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News Release

USDA Awards Conservation Innovation Grant to Electric Power Research Institute

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News Release - Indiana

United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

6013 Lakeside Boulevard
Indianapolis, IN 46278
www.in.nrcs.usda.gov

Indianapolis, IN, August 9, 2012 – USDA Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment Harris Sherman today that the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) will receive a Conservation Innovation Grant for 1 million dollars to further development of its Ohio River Basin Pilot Water Quality Trading Program. Sherman gave remarks at an event in Cincinnati, Ohio, where EPRI and partners announced the kickoff of the program.

At the event, the states of Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio signed onto a plan to launch water quality pilot trades in the Ohio River Basin in 2012. Water quality trading is a market-based approach that allows businesses facing high pollution control costs to buy credits from farmers, who implement conservation practices on their land to reduce water pollution. The goal is to achieve overall water quality improvements in the basin more efficiently.

“USDA is proud to be a long-standing collaborator with EPRI in advancing water quality trading in the Ohio River Basin,” Sherman said. “The grant we are announcing today will help EPRI develop a user-friendly credit registry to continue development of this groundbreaking effort.”

USDA provided funding to EPRI in 2009 and 2011 to enable the development of the interstate trading program. The pilot trading announced today is expected to include at least three power plants or other participants, and up to 50 farms putting agricultural conservation best management practices on up to 20,000 acres of farmland.

“USDA believes water quality trading holds great promise for agricultural producers in the Ohio River Basin,” Sherman said. “We look forward to seeing how this program will benefit water quality, agricultural production and communities in the years to come.”

USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers CIG as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Grants are awarded to state and local governments, federally recognized Indian tribes, non-governmental organizations and individuals. NRCS uses CIG to invest in innovative, on-the-ground conservation technologies and approaches with the goal of wide-scale adoption to address water quality and quantity, air quality, energy conservation, and environmental markets, among other natural resource issues.

For more information about NRCS conservation programs online, visit: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov> or visit the nearest USDA Service Center in your area.

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Contacts:

Jane Hardisty, State Conservationist, 317-295-5801 (jane.hardisty@in.usda.gov)

Jill Reinhart, Assistant State Conservationist Special Programs, 317-295-5883 (jill.reinhart@in.usda.gov)

Rebecca Fletcher, State Public Affairs Specialist, 317-295-5825 (rebecca.fletcher@in.usda.gov)

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