until funds allocated are exhausted. Approved applicants can be reimbursed for up to 75 percent of a predetermined average cost for each BMP installed. The applicant is responsible for at least 25 percent of the project cost and many BMP's have a required maintenance period of 10 years. Applicants should discuss specifics for each desired BMP with District staff.

The NC ACSP is successful in protecting and improving the state's natural resources because of grassroots efforts of local Soil and Water Conservation Districts. Harnett Soil and Water Conservation District staff will provide assistance in developing individual conservation plans including specific BMP's suitable for your operation, design BMP's that are long lasting, oversee BMP installation, and provide technical assistance to ensure proper operation and maintenance.

For more information or to obtain an application please visit the District Office located within the Harnett County Agriculture Center at 126 Alexander Drive, Suite 200 in Lillington or call 910-893-7584. Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8:00-5:00.