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Applications for Gulf of Mexico Initiative due March 1

Jackson, Miss., Feb. 1, 2012 – USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is encouraging agriculture producers in Harrison and Hancock counties to apply for assistance through the Gulf of Mexico Initiative (GoMI), a new initiative focusing on improving the water quality of the Gulf.

Producers in the Bayou LaTerre and Rotten Bayou watersheds are eligible. The deadline to participate in GoMI through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is March 1, 2012. Interested producers should visit their local field or conservation district offices at the following locations:

Harrison County Land Owner
Natural Resources Conservation Service
12238 Ashley Drive
Gulfport, MS 39503
228-831-0881

Hancock County Land Owners
Natural Resources Conservation Service
310 Hwy 26 East
Poplarville, MS 39470
601-795-4409

Or

Hancock County SWCD
16195 State Hwy 603/43
Kiln, MS 39556
228-255-3225

“The Gulf of Mexico Initiative encourages the use of conservation practices in Mississippi’s coastal rivers and streams,” Acting State Conservationist Al Garner said. “The Gulf of Mexico is an important environmental and economic resource of this state, and it is important we help our farmers do their part in improving water quality.”

GoMI was launched in December as a way to work with producers in targeted watersheds draining into the Gulf to implement sustainable agricultural systems that will reduce the amount of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment traveling from the farm to the Gulf of Mexico.

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Helping People Help the Land

The initiative is focusing on 16 watersheds across the Gulf states, including Rotten Bayou and Bayou LaTerre in Mississippi.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program administered by the NRCS. Reauthorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, it supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, agricultural producers may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land.

To find your local USDA service center, call (601) (601) 296-1173 or visit <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?state=MS&agency=NRCS>.

For more on GoMI, visit

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/home/?&cid=stelprdb1046039>

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