

# Fresno Irrigation District: USDA/NRCS – EQIP Program and OFR Webinar

December 23, 2025



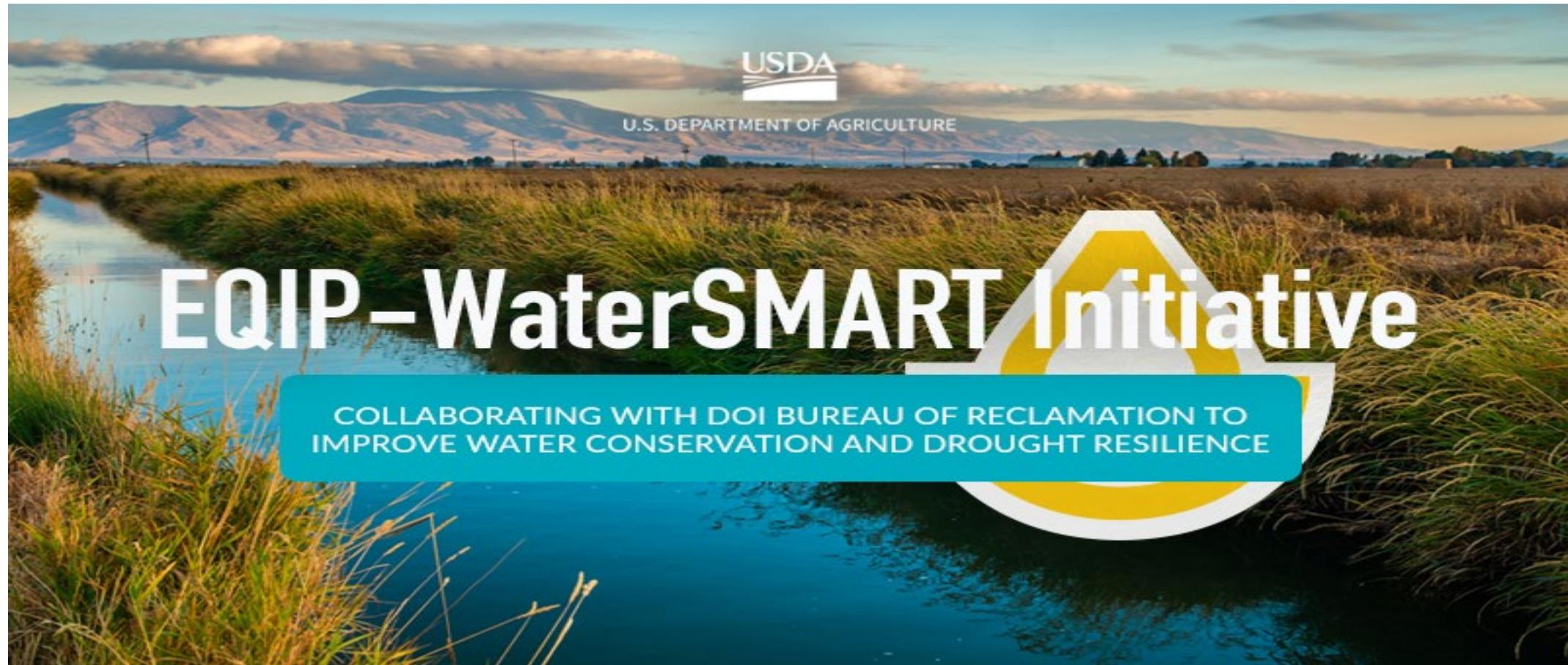
# AGENDA

1. Welcome/Introduction
2. NRCS – EQIP Program Overview – Erwin Duenas and Dave Krietemeyer– NRCS
3. NRCS – On Farm Recharge Pilot Program Update
4. Additional Project Considerations
  - Meter Considerations and Recommendations
  - OFR Preliminary Evaluation
  - Flexible Irrigation Practices
  - Inclusion of Soil Moisture Sensors
5. Questions





