



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Kristie Garcia
Director of Public Affairs, New Mexico Department of Agriculture
kgarcia@nmda.nmsu.edu
Office: 575-646-2804
Cell: 575-339-5011

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**New Mexico Department of Agriculture accepting Healthy Soil
Program grant applications until May 12, 2022**

Potential applicants encouraged to act quickly

LAS CRUCES – The New Mexico Department of Agriculture is accepting grant applications for its Healthy Soil Program until Thursday, May 12.

Potential applicants include Eligible Entities and Individual Applicants. Eligible Entities are defined in the 2019 Healthy Soil Act as “local governmental [entities] with proven land management capacity to support healthy soil” and include pueblos, tribes, and nations; land grants; acequias; soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs); and New Mexico State University’s Cooperative Extension Service. Individual Applicants include farmers, ranchers, and other land managers, as well as businesses and nonprofits engaged in farming, ranching or other forms of land management.

To launch the 8-week application period for fiscal year 2023, NMDA hosted two webinars March 18 to demonstrate how to complete the application for a Healthy Soil Program grant. Recordings of those webinars, along with all application materials, are available on the [NMDA Healthy Soil Page web page](#).

Applications are due by 5 p.m. Thursday, May 12. Late applications will not be accepted.

The Healthy Soil Program was created in the 2019 Healthy Soil Act. The act’s purpose 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.

Grant funding may be used for on-the-ground projects in New Mexico that focus on one or more of five basic soil health principles: keeping the soil covered; minimizing soil disturbance on cropland; maximizing biodiversity; maintaining a living root; and integrating animals into land management.

Individual Applicants must have a certified conservation plan to apply for a Healthy Soil Program grant. NMDA advises Individual Applicants to contact their local service center of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to initiate the conservation planning process. Individual Applicants who cannot complete conservation planning by the May 12 application deadline can apply for the Conservation Planning Opportunity instead. NMDA will provide a limited number of such applicants the opportunity to work with a technical service provider to complete a conservation plan in accordance with NRCS standards.

“We can't overstate the important role that conservation planning plays within the Healthy Soil Program, at least as far as Individual Applicants are concerned,” said New Mexico Agriculture Secretary Jeff Witte. “The conservation planning process reveals to land managers what exactly is occurring on their land, so they know the state of their soil health and what activities can help them improve it.”

NMDA strongly recommends that Individual Applicants make themselves known as soon as possible to their SWCD or pueblo, tribe, or nation that will support their project.

Visit the [NMDA Healthy Soil Program web page](#) for more information and to apply.

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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 is accepting fiscal year 2023 grant applications from March 18 to May 12, 2022, for its Healthy Soil Program, which was created in the 2019 Healthy Soil Act. (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 is accepting fiscal year 2023 grant applications from March 18 to May 12, 2022, for its Healthy Soil Program, which was created in the 2019 Healthy Soil Act. (Photo courtesy of New Mexico Department of Agriculture)