HONOLULU, April 15, 2015—Are you an agricultural producer suffering from natural resource damage caused by feral swine? The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) unveiled a new conservation activity in select states and territories to address feral swine management. An ongoing concern in the islands, Hawaii and Guam joins Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi in a pilot effort to reduce adverse impacts of feral swine on our natural resources and on livestock and human health and safety. “We are fortunate to have this new conservation activity available for implementation in Hawaii County and the Territory of Guam, as only a few states and territories have been given the authorization to address feral swine,” said Bruce Petersen, NRCS Director for the Pacific Islands Area.

Through the Farm Bill, funds are being provided through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to address three primary purposes. First, the new feral swine management conservation activity will help to determine the impacts upon the natural resources. Second, NRCS will work with private landowners and other partners to develop a management plan to address identified feral swine impacts. Finally, NRCS will evaluate the effectiveness of practices in reducing the impacts to natural resources.

NRCS partnered with USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), federal and state wildlife agencies, and other partners to identify targeted areas where management actions will exclude or remove feral swine. Specifically, the partnership will focus on assistance to EQIP eligible private landowners to implement conservation practices that will minimize adverse impacts caused by feral swine and restore the natural resource condition. Through EQIP, there will be an application, evaluation, and ranking process to ensure that feral swine management projects will occur in areas where feral swine can be effectively addressed. In addition, an eligible participant must address resource concerns such as soil erosion, soil quality degradation, fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, or degraded plant condition.

May 15, 2015 is the cutoff date to apply for the feral swine initiative. Only agricultural producers in Hawaii County and the Territory of Guam are eligible to apply for this pilot. Land enrolled in this initiative must meet EQIP eligibility. All methods proposed for feral swine management must comply with Federal, State, and local regulations. Any activity that involves feral swine trapping, transport, euthanasia, or disposal of carcass will be the sole responsibility of the landowner or local agency partner. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.