United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



Fresno Irrigation District  
December 23, 2025

Natural  
Resources  
Conservation  
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[nrcs.usda.gov](http://nrcs.usda.gov)

# EQIP - WaterSMART Initiative

- Collaboration between USBR and USDA
- System-level projects funded by USBR
- Farm-level projects funded by USDA through EQIP initiative



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# EQIP - WaterSMART Initiative

**Purpose: to assist producers and landowners in implementing voluntary conservation that is complementary to the water conservation assistance provided through the Bureau of Reclamation's Sustain and Manage America's Resources for Tomorrow (WaterSMART) program.**



# EQIP WaterSMART Initiative

Priorities are:

- Improving irrigation water use efficiency
- Preventing groundwater depletion
- Preventing surface water depletion
- Optimal use of naturally available moisture and prevention of drought stress

# EQIP - WaterSMART Initiative

10 ongoing projects, 1 new

- Fresno, Kern, Kings,  
Riverside, Tulare Counties

Practices:

- Efficient irrigation systems
- Irrigation management
- Nutrient management
- Cover crops



## Fresno ID Projects

- Canal Flow Meters
- Gould Canal to Friant-Kern Canal Intertie
- Groundwater Recharge Basin
- Pipeline Replacement Projects



# Fresno EQIP-WaterSMART

Practices include:

- Irrigation Water Management
- Micro-irrigation
- Pipelines
- Variable Frequency Drive (VFD)
- Flow meters
- Soil Moisture Sensors



# Groundwater Recharge Pilot program

- Goal: Field test recharge practices
- Limited area
- Extra requirements on pilot projects
- Monitoring well
- Assured water source



## Recharge plans can include supporting practices like:

### **Basin or Trench**

- Structures for Water Control
  - Inlets, outlets
  - Flow meters
- Pre-treatment of water
  - Sediment basin
  - Coagulants (PAM)

### **On-Farm Recharge**

- Water conveyance
  - Pipeline
  - Field ditch
  - Pump
- Water control
  - Diversion/Dike
  - Land shaping

These are conservation practices that can be paid for as part of an EQIP contract!

