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of Public Accounts

Texas Agricultural Technical Assistance Program

What is this program?

Investing in our communities through improved energy efficiency in farming operations is a win-win opportunity for Texas agriculture. Energy-efficient farms reduce energy costs, increase available capital, spur economic growth and improve agriculture's working environment.

The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts' State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) has created the Texas Agricultural Technical Assistance Program to provide Texas agricultural producers with free Energy Assessment Reports (EARs) for their farming operations. The EARs will identify and make recommendations on opportunities to save energy (electricity, propane, diesel, etc.) within the farm operation.

How does this program work?

SECO has contracted with EnSave Inc. to administer the program. EnSave also has a partnership with the National Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils (RC&D). This partnership allows the RC&D Councils, SECO, and EnSave to work together to maximize energy efficiency activities within agriculture, including the free Energy Assessment Reports (EARs).

What is an Energy Assessment Report?

Preparing an EAR involves several steps. Once a producer signs up for a free EAR, he or she will receive an initial phone interview from EnSave. The interview is conducted to collect pertinent data regarding energy consumption on the farm. After this initial interview, a data collector will visit with the contact person at the farm and tour the operation to gather additional information about the farming equipment. Finally, the producer will receive the EAR with recommendations on how to save energy and a follow-up phone call to review the EAR.

What is the timeline for the EAR process?

The data collector will spend time at the farm for data collection, and it takes approximately six to eight weeks for the final report to be completed.

Who is eligible to participate in this program?

All agricultural producers in Texas are eligible to apply for a free EAR. Some restrictions apply.

What about funding for project implementation?

In addition to the free EARs, this program will also work with agricultural producers to access additional funds to implement energy efficiency projects, such as grant and guaranteed loan funds available through the USDA Rural Development Section 9007, Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), utility company incentives, or other funds as applicable.

The USDA Rural Development Section 9007 is designed to help agricultural producers and rural small businesses obtain federal grants and/or loan guarantees to make energy efficiency improvements to their existing operations or install their own renewable energy systems.

Through the USDA Rural Development Program grants and loan guarantees have been awarded to applicants across the country for renewable energy projects including energy efficiency improvements on poultry houses, grain dryers and irrigation systems as well as renewable energy projects that include utility-scale wind power, small wind power, biomass, biofuels and solar projects.

Grant funds can be used to pay up to 25 percent of eligible project costs. The loan guarantees can fund up to 75 percent of eligible projects. A loan and grant combination can fund up to 75 percent of total eligible project costs.

USDA Rural Development Grant Application Training

USDA Rural Development will provide training on how to complete REAP grant applications on behalf of Texas agricultural producers.

How do we get involved?

For more information on how to get involved in this program or how to apply for a free EAR, please contact EnSave at (800) 732-1399 or SECO at (800) 531-5441 ext 3-1931. You can also visit EnSave online at www.ensave.com.

Web sites For Additional Details on Funding and Rebates For Energy Efficiency:

USDA's Section 9007 program: http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/farmbill/
Texas IOU programs: http://www.texasefficiency.com/links.html
American Electric Power: www.aepefficiency.com
Center Point Energy: www.centerpointefficiency.com
Entergy Texas: http://www.entergy-texas.com/TX/EnergyEfficiency
Oncor Electric Delivery Company: http://www.oncor.com/electricity/teem/default.aspx
Texas- New Mexico Power: http://www.tnpeefficiency.com/
Xcel Energy: http://www.xcelenergyefficiency.com/
El Paso Electric: http://www.epelectricefficiency.com/default.asp

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