

South Yakima Conservation District

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State Legislative District #14, 15
Congressional District #4

2015 Feature Accomplishment: Small cost-share incentives = big results

RESOURCE CHALLENGE The Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area was established in June 2012 due to high nitrates found in private wells. One potential source of nitrates in the groundwater is irrigated agriculture. Soil and water loss from surface irrigated agriculture results in the loss of precious top soil, and it takes numerous beneficial nutrients necessary for crop growth along with it. Unfortunately, these lost nutrients can have an impact on surface and groundwater quality.



Before: A 65 acre field of rill irrigated hops prior to conversion to drip irrigation.

PROJECT SUMMARY AND RESULTS South Yakima Conservation District provided \$10,000 in cost-share assistance to convert 65 acres of hops from rill irrigation to drip irrigation. Converting rill irrigation to drip or sprinkler irrigation not only saves soil and water, it also prevents degradation to surface and groundwater quality. An estimated 10 tons per acre of soil erosion was eliminated, and 15 acre inches of water per acre were saved. Millions of gallons of water no longer leave the field. This large project had a total cost of well over \$200,000.

Mr. Ramos, manager of Segal Ranches, said, "Whatever cost-share you can help me with will go a long way to help with the cost."



After: Conversion to drip irrigation.

Other Accomplishments



Our partners, Benton and Franklin Conservation Districts, provided 1,500 students with hands-on activities for the educational programs Salmon in the Classroom, Wheat Week, and Water on Wheels.

Credit: Benton Conservation District



Field soil sampling technical lead determining soil types for Lower Yakima Valley Ground Water Management Area Deep Soil Sampling Plan.



The district offers a no-till drill for rent that helped many growers preserve the little bit of moisture that was left in their soils due to this year's drought. It was used on 1,000 acres.

More Work to Do!

- Continue to gather baseline data for potential nitrate leaching to groundwater through the Deep Soil Sampling Plan within the Lower Yakima Valley Ground Water Management Area.
- Conduct educational workshops for dairies and local growers focusing on nutrient and irrigation water management.
- Conduct six irrigation trials with soil moisture sensors and telemetry to automatically measure soil moisture in different soil types.