# Financial assistance

Costs reimbursed AFTER contract is signed and design criteria are met

## **Recharge trench or basin (815): one-time payment after construction**

**Trench:** \$4.21 per cubic yard excavated

<b>Basin:</b> \$4,186.79 per AF storage capacity <10 ac ft	5 ac ft basin = \$20,933.95
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<b>Basin:</b> \$4,474.70 per AF storage capacity >=10 ac ft	20 ac ft basin = \$89,494
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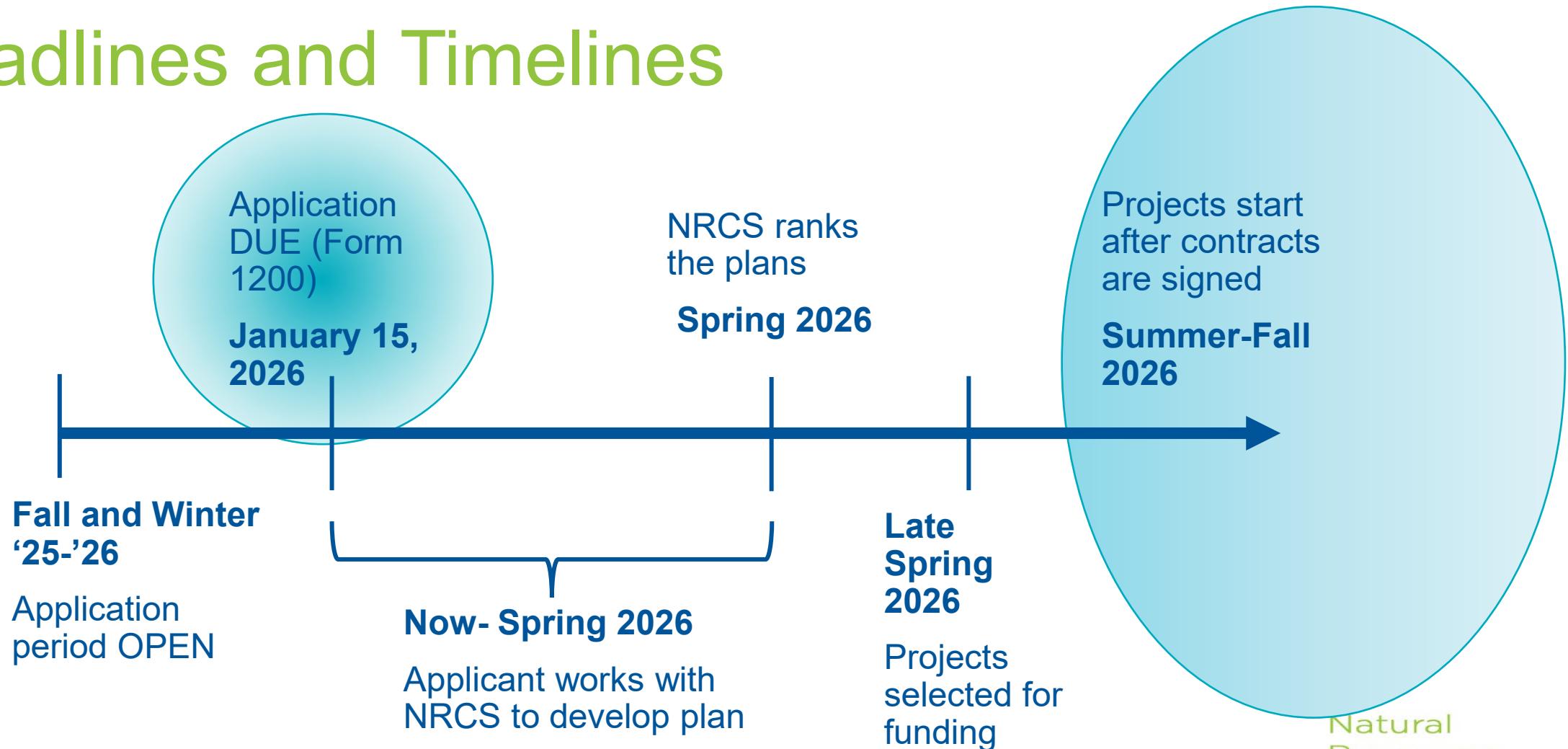
## **On farm recharge (817): annual payment each year field is inundated with water\***

\$121.33 per acre, 1 ac-ft per ac. minimum	20 acres = \$2,426.60
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\$200.14 per acre, 2.5 ac-ft per ac. minimum	20 acres = \$4,002.80
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\*If weather conditions prevent inundation, this practice can't be performed or reimbursed

# Deadlines and Timelines



# How to apply

CONSERVATION PROGRAM APPLICATION

Applicant (Decision Maker): Application Date:

Address: Location where assistance is requested:

Email:

Telephone: Receive text messages (optional):

Assistance Requested:

Click here for [instructions](#) to complete this form or contact the local office for assistance.

1. Do you have a customer record with the Farm Service Agency (FSA)?  
 Yes  No

2. Interested in participating in the following (select all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Conservation Easement Program-Wetland Reserve Easement (ACEP-WRE)	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)	<input type="checkbox"/> Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	

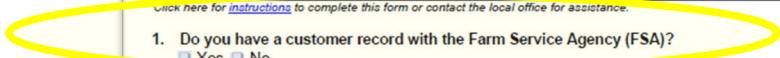
a) Program enrollment type, activity type, and/or project name, as applicable:

3. Applicant Information:  
Select the business structure and enter the legal name, and tax identification number for all applicants who will be participants on the contract or agreement including the decision maker.

