



Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District Partnering with H2Ohio on Locally Led Water Quality Project

10/29/2026 - Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) announced today a new county-level program to address water quality surrounding pasture and hayland.

In partnership with the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) and H2Ohio, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine's statewide water quality initiative, Jefferson SWCD is launching its Clean Water • Pasture • Farm program.

Jefferson SWCD was one of nine districts chosen to receive funding through the H2Ohio SWCD Conservation Pilot Program which focuses on addressing nonpoint source pollution from pasture and hayland fields.

"We are working with local partners to determine the most effective ways to address nutrient runoff from farms of varying landscapes," said Director Baldridge. "In Ohio, we are fortunate to have great SWCDs and farmers that look for innovative ways to continue protecting water quality, and we're excited to be partnering with them on this pilot program."

Jefferson SWCD was awarded \$250,000 to help family-owned livestock farms fund some of the costs for installing conservation practices that address soil erosion and manure nutrient runoff. The program also looks to build local capacity to install conservation practices by bidding out permanent structural practice work to local installers and excavators.

Applicants can apply for one of three funding levels developed to address the needs of varying farm sizes in the county.

- Level 1 funding is tailored towards producers who want to begin or expand managed grazing on their farms. Producers who apply for Level 1 funding will be eligible to receive a one-time payment of \$2,500 for the purchase of items to set-up or expand a rotational grazing system for livestock, such as step-in posts, polywire, solar fence chargers, pumps, etc.
- Level 2 funding is focused on farms in need of permanent structural practices to improve or implement grazing management, or to address an erosion or water quality resource concern. Applicants for Level 2 funding will be eligible to receive a cost-incentive payment of 85% of the total cost of practices installed for permanent structural practices such as watering systems, stream exclusion fence, spring developments, etc., with a maximum payment award of \$16,650.
- Level 3 funding is targeted towards producers who need to address erosion and water quality resource concerns caused by winter feeding. Applicants for Level 3 funding will be eligible to receive a cost-incentive payment for the installation of a gravel heavy use pad (with supporting practices) paid at 85% of the total cost of practices installed, up to a maximum payment of \$25,000.

Grazing or Nutrient Management plans and soil testing will be completed for funding awardees at each level.

A primary goal of the program is to offer different funding levels as an incentive for pasture-based farms of any acreage size and livestock number to address sediment or nutrient impairments through conservation practices and pasture management.

The District will conduct farm visits with every applicant. Applications for each level will be scored and ranked to determine those that will be selected for funding.

If you are interested in applying for the program, please contact Wendee Dodds at (740) 264-9790.

Application sign-up period and informational meeting dates will be announced before the end of 2026.

About H2Ohio

H2Ohio is Governor Mike DeWine's statewide water quality initiative designed to address complex issues impacting Ohio's waters. Launched in 2019, H2Ohio uses a comprehensive approach guided by science and data to reduce algal blooms, stop pollution, and improve access to clean drinking water. H2Ohio's agricultural program, which initially focused solely on farms located in northwest Ohio near Lake Erie, incentivizes farmers to implement science-based, proven best management practices to prevent nutrient runoff and improve water quality.