

FACTSHEET

Idaho Ag Producers: Save Energy, Save Money

Idaho's agricultural producers can find a variety of solutions for saving energy in their every day farming operations. These solutions include converting to low-pressure irrigation systems, using no-till, planning intensive grazing systems and planting windbreaks.

Why save energy? Saving energy can help you reduce input costs and, thus, boost your bottom line. It's part of an integrated effort to conserve natural resources, including soil and water. But there's also a payoff for our nation—improving the U.S. import/export balance and reducing America's dependence on foreign oil. In short, saving energy is a sound business strategy with multiple benefits.

How Can You Save Energy and Money?

The following lists eight different ways producers can save energy while also improving their bottomline.

- Switch from conventional tillage to no-till—and save at least 3.5 gallons of fuel per acre—\$7.70 at \$2.20 per gallon—or 3,500 gallons of diesel and \$7,700 for a 1,000-acre farm.
- Move to low-pressure irrigation systems—and save \$9 per acre for medium-pressure systems and \$41 per acre for high-pressure systems.



Producers can save energy by converting to gravity-flow or low-pressure irrigation systems. The NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) offers cost-share for qualified producers.



Using no-till, or direct-seeding, reduces fuel costs and equipment maintenance. The conservation practice also promotes air and water quality.

- Replace old or inefficient irrigation pumps—and achieve a 10-percent improvement in water use efficiency, reducing diesel consumption by 8 gallons per acre, saving \$17,600 on 1,000 acres.

- Use manure instead of petroleum-based fertilizers—and reduce costs by up to \$85 per acre, for a corn producer, for example.

- Better manage nutrient and pesticide applications through precision agriculture—and almost pay for the cost of an inexpensive “auto-steer” guidance system by saving \$6,000 on a 3,000 seeded-acre farm.

- Improve pesticide use with scouting, spot spraying and integrated pest management—and cut costs significantly. Some producers may realize savings of up to 25 percent.

- Adopt management intensive grazing practices—and extend the grazing season and reduce the demand for grass hay—extending grazing by one month can reduce hay consumption by 30 pounds per cow and reduce direct energy costs to produce, store and feed the hay, saving more than \$10 per cow.

- Plant windbreaks and shelterbelts to reduce heating and cooling costs—and save up to 20 percent on energy bills for the farmstead.

How NRCS Can Help

Energy Estimator—NRCS’ new Energy Estimator gives farmers and ranchers a quick read on how much money they can save by using conservation tillage. It’s simple and easy—just three “clicks” on the computer.

Producers enter their zip code, fuel costs, crop plans and acreage and the Energy Estimator calculates estimated costs for various conservation tillage options. With the Energy Estimator, producers can consider a variety of options as they make plans for next year’s crops and equipment purchases.

A link to the Energy Estimator can be found at www.id.usda.gov.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Conservation practices under EQIP that specifically contribute to saving energy include conservation tillage, manure management, prescribed grazing, irrigation water management, digesters, and nutrient and pest management.

For more information on EQIP or to learn more about saving energy, contact your local USDA NRCS Service Center.



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