Business Structure (Mark with an X)	Applicant Legal Name	Tax Number (last four digits)
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	<input type="checkbox"/> Entity	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

To add more applicants, complete [NRCS-CPA-1200 Continuation Page](#). Applicant Information and attach to this form.

a) If applicant is a legal entity or joint operation, do you have appropriate documents including proof to sign for the entity or joint operation?  
 Yes  No  N/A



- Application form CPA-1200
- Conservation Plan- System quote and design
- AGI form 941 (Adjusted Gross Income)
- SF-1199 (Direct deposit)
- AD-1026 (HEL or wetland determination)
- Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Records
- CCC-902I or 902-E (Operating plan)

# How to apply

USDA-NRCS Service  
Center, Fresno

Erwin Dueñas, District  
Conservationist

[Erwin.Duenas@usda.gov](mailto:Erwin.Duenas@usda.gov)

559-490-8039



4625 West Jennifer Ave,  
Suite 125

# Groundwater Recharge Pilot Program

December 2025



## Why a pilot program?

NRCS recognized groundwater depletion as a resource concern, and California NRCS developed two interim practice standards for groundwater recharge.

These interim practices must be field tested before being adopted into our Field Office Technical Guide.

Two interim practices are being tested:

- **Groundwater Recharge Basin or Trench** (code 815)- a dedicated, permanent (15 year lifespan) recharge feature
- **On-Farm Recharge** (code 817)- active farmland flooded on an annual basis for recharge



## How does it work?

Applicants work with NRCS conservationists to develop a conservation plan including the recharge practices and any needed supporting practices.

Supporting practices can include:

- Pipeline
- Land shaping
- Pump
- Ditch
- Water control structures

## How can I participate?

Applications received in Winter of 2026 are for recharge to be completed in Fall 2026-Winter 2027.



## Payment Rates

These are rates from 2025, subject to change:

Basin: \$4,186.79-\$4,474.70 per ac-ft storage

Trench: \$4.21 per CY excavated

On-Farm Recharge: \$121.33-\$200.14 per acre, per year

Contact your field office for further information:

Fresno Service Center 559-276-7494

Madera Service Center 559-674-4628

Merced Service Center 209-722-4119

Bakersfield Service Center 661-281-2765

Visalia Service Center 559-734-8732

## Eligibility for 2026

### Location:

- Madera County
- Fresno County (Fresno Irrigation District only)
- Merced County (Chowchilla Irrigation District only)
- Tulare County (Tulare Irrigation District or Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District only)
- Kern County (Delano-Earlimart Irrigation District only)

### Water access:

- Irrigation District
- Winter flood water, with recharge water rights

### Project site:

- Site suitability-soils and geology
- Nutrient and pest management plans
- Access to well for monitoring

### Applicant:

- Landowner or leaseholder
- Irrigation District

## Is the pilot program right for you?

- **Site suitability for basins:** Does your site have sufficient saturated hydraulic conductivity (percolation rates) in the top 5 feet of soil?
- **Soil suitability:** Will your soils take water fast enough for recharge? Check the ratings using the Soil Agricultural Groundwater Banking Index (SAGBI) tool here: <https://gratviewer.earthgenome.org/>
- **Hydrogeologic suitability:** Does your site have connectivity to the aquifer? Check its rating on the LandIQ Groundwater Recharge Suitability Tool, available here: <https://gratviewer.earthgenome.org/>
- Alternative data for hydrogeologic suitability:
  - On-site sub-surface soil investigations (such as deep soil cores, cone penetrometer, or nearby well log data)
  - Electromagnetic survey
- **Nutrient and pest management:** Records will be reviewed to minimize risks to groundwater quality. Former manure storage sites will be excluded.

