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Grant proposals sought for manure application education

OLYMPIA – The [Washington Department of Agriculture](#) (WSDA) is seeking experts to train farmers on best practices when applying manure to farmland, part of an effort funded by the Legislature to help the agriculture industry manage manure in a way that protects ground and surface water.

WSDA's [Dairy Nutrient Management Program](#) is accepting applications for grants to develop and carry out farmer education projects focused on this effort. The curriculum in the proposed projects must include ways farmers can make good decisions about when, where and how to apply manure in a manner that both helps crops grow, but also protects water sources. In addition, the proposed training and outreach projects should help land applicators comply with state and federal water quality laws.

Project proposals to WSDA will be accepted beginning today. The application period closes Nov. 1. Interested applicants should visit the [training project grant page](#) on our website for details on how to apply.

“We’re looking for grant applicants who can show expertise in agronomic application of manure or irrigation water management,” said Ginny Prest, Dairy Nutrient Management Program manager. “The educational projects could consist of classroom training, field days or both.”

Funds for the grants come from a proviso included in the state budget approved for the 2015-2017 fiscal period. Lawmakers included \$575,000 from the state toxics control account for farmer training, as well as other activities, to improve manure management and protect water quality.

With the additional funding, WSDA will also:

- Increase dairy inspections in watershed areas, including where surface or ground water has been impaired.
- Hire two temporary employees based in Yakima and Lynden to work with local farmers and conduct inspections.
- Identify gaps in manure management, collaborating with organizations working on this issue including agricultural associations, conservation commissions, tribes, commodity commissions, environmental organizations and other governmental agencies.

“This funding addresses important public health issues, including protecting the quality of drinking water and shellfish harvests,” Prest said. “It also supports the future of a sustainable state agricultural industry

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so consumers can continue to get the high quality food they have come to expect from Washington farmers.”

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