



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**New Mexico Department of Agriculture to host Healthy Soil Program outreach webinars in January**

*Jan. 11 webinar for Eligible Entities; Jan. 13 webinar for Individual Applicants*

LAS CRUCES – The New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) will host two webinars in January to show potential applicants the steps to take to be considered for a grant to improve soil health in the state. NMDA will open its next Healthy Soil Program grant application period in March.

The webinar to prepare Eligible Entities to apply for a grant is Tuesday, Jan. 11 from 1:30 to 3 p.m. As defined in the 2019 Healthy Soil Act, Eligible Entities are “local governmental [entities] with proven land management capacity to support healthy soil” and include nations, tribes and pueblos; land grants; acequias; soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs); and New Mexico State University’s Cooperative Extension Service.

The webinar to prepare Individual Applicants to apply for a grant is Thursday, Jan. 13 from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Individual Applicants include farmers and ranchers, as well as businesses and nonprofits engaged in farming, ranching or other forms of land management.

To register for the appropriate webinar, please go to: [www.nmda.nmsu.edu/healthy-soil-program](http://www.nmda.nmsu.edu/healthy-soil-program).

New Mexico Agriculture Secretary Jeff Witte encourages participation in the free webinars.

“The purpose of the webinars is to help potential applicants get ready for when we open a new Healthy Soil Program application period in March,” said Witte. “Our goal is to have people come away from these webinars knowing the few simple steps they can take now in order to succeed in the application process later.”

Grant funding may be used for projects in New Mexico that focus on one or more of the five basic soil health principles named in the Healthy Soil Act: keeping the soil covered; minimizing soil disturbance on cropland and minimizing external inputs; maximizing biodiversity; maintaining a living root; and integrating animals into land management, including grazing animals, birds, beneficial insects or keystone species, such as earthworms.

Created in 2019, the purpose of the Healthy Soil Program is to promote and support farming and ranching systems and other forms of land management that increase soil organic matter, aggregate stability, microbiology and water retention to improve the state's soil health, yield and profitability.

For more information, visit [www.nmda.nmsu.edu/healthy-soil-program](http://www.nmda.nmsu.edu/healthy-soil-program), email [hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu](mailto:hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu) or call 575-646-2642.

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The strip-till conservation system aligns with the Healthy Soil Act's basic soil health principles. The New Mexico Department of Agriculture's Healthy Soil Program will host

two webinars in January 2022 to show potential applicants the steps to take to be considered for a grant. (Photo courtesy of New Mexico Department of Agriculture)



By only disturbing the portion of the soil that is to contain the seed row, the strip-till conservation system aligns with the Healthy Soil Act's basic soil health principles. The New Mexico Department of Agriculture's Healthy Soil Program will host two webinars in January 2022 to show potential applicants the steps to take to be considered for a grant. (Photo courtesy of New Mexico Department of Agriculture)