## More fine print...

Projects must meet design and monitoring criteria detailed in one of the following:

### Interim Practice Standard 815 Groundwater Recharge Basin and Trench

[https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/30312/815\\_CA\\_ICPS\\_Groundwater\\_Recharge\\_Basin\\_or\\_Trench\\_2020](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/30312/815_CA_ICPS_Groundwater_Recharge_Basin_or_Trench_2020)

### Interim Practice Standard 817 On-Farm Recharge

[https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/30313/817\\_CA\\_ICPS\\_On\\_Farm\\_Recharge\\_2020](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/api/CPSFile/30313/817_CA_ICPS_On_Farm_Recharge_2020)



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# Other Considerations/ Recommendations

- Meter Considerations and Recommendations
- OFR Preliminary Evaluation
- Flexible Irrigation Practices
- Inclusion of Soil Moisture Sensors

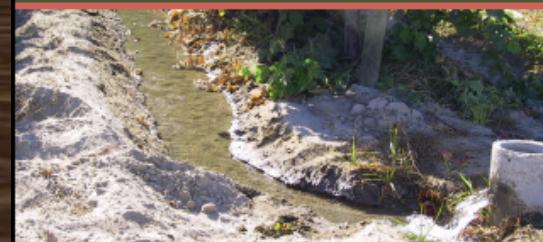


**Growers in the North Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency:**  
Using surface water makes all of us more sustainable.

North Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency is working in cooperation with Fresno Irrigation District (FID) to encourage growers to retain their flood irrigation systems to be able to use surface water when available. Strategies to help improve groundwater conditions include:

- Using flood irrigation systems in wetter years instead of drip.
- When FID has excess water available, take delivery and spread for on-farm recharge or storage in a local, private pond.
- Contact FID to explore options for using drip or micro irrigation systems directly off an FID canal.

These conscious water management decisions benefit our groundwater supply and the overall regional water supply. To make it through future droughts, we need to store available water supplies in our underground aquifers.



Grower benefits from having both drip/micro and surface water flood irrigation systems:

- Improves local groundwater levels
- Increases water supply reliability
- Proactive approach for drought preparedness
- Improves groundwater quality



## Stop Before You Convert

Growers in the Fresno Irrigation District service area are making decisions now to transition their irrigation system from flood to drip/micro. The North Kings Groundwater Sustainability Agency promotes keeping your irrigation methods flexible by maintaining flood irrigation systems when installing a drip/micro system. Funding assistance may be available through State and Federal grants and existing programs.



## Contact Us Today

Contact North Kings GSA Executive Director Kassy Chauhan at (559) 233-7161 or [kchauhan@fresnoirrigation.com](mailto:kchauhan@fresnoirrigation.com) to discuss the benefits of maintaining both flood and drip/micro systems on your farm.

# FID Well Metering Requirements



## Fresno Irrigation District Well Meter Requirements

Fresno Irrigation District (District) has received grant funding that may be used to assist landowners with the cost to purchase and install meters on wells. To be eligible for this assistance, the meter shall meet the requirements identified herein. Meters are owned by the landowner, and any repairs or replacement equipment are the responsibility of the landowner.

### Meter Requirements:

1. The meter shall be an electromagnetic flow meter with microprocessor-based signal converter capable of communicating with remote telemetry.
2. The meter shall be either a flange or saddle type meter.
3. The meter shall contain a flow sensor based on Faraday's law of electromagnetic induction.
4. The meter shall be accurate to within plus or minus two percent (+/- 2%) of actual flow.
5. The meter shall report and display instantaneous flow rate and a totalizer capturing total pumping volume, with instantaneous flow reported in gallons per minute (GPM) and total pumping volume reported in acre-feet (AF).
6. The meter shall be appropriately sized for the production rate and discharge piping of the well.
7. The meter shall have a measurement range that matches the expected range of production rates from the well on which it is installed.
8. Meters must be installed in strict adherence to all applicable manufacturer specifications by an approved contractor.
9. Testing and calibration of meters shall be performed at landowner expense by a District or manufacturer-approved contractor at intervals specified by the meter manufacturer. Calibration records shall be made available to the District.

- FID does not currently have a meter requirement for groundwater extraction wells.
- FID recommends that you include a meter on your groundwater extraction wells and keep track of total extractions.
- If you are submitting an application for EQIP grant, include a meter as part of the project.
- Adhere to Meter Requirements to help ensure future compatibility with metering program.

