



Rhode Island Conservation Districts
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PRESS RELEASE

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The Rhode Island Conservation Districts have undertaken a project to inform livestock owners in Rhode Island about some important and valuable opportunities for improving the quality of their farm. By participating in this project, local livestock owners are being offered the opportunity to have their poultry tested by the state veterinarian free of charge and may receive funding for developing conservation plans on their farms. **Drive by site visits to all livestock owners will be made by SRICD in the towns of North Kingstown, Exeter, West Greenwich, East Greenwich, Coventry and Johnston over the next several months.**

The districts aim to inform local poultry owners about the importance of practicing biosecurity on their farms in order to help prevent bird diseases such as Avian Influenza, better known as Bird Flu. Best management practices and strict biosecurity precautions will not only protect flocks from the risk of these diseases, but also protect the health of their family, local wildlife, and other poultry farms in the state. By choosing to have their flocks tested, these farmers are joining a nationwide effort to reduce the risk of an outbreak. All testing is done on site at the individual's farm, and is completely free of charge. If you are interested in having your flock tested, please contact the Districts at 949.1480.

In addition, local farmers may have the opportunity to receive federal funding to enact conservation plans on their farms. The United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS) has a number of Conservation Programs which enable farmers to solve any resource problems they may have on their property, from soil erosion to irrigation to simply conserving open space. Some of the cost-shared practices include, but are not limited to: manure storage facilities, barnyard improvements such as roof gutters and concrete loafing areas, fencing, livestock watering systems, stream buffer plantings and restoration, irrigation systems, erosion control, forest management plans and design of rotational grazing systems. One such program, known as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), has spent nearly 11 million dollars in the last ten years assisting farmers all over the state to improve conservation practices. Please contact NRCS at 401.822.1300 for immediate assistance if you are interested in funding for 2010.

The project is funded by RI Department of Environmental Management's Division of Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service. It has been conducted throughout other areas of the state and we hope to include all towns as the project progresses. If you have any questions regarding this effort, please feel free to call the Districts office at 949.1480.