

NM Acequia Association grant to help farmers, ranchers

Staff report

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Funding to be used to support acequia farmers and ranchers has been awarded to the New Mexico Acequia Association (NMAA).

Officials recently announced that the NMAA federal grant would be used to work with acequia irrigators to operate successful farms and ranches. The grant was awarded by the Office of Advocacy and Outreach of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

“Acequias are vital to our agricultural heritage and economy in New Mexico. We are pleased to have the support of USDA in providing training and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers,” said Paula Garcia, executive director of the NMAA.

Officials said in a news release that some of the work supported by the grant includes demonstration workshops that highlight conservation practices funded by USDA programs, farmer training workshops using a seasonal curriculum and technical assistance focused on creating improvements to irrigation efficiency.

“We are hopeful about the future of acequia agriculture because of the renewed interest in growing fresh food for local markets,” Garcia said. “We are building a solid foundation for our small-scale farms and ranches to produce healthy, locally grown food. In doing so, we are supporting livelihoods in historic, agricultural communities.”

Partners on the project include the New Mexico Association of Conservation Districts and several local soil and water conservation districts. For information about how to participate, contact the NMAA at (505) 995-9644 or email Serafina Lombardi, director of education and outreach at serafina@lasacequias.org.