# OFR Pre-Screening Form and Contact Info

## Fresno Irrigation District

### Pre-Screening Form for Potential Landowners Applying for On Farm Recharge Pilot Program Grant

Fresno Irrigation District (FID) landowners have an opportunity to apply for grant dollars as part of the USDA-NRCS On Farm Recharge Pilot Program. The program provides funds for landowners who irrigate their parcels during the non-irrigation season as well as necessary improvements to facilitate the on-farm recharge practices.

FID will pre-screen all potential parcels and submit confirmation of the screening along with the outcomes to NRCS prior to the landowner submitting an application to be included in the OFR pilot program.

Landowner or Representative Name:	Date of Screening:	Landowner Phone
Landowner Email	FID Representative Name/Title	
Site Location:	APN:	
Brief Project Description:	FID Canal Servicing Parcel(s)	

#### Fresno Irrigation District Determinations (check all that apply):

- The parcel(s) listed above are good candidates for the on-farm recharge pilot program given their proximity to FID's main conveyance systems based on the information reviewed and provided during the pre-screening discussion.
- FID does not recommend inclusion of this parcel(s) in the on-farm recharge pilot program given its location and inability to reasonably guarantee deliveries of surface water during the non-irrigation season.

*The preceding statements are made based on information known at the time of this statement only.*

Additional Comments:

NAME AND TITLE OF FID REPRESENTATIVE COMPLETING PRE-SCREENING AND SIGNING THIS FORM:

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Position/Its: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Thinking About On-Farm Recharge?
  - Contact FID's Watermaster: David Burrow  
[dburrow@fresnoirrigation.com](mailto:dburrow@fresnoirrigation.com)  
559-233-7161
  - Location Matters
- FID to submit proof of pre-screening to NRCS prior to submittal of application by landowner.

# Irrigation Practices: When modifying irrigation system – maintain flood lines.

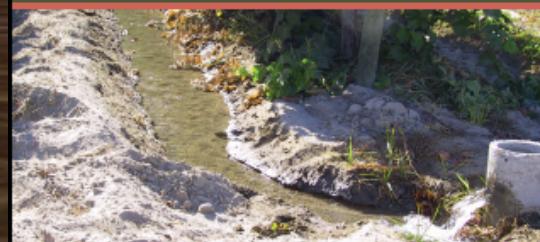


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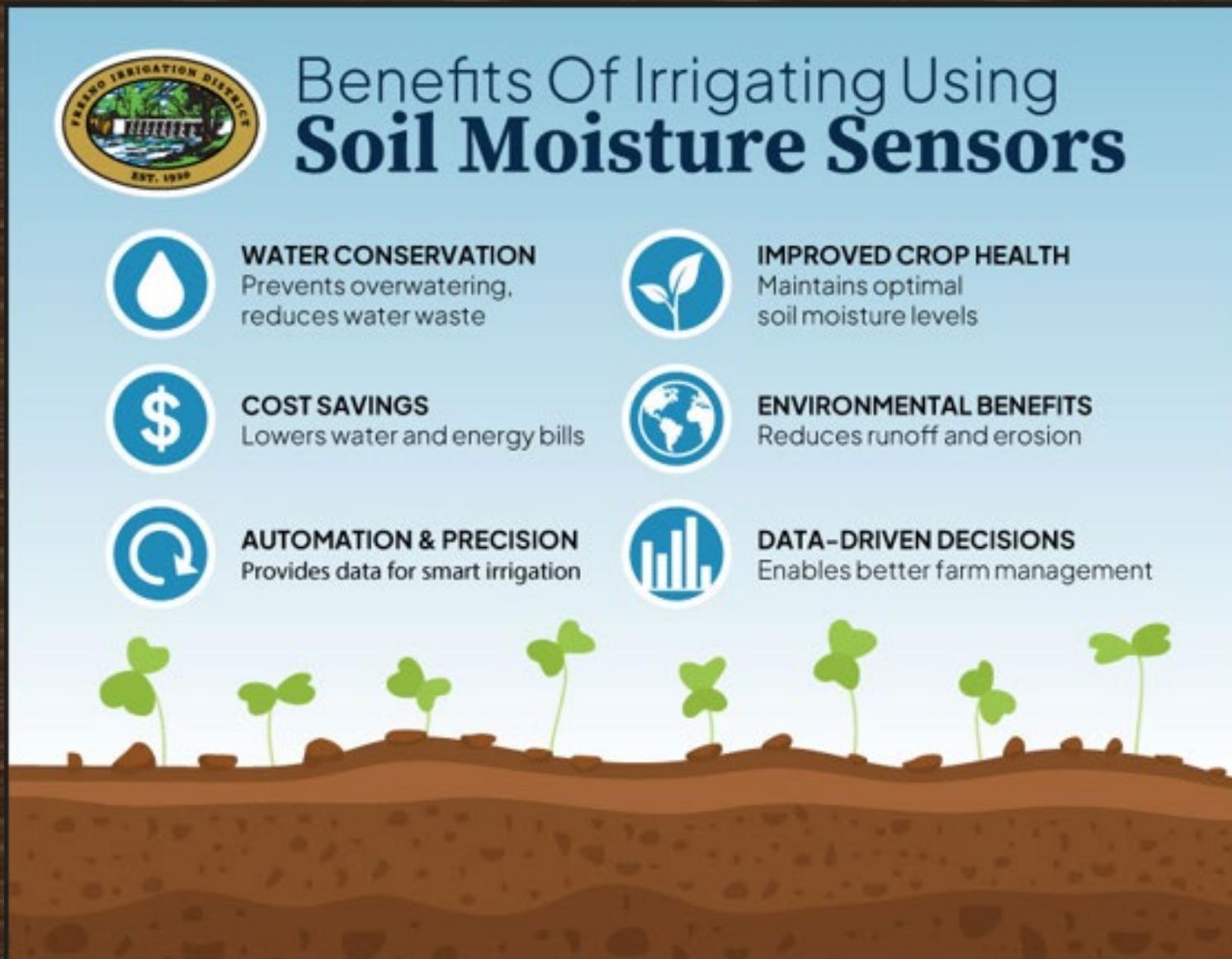


**NORTH KINGS  
GROUNDWATER  
SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY**

## Contact Us Today

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# Inclusion of Soil Moisture Sensors:



**Benefits Of Irrigating Using  
Soil Moisture Sensors**

- WATER CONSERVATION**  
Prevents overwatering, reduces water waste
- IMPROVED CROP HEALTH**  
Maintains optimal soil moisture levels
- COST SAVINGS**  
Lowers water and energy bills
- ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS**  
Reduces runoff and erosion
- AUTOMATION & PRECISION**  
Provides data for smart irrigation
- DATA-DRIVEN DECISIONS**  
Enables better farm management



# Prior Year Applications – Not Selected

- Producers Not Selected for Funding in 2025:
  - Contact Farm Services Agency
    - Express continued interest.
    - Understand why you weren't selected last year.
    - Receive assistance with providing the needed documents.



**FRESNO IRRIGATION DISTRICT**  
"Water...Your Most Valuable Resource."

## Grant Opportunities

Funding available for FID growers. Deadline to apply is January 15, 2026.

The Fresno Irrigation District was selected for another round of funding through two USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs - the EQIP-WaterSMART Initiative and Groundwater Recharge Pilot Program. Find details about the funding available for growers and step-by-step instructions for applying below.

[How to Apply](#)

**NRCS Funding Opportunity Webinar**

FID in collaboration with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is holding an informational webinar on Tuesday, December 23, 2025, for those interested in learning more about the NRCS grant opportunities exclusively for FID growers.

<https://www.fresnoirrigation.com/grants>

Thank you for joining us for the  
webinar.

