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## *Sustainable Farming Technician*

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### Position Description

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*Revision Date: February 28, 2024*

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#### **POSITION OBJECTIVE:**

This position develops and manages the Benton County Sustainable Farming Initiative; Performs soil health assessments and farm conservation assessments for Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program; Provides technical advice for farmers establishing conservation practices consistent with the five principles of soil health and farm plans. Specific duties of this position are expected to change as the needs of the District change.

#### **SUPERVISION RECEIVED:**

This position is under daily supervision of the District Manager.

#### **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. 2-year degree in an agricultural sciences field such as agribusiness, farm management, agronomy and/or a 2-year degree in a natural resources field such as resource conservation/management, watershed management, hydrology with experience and training in agriculture.
2. A vehicle and Minnesota class D driver's license is required for this position.
3. Certified Crop Advisor through The American Society of Agronomy or the ability to obtain certification within 5 years. Benton SWCD will sponsor activities needed to obtain and maintain certification. Other specialized training and certifications may be required to perform job duties.
4. An understanding of water resource concerns in Benton County and methods of addressing these concerns, including experience and/or knowledge of farming Best Management Practices is required.
5. Strong oral and written communication skills are required. Must be comfortable speaking and presenting in public and working with individuals.
6. Must be proficient in Microsoft Excel and Word; knowledge of ArcGIS, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Outlook is required.

Benton County Soil and Water Conservation District is an Equal Opportunity Employer. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the SWCD will provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals and encourages both prospective and current employees to discuss potential accommodations with the employer.

7. Ability to perform all items under “Essential Duties and Responsibilities” listed below.

**ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Perform the duties of the local team leader and advisor for the Benton County sustainable farming initiative.
  - a. Facilitate local partnerships such as continual development of the local soil health team members comprised of farmers, and agribusiness leaders and develop professional relationships with these members.
  - b. Provide technical assistance to farmers adopting soil health practices; conduct in field assessments and testing, assess the farm operation for the five soil health principles.
  - c. Develop strategies for integrating soil health practices such as identifying barriers to the diversity of soils and farming practices in Benton County.
  - d. Facilitate agriculture community networking including regular soil health team meetings and other activities recommended by the team.
  - e. Coordinate outreach activities such as field days and farm trials.

**Responsibility 1 Performance Indicators**

- a. Overall, the sustainable farming initiative is running smoothly with all five areas being addressed. Local partnerships are being well managed with new team composition being updated regularly.
  - b. Assistance for local farmer adoption of soil health systems is resulting in new management strategies.
  - c. Barriers to the diverse nature of Benton County and farming practices are being identified and strategies for limitations are being addressed.
  - d. Regular farm group meetings are being held and the topics selected by the members are being adequately facilitated.
  - e. Activities such as field days, demonstrations and farm trials are being completed and are well run.
2. Conduct soil health and whole farm conservation assessments and develop recommendations.
    - a. Evaluate farms for the five principles of soil health and farm management levels for soils, water, air, plants, and animals as they relate to conservation and farmer goals. Develop treatment and management alternatives, when warranted, with the farmers resources, experience and needs in mind.
    - b. Manage local farm planning programs such as the Minnesota Agriculture Water Quality Certification program, perform program assessments for local farmers and assist them with all aspects of the program.

**Responsibility 2 Performