

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Name of the Project: Enhancing Capacity for Water Quality and Nutrient Management Education of

Is This a New Project or Request for Continuation?: New

Geographic Area of the Project: 26 Counties in East and South Texas

Name of Principal Investigator(s)*: Jeffrey W. Koch and Mark L. McFarland

County(s) and/or University Department(s), TCE, or Unit: Cooperative Extension Program at Prairie View A&M University and Texas Cooperative Extension (Department of Soil and Crop Science)

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Amount of Funding Requested: \$10,000

Project Need, Description and Expected Outcomes

Discuss the situation and need for the project, describe the proposed project and expected outcomes/benefits, and suggest how the proposed project will involve the use of innovation and new technology.

Nutrient management is a critical component of soil and water resource management. Providing education and training to land managers is a primary mission of the land grant university system. 1890 institutions serve a special function in targeted delivery of information and technology to limited resource agricultural producers and other traditionally underserved audiences. The purpose of this project is to coordinate with and provide support for an intensive training program in nutrient and water resource management for selected Extension personnel at Prairie View A&M University to expand and enhance soil and water conservation program development and delivery potential.

The Texas Nutrient Management Planning Certification program was developed by Texas A&M University in cooperation with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The program provides comprehensive training in nutrient management relative to soil testing, and selection, management and use of both inorganic and organic (biosolids/animal waste) fertilizer materials. In addition, the program addresses NRCS standards and specifications for nutrient management plan development and implementation. Completion of the course and successful passage of the qualifying examination enable certification of individuals as Certified Nutrient Management Planners in the State of Texas.

The project will involve organization and conduct of a comprehensive training event for the Nutrient Management Certification Program for selected faculty/staff at Prairie View A&M University.

Approximately 15 personnel will be selected to participate based on job responsibilities and potential for the training to enhance delivery of information and resources to clientele. Participants will travel to College Station, Texas, to undertake the 4-day training and certification program. Requested funds will support travel costs and costs for educational materials (Nutrient Management Certification Handbook, SCS-2002-01).

This project is innovative in its effort to promote and enhance coordination and collaboration between soil and water conservation programs and personnel at Prairie View A&M University and Texas A&M University. Anticipated benefits of this project will be increased knowledge and understanding of soil and nutrient management and the interrelated impacts on soil quality/health and water quality management and protection. In addition, the program will accomplish targeted training of outreach personnel in state of the art management strategies. The project also will expand the potential for future collaboration and for educational resource and technology transfer between institutions. Most importantly, this project will substantially increase the capacity for delivery of educational and technical support to minority and limited resource agricultural producers, land managers and citizens in Texas.

Specific Soil and Water Conservation Issues Addressed

Relative to the needs of current conservation projects (listed in Section III, or others), what concern(s) is/are addressed by this project?

This project specifically addresses program concerns related to soil management and soil quality and health. Nutrient management is an important economic and environmental issue which affects both soil and crop quality. Proper plant nutrition is essential to ensure optimum crop growth and vegetative cover to protect the soil resource. In addition, improper rates, timing and application of fertilizer nutrients can contribute to water quality impairment. The regulatory focus on nonpoint source nutrient pollution is increasing. New requirements for development and implementation of NRCS Nutrient Management Plans (NMPs) by farmers receiving federal cost-share assistance are being enacted, and producers must take a proactive approach to reduce the need for regulatory oversight. Limited resource producers may be especially at risk due to increased management and input costs necessary to provide required safeguards.

Collaboration

What agencies, groups, organizations, or additional TCE/TAES disciplines are included in this project? List all collaborators and their function in the project.

Collaborators will include:

Prairie View A&M University: Will serve as the lead agency for the project to facilitate selection of appropriate personnel for participation in the training event, organizing local arrangements and coordinating activities with the cooperating agencies.

Texas Cooperative Extension: Will provide support through program development and implementation, provide educational resource materials, provide faculty to conduct the training, and facilitate the training event.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service: Will support the program through resource development and implementation and provide technical personnel to assist and participate in conducting the training event.

Submitted by _____
(P.I. signature)

(Co-P.I.) _____

Approved for submission _____
(Unit Head signature)