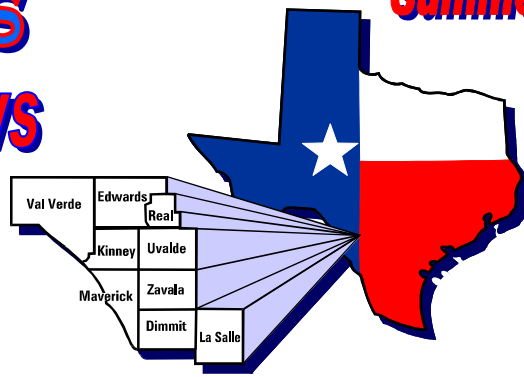


RIO GRANDE-NUECES RC&D 9 County News

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Summer 2009



President's Message

The National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils, a 501(c)(3), was established by congress in 1988 to represent America's 375 volunteer Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) councils. RC&D Councils deliver coordinated resource, conservation and rural development assistance throughout America. The RC&D program helps people care for their natural resources and improve the quality of life in their communities. Volunteers on the RC&D Councils from public and private sector sponsors and other local organizations undertake community-driven actions that are strategically focused on regional resource conservation and economic viability. RC&D's initially were funded by congress at \$36 million. The 2010 budget has been approved by the House of Representatives at \$50.7 million and awaits senate approval for the current 375 RC&D's. There are still approximately 50 other councils awaiting USDA designation.

I was very fortunate to attend the 2009 National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils Triennial conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico the week of June 14-17, 2009. It gives me great pleasure to report that the Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D Council was recognized for meeting the "Circle of Diamonds" distinction.

According to the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils more than 32,000 volunteers are serving on RC&D councils. This past fiscal year, 2008:

- *802 new businesses were created with RC&D Council assistance.
- *4,977 businesses were expanded or retained by RC&D Councils.
- *465 businesses were financially assisted with funds totaling \$13.6 million.
- *10,940 jobs were created or retained due to Council activities.
- *Councils helped improve 2,428,301 acres of wildlife habitat, 1,327,308 acres of lakes, and 19,298 miles of streams.
- *Councils helped 931,824 people learn new skills.
- *RC&D projects helped 2,396,000 economically or socially disadvantaged people.
- *RC&D Councils, through implementation of projects, served over 180 million citizens nationwide.
- *RC&D Councils brought a return of \$5.40 for every dollar the federal government provided.

I hope you will join me and the other Council members in utilizing our local program for the betterment of the Rio Grande-Nueces Area and our residents. Your participation is vital to our success.

Eddie Ramirez

Calendar of Events

Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D Council Meeting, TX AgriLife Experiment Station, Uvalde, TX - July 9, 2009

Goat Dairy Field Trip to Lampasas - July 25, 2009

Soap Making Class Uvalde— July 27, 2009—AM

Grade A Dairy Business Presentation Uvalde— July 27, 2009—PM

Fever Tick Workshop Eagle Pass, Aug. 10, 2009

Fever Tick Workshop Cotulla, Aug. 11, 2009

Field Trip to Proverb's Soap Farm Alvin, Aug. 22, 2009

Olive Oil Field Day—to be announced—Sept.?

2008-2009 Council Officers

Eddie Ramirez,
President
Marcel Valdez,
Vice President
Larry Ernst,
Secretary
John Earl Smith,
Treasurer

RC&D Coordinator

Mario A. Morales

Admin. Asst.

Leigh Ann Sanderlin

Environmental Quality Incentive Program

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) is a conservation program that allows landowners or operators to apply for financial and technical assistance for the application of specific conservation practices. Higher priority will be given to those applications that address national, state and local priorities and provide higher cost efficiency. The NRCS in Texas supports the locally led process through local work groups and provides EQIP funding to every county. The State Technical Committee and Local Work Groups have concurred in the practices eligible for financial assistance to treat the identified resource concerns.

Financial assistance funds will be used to address both the local high priority practices identified by the Local Work Group and the statewide resource concerns identified by the State Technical Committee. Landowners and operators will choose the practices and evaluation system that best fits their needs.

