

Farm Energy Audits Help Agricultural Producers Save Money

Across Montana, agricultural producers are taking a second look at how they manage day-to-day operations. With skyrocketing fuel, and energy costs, saving money without sacrificing productivity has become a number one priority.

There are currently many federally funded grant and incentive programs to assist agricultural producers in becoming more energy efficient. The Conservation Security Program (CSP), administered by the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) is one such program, as is Section 9006 of the Farm Security, and Rural Investment Act of 2002, also known as the Farm Bill.

Energy audits generally start with an initial interview with the producer to gather information about their operation. Data is then collected about the equipment they own, including lighting, ventilation, compressors, motors, grain dryers, and anything else that is used in day-to-day operations. Energy usage history is also gathered. Once collected, it is analyzed, and a report is generated, detailing recommendations that, if implemented, will save the producer money and energy.

The savings can be dramatic. An Alabama poultry grower had an audit performed and discovered that by changing the lights in his chicken houses, and installing fans and radiant heating, he could save over \$900 yearly in electricity costs, \$4,000 in propane costs, and could gain approximately \$5,000 annually in additional income from productivity gains.

Finding a company that specializes in energy audits for the agricultural sector can be difficult, but there are some out there who understand the specific needs agricultural producers have when it comes to energy. EnSave is one company that has been focusing on agricultural energy efficiency, and has been providing energy audits and resource conservation solutions to the agricultural sector since 1991.

As energy and fuel prices climb, agricultural producers need customized solutions in order to stay competitive. Energy audits can help producers increase their bottom line without sacrificing quality and productivity. For more information on the CSP program, please visit them online at www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/. For more information on Section 9006, please visit www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/farmbill/. For more information on EnSave, please visit www.ensave.com, or call 1-800-732-1399.

New Employee



Ryan Ragsdale is the new soil scientist in the NRCS Soil Survey Office Survey Office. He will be working with Bill Drummond. Ryan says:

I'm from Chattanooga, Tennessee. I recently graduated with a M.S. in Soil Science from the University of Tennessee. Before graduate school I served two years as an Agro-Forestry Extension Agent with the U.S. Peace Corps in Paraguay, South America. In my free time I help coach the U16 Boys soccer team in Miles City.

Welcome on board Ryan !!!!

USDA

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Commitment to Conservation

Celebrating 49 Years

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

USDA-NRCS Bridger Plant Materials Center

98 South River Road

Bridger, MT 59014

Schedule of Events

Tour 10:00 a.m.- 1:00 pm

Free BBQ Lunch: - 1:00 pm

Tour includes

Seed Processing Facilities

Plant Propagation Facilities

Tour hosted in cooperation with the Montana Association of Conservation Districts and the Wyoming Conservation Districts.

Plant demonstration Area
Equipment Display
Seed Production Fields
Studies and Evaluations

RSVP by June 11, 2008

Contact your local Conservation District for registration forms
Custer County Conservation District 406-232-7905 ext 103

