

Program Offers Incentives To Reduce Energy Costs On Small Farms

COLUMBIA, MO.

Small Missouri farms can take steps to reduce energy usage through a program that offers energy audits, loans and rebates to retrofit equipment and improve operations.

The Missouri Agricultural Energy Savings Team – A Revolutionary Opportunity, or MAESTRO, targets livestock and poultry farms that are small enough to not require a confined feeding operation permit.

“Our goal is to provide these farm operations with affordable ways to reduce energy use to improve their financial position and help keep them on the farm,” said Leon Schumacher, University of Missouri professor of agricultural systems management.

Schumacher’s preliminary estimates indicate per-farm savings of \$500-\$600 per month after implementing new energy-saving devices and procedures.

Funding for the program comes from a \$5 million U.S. Department of Energy block grant. It is implemented through a partnership of MU Extension; the Missouri Department of Agriculture and Department of

Natural Resources; the Missouri Agricultural and Small Business Development Authority; and EnSave, Inc., a private company that designs and implements agricultural energy-efficiency programs.

Farmers start with a comprehensive energy audit conducted by either EnSave or MU Extension. Results of that audit will include detailed recommendations on equipment and other improvements that will increase energy efficiency for the farm and the farm residence. New equipment could include more-efficient lighting, heating, cooling and ventilation, and improved animal waste treatment facilities.

Loans of up to \$50,000 per farm are available to purchase energy-efficient equipment. Loan options include an interest rate buy-down to 3 percent or equivalent amount in a cash down payment. A 75 percent loan loss reserve (loan guarantee) program also is available.

For more information, call 800-732-1399 or see www.mda.mo.gov/abd/financial/maestro.php.
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