Assistance to Aid Citrus Growers with Grove Management Technology

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Citrus growers interested in making improvements to their grove or grove management equipment can implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) and utilize an easy way to defer some costs through established cost-share assistance programs. At this time, about a dozen citrus growers in the Peace River area have already tapped into $400,000 of assistance provided by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Growers implementing BMPs will need to spend about 3 hours working with the local BMP Implementation staff member to evaluate their grove, complete a checklist composed of seventy-two questions about the grove management, and agree to implement and maintain BMPs on their grove. Once this evaluation is complete, the staff member will provide you with a cost-share application and will assist you in completing and submitting the application. The application includes an itemized list of the practices to be implemented or equipment to be purchased and the estimated costs associated with each item. Applications are evaluated by the board of the local Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Board at their monthly meetings. Applicants will receive notice of the Board’s decision within a few days of the meeting. If approved, a contract will be signed and successful applicants can then proceed at once with the project.

Once the project is complete, receipts and copies of check stubs must be submitted to document the costs incurred. The submitted documentation will be reviewed by the SWCD Board prior to writing reimbursement checks.

An example of a cost-share project could be Precision Agriculture Equipment (www.treesee.com). Retrofitting an air blast sprayer with the installation of tree-see
sensor technology will generally cost $12,000.00-$15,000.00. Cost-share on this project would be at a 60% reimbursement; repaying the grower $7,200.00-$9,000.00 of the cost outlay.

Many growers are currently implementing BMPs and are discovering significant cost savings through the cost share program. We can provide you with some real life values of the money growers are saving through implementing BMPs. Don’t be late, contact Geovanne today at (863) 993-4846 or (863) 634-7830 to start implementing BMPs in your citrus grove. If you have questions about other BMP programs, you can call Dr. Brian Boman at (772) 468 – 3922 Ext. 122.