Payments for installed practices and management incentives will be made in accordance with the posted payment schedule for the conservation practice activity planned. The payment schedule

for Limited Resource Farmers and Ranchers (LRFR), Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers (SDAFR) and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (BFR) are set at higher levels than the standard rates.

A contract containing an EQIP Plan of Operations will be developed on applications that are accepted into the program. The minimum contract period will be one year following implementation of the last conservation practice but cannot exceed 10 years. Technical assistance will be provided by NRCS or, if desired, by a private Technical Service Provider (TSP) funded by NRCS.

In order to be considered an agricultural producer eligible for EQIP, there must be an annual minimum of \$1,000 of agricultural products produced and/or sold from the operation. Agricultural producers of non-industrial private forest land are exempt from the \$1,000 requirement.

There are, however, circumstances that may limit an individual's or entity's participation; these include: 1) federal and state governments and political subdivisions thereof, are not eligible; 2) the applicant must be in compliance with highly erodible land

and wetland conservation provisions; and 3) the individual or entity may not be eligible due to Adjusted Gross Income provisions.

Eligible persons may select to apply in either the county based program, which reflects approved recommendations by the Local Work Group, or in one of the approved Statewide Resource Concerns based on recommendations by the State Technical Committee. The base program will vary from county to county depending on the priorities set at the local level.

The State Resource Concerns to be addressed in 2009 are listed below. Check the link for state information to find the high priority counties and eligible practices.

- Water Quantity – Brush Management
- Water Quantity - Irrigation
- Water and Air Quality - AFO/CAFO
- Wildlife Habitat
- Invasive Species
- Water Quality - South Central Texas
- Plant Condition – Reforestation

If you have any questions about this Program or any other, please contact your local NRCS Office for more information or call us 830-279-0164.

Council Bylaws to be Reviewed.

Eddie Ramirez, Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D President, has decided to form a committee that will review and make recommendations with regards to our organization's Bylaws. This Bylaws Review will ensure our compliance with new IRS rules and regulations for all non-profits. The IRS has made significant changes to

some of the compliance rules and reporting requirements. Mr. Ramirez wants to assure Council members, Sponsors, and the general public that this will be a detailed process. He further assures everyone that needed changes will be proposed in a timely manner in order for interested persons to study the proposed changes. The

proposed changes will most likely be voted on at our December Annual Meeting tentatively scheduled for December 10th, 2009. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please contact Eddie Ramirez or Mario A. Morales at 830-279-0164.

Texas Fever Tick Meetings Scheduled for August.

The Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D Council, in conjunction with our partners, is hosting a series of two Texas Fever Tick Meetings. The first meeting is scheduled for Eagle Pass, Texas on August 10th, 2009 and the second meeting is scheduled for Cotulla, Texas on August 11th, 2009. At this meeting, we will be discussing the history and effects of the Texas Fever Tick. There will also be a presentation on Conservation Planning and its potential impact on Texas Fever Tick Control. The NRCS

EQIP Texas Fever Tick Special Emphasis Area Program will be discussed and an opportunity to determine the extent of the need for this program will be discussed.

Other agencies, namely APHIS and Texas Parks & Wildlife, also have Texas Fever Tick responsibilities and they will have an opportunity to discuss their programs. There will also be a presentation on the Regulations and Liabilities of Prescribed Burning for habitat enhancement and tick control. A chemical brush control presenta-

tion will close out the presentations. The meeting will officially close with a Question and Answer session. CEUs will be provided.

We are looking forward to a great meeting and **lunch will be provided to the first one hundred persons that RSVP for each meeting.** Please call Mario A. Morales or Leigh Ann Sanderlin at 830-279-0164 for more information and/or to RSVP.

National Association of RC&D Council Conference held in Albuquerque, NM



A group of young folklorico dancers offered colorful entertainment at the Awards Banquet.

NARC&DC held their triennial conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico June 13-18. RG-N RC&D Council president Eddie Ramirez and his wife Josie attended the conference along with Coordinator Mario Morales and Administrative Assistant, Leigh Ann Sanderlin.

RC&Ds from all over the United States came together to share successes and get valuable training in a host of subjects.

