



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**New Mexico Department of Agriculture to host Healthy Soil Program webinar May 21**

*Eligible Entities, farmers, ranchers invited to learn about grant application process*

LAS CRUCES – The New Mexico Department of Agriculture’s Healthy Soil Program will host a webinar from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Friday, May 21 to show potential applicants the steps to take to be considered for a grant. The grants fund on-the-ground projects to improve soil health in the state.

“We are pleased to announce we have received grant funding through state appropriations for a third consecutive year to improve soil health in New Mexico,” said New Mexico Agriculture Secretary Jeff Witte. “Our updated Healthy Soil Program grant application process reflects the substantive input offered by Eligible Entities and the farmers and ranchers within their communities during the four virtual listening sessions we held in March and April.”

To register for the webinar and to begin preparing to apply for a Healthy Soil Program grant, please go to: [www.nmda.nmsu.edu/healthy-soil-program](http://www.nmda.nmsu.edu/healthy-soil-program).

Eligible Entity leaders and representatives – as well as farmers and ranchers– are invited to join the webinar. As defined in the 2019 Healthy Soil Act, Eligible Entities include tribes, nations and pueblos; land grants and acequias; Soil and Water Conservation Districts; and New Mexico State University’s Cooperative Extension Service.

Grant funding may be used for agricultural projects in New Mexico that focus on one or more of 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](http://www.nmda.nmsu.edu), email [hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu](mailto:hsp@nmda.nmsu.edu) or call 575-646-2642.

The New Mexico Department of Agriculture benefits the public by promoting the viability and advancement of New Mexico agriculture and affiliated industries. The agency promotes a fair marketplace, food protection, marketing, and economic development; supports the beneficial use and conservation of natural resources; and works cooperatively with the public and private sectors. For grant cycles beginning in 2019, the agency has administered over \$1.5 million in funds to support agriculture initiatives in the state through the Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and Healthy Soil Program combined.

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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 a webinar from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Friday, May 21 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 a webinar from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Friday, May 21 to show potential applicants the steps to take to be considered for a grant. (Photo courtesy of New Mexico Department of Agriculture)