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**From:** Tracy Mehan [tmehan@awwa.org]  
**Sent:** 6/28/2018 8:59:33 PM  
**To:** Tracy Mehan [tmehan@awwa.org]  
**Subject:** New AWWA Guide to USDA Conservation Programs for protection of Source Water

## AWWA releases guide to assist water systems in exploring USDA programs to protect source water

June 28, 2018

(DENVER) – The American Water Works Association today released a guide that highlights opportunities for water systems to utilize U.S. Department of Agriculture conservation programs to protect drinking water sources.

Over the past several years, AWWA, the largest association of water professionals in the world, has emphasized the importance of collaboration between the water community and agricultural producers to reduce nutrient runoff and better protect source waters. The online guide, titled *USDA Tools to Support Source Water Protection*, explains how utilities can leverage USDA programs – particularly through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – to expand the effectiveness of community partnerships.

USDA has funding and programs in place to assist farmers and ranchers in implementing conservation practices, including source water protection. The guide encourages water utilities to work with the agricultural community and local partners to access these programs for the benefit of all parties.

“The USDA conservation programs have tremendous potential to forge partnerships that benefit both agricultural producers and water consumers,” said Tracy Mehan, AWWA executive director of government affairs. “This guide provides an inventory of available programs, guidance on how to access those programs and real-life case studies that demonstrate the power of utility-farmer collaborations.”

The guide emphasizes that water utilities can:

1. Help shape how conservation dollars are spent, focusing them on the greatest benefits to source water protection.
2. Foster mutual trust and understanding between water systems and farmers, encouraging constructive problem-solving.
3. Make progress on specific source water concerns by focusing on practices that will best address them.
4. Save on treatment costs or delay or avoid installing additional treatment.
5. Reduce risks to their water supplies.
6. Increase public confidence in both water and agricultural sectors.
7. Leverage every dollar they contribute through NRCS and other partners.

AWWA is also bringing attention to the benefits of USDA conservation programs in the reauthorization of the U.S. Farm Bill. The Association created a whiteboard animation video to more clearly illustrate how these programs are key to protecting drinking water sources. It is available on AWWA’s YouTube channel.

The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed its Farm Bill, the Agriculture and Nutrition Act of 2018, which includes several key measures advanced by AWWA over the past two years, focusing on source water protection. And the U.S. Senate is currently working on a bipartisan Farm Bill, the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, which also features source water protection advancements.

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*Established in 1881, the American Water Works Association is the largest nonprofit, scientific and educational association dedicated to managing and treating water, the world’s most important resource. With approximately 51,000 members, AWWA provides solutions to improve public health, protect the environment, strengthen the economy and enhance our quality of life.*

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