Aside from informative speakers, and vital training for council members and staff a variety of other events enhanced the conference experience.

The President's Reception held the night before the actual conference began brought old friends and new friends together as well as offering a delightful taste of New Mexican cuisine.

A social was held at the Albuquerque Bio Park. After a

delicious buffet guests toured the Aquarium and the Botanical Gardens before native American dancers entertained the crowd with traditional dances of local tribes.

The tram ride at Sandia Peak offered a bird's eye view of miles and miles of New Mexico's spectacular terrain.

During the Awards Banquet Rio Grande-Nueces RC&D was mentioned as a member of the Circle of Diamonds and received a commemorative plaque. Traditional Mexican dances were performed by a group of young folklorico dancers.

The conference provided valuable RC&D information, great opportunity to learn new skills, hone old skills, and the chance to visit with other persons that have similar



Council President, Eddie Ramirez, Administrative Assistant, Leigh Ann Sanderlin, & Coordinator, Mario Morales, with the Circle of Diamonds plaque.

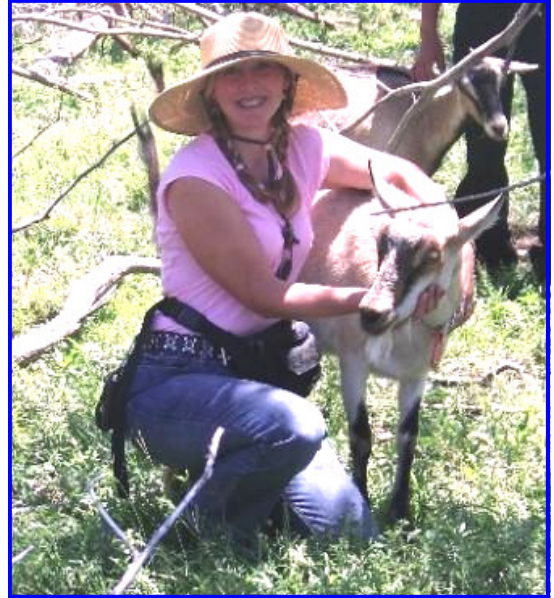
interests and like concerns.

SWTGP Update

South West Texas Goat Producers, Inc. has been busy with trainings, workshops, shortcourses, field days, and field trips!

Listed below are a few activities and events they have hosted or participated in, or will in the future.

- Field Trip to Pure Luck Dairy in Dripping Springs, June 5, 2008
- 3 Goat Short Courses in May in Uvalde, Del Rio & Carrizo Springs taught by Catherine Tull, DVM
- Dairy Question & Answer Session, May 27, by Andy Calcote, USDA Dairy Inspector.
- Goat Field Day, June 27th, in Quemado, at the Double S Ranch.
- Field trip to a dairy in Lampasas on July 25.
- Soap Making Class, July 27, 8 AM—Noon
- Grade A Dairy Business Presentation, July 27, 1-5 PM
- Field trip to Proverb's soap farm in Alvin on Aug. 22nd.



Council Meeting Agenda

July 9, 2009, 9:30 AM, TX A&M Experiment Station Auditorium,

1619 Garner Field Road, Uvalde TX

830-278-9151

1. Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Establish quorum
3. Introductions.
4. Approval of Agenda.
5. Approval of Last Meeting Minutes.
6. Approval of Treasurer's Report and Accounts Payable.
7. Presentation of Potential Projects.
8. Discuss the 2009 NARCDC Conference.
9. Discuss and approve Conflict of Interest Policy.
10. Discuss and approve Whistleblower Policy.
11. Discuss and approve Council Document Retention and Destruction Policy.
12. Discuss and establish a Bylaws Review and Reorganization Committee.
13. Other Old Business.
14. Coordinator's Report.
15. New Business.
16. Council Capacity Building Presentation.
17. Council Correspondence.
18. Next Meeting Date (Sept. 10th)
19. Adjournment.

Our Mission

"A local volunteer council helping people along the Texas-Mexico border, to care for their rural resources in a way that improves the economy, environment and living standards of the community."

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