



Conservation Cost-Share for Farmers and Ranchers

REGIONAL PROGRAMS

There are regional programs specially designed to help farmers and ranchers protect and improve the health of their land.

Southwest Florida Water Management District

Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) was created in 1961 by a special act of the Florida Legislature after Hurricane Donna caused massive flood-related damage to southwest Florida. When first created, SWFWMD focused solely on regional flood prevention. Today, SWFWMD's scope encompasses water supply, flood protection, water quality management and natural systems management.

To learn more about the history of SWFWMD:

<https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/about/about-the-district/district-history>

Farmers and ranchers in the sixteen counties served by SWFWMD are eligible for a number of cost-share programs. These programs can help to cover the cost of FDACS Ag BMP projects and more. Here is some information about two of SWFWMD's agricultural programs:

Facilitated Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS)

The FARMS cost-share can cover up to 75% of the cost of Ag BMP projects such as:

- Tailwater recovery/surface water irrigation pump stations, including pump, engine, fuel tank, filters and mainline pipe
- Irrigation system conversion to a more efficient system
- Weather stations, including rain gauge, anemometer and wireless telemetry
- Soil moisture sensors, including wireless telemetry
- Reclaimed/reuse water connections
- Automated irrigation valves and pump start/stops
- Rainwater harvesting systems

Farmers and ranchers love their land.

Anyone who has ever made their living from the land knows that the health of your land affects the productivity of your land. And at the end of the day, productivity is what makes or breaks a business.

Anyone who has ever made a living from the land also knows that making improvements to your land often comes with a hefty price tag.

If you are interested in learning how to improve the health and productivity of your land without breaking the bank, this series will help you do it.

There are federal, state, local, and independent programs specially designed to help farmers and ranchers protect and improve the health of their land.

The majority of the programs are federally funded and administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

For more information:

- Visit: <https://swfwmd.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=f2e144cf823c460e8584eaac840dbcea>
- Contact the FARMS program: (813) 985-7481, ext. 4413

Mini-FARMS

Mini-FARMS is a version of the FARMS cost-share program that is specially designed to fit the needs of agricultural operations of 100 acres or less. Operations must be enrolled in FDACS Ag BMP program to be eligible. The program reimburses producers for 75% of the cost of projects (up to \$8000). Commonly funded projects include but are not limited to:

- Soil moisture probes/tensiometers
- Weather stations with evapotranspiration measurements
- Irrigation pump station automation
- Irrigation conversions
- Irrigation pumps, controls, filtration and infrastructure

For more information:

Visit: <https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/business/agriculture/mini-farms>



Interesting facts about Water Management Districts in Florida:

- Over the last 20 years, Florida has invested \$1.8 billion in phosphorus control programs that have significantly improved Everglades water quality. Scientific monitoring shows at least 90 percent of the Everglades now meets ultra-clean water quality standards of 10 parts per billion or less of phosphorous.

– **Success story:** In the South Florida Water Management District, a combination of Storm Water Treatment Areas and farmers and ranchers enrolling in the Ag BMP program has prevented nearly 12 million pounds of phosphorous from entering the Everglades. To learn more visit:

https://www.sfwmd.gov/sites/default/files/documents/infographic_everglades_wq.pdf

- Water Management Districts (WMD) don't just work with agricultural producers. WMDs work with individual homeowners, municipalities, counties, and public and private land and business owners to improve water quality.
 - From filling old wells to installing miles of reclaimed water pipes to completing the largest restoration project ever done in Tampa Bay, SWFWMD works across the SW District of Florida to improve water quality for people and wildlife alike. To learn more on reclaimed water and/or the restoration project visit: <https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/sites/default/files/medias/documents/Reuse%20Dashboard%202020.pdf> and/or <https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/projects/swim/rock-ponds-ecosystem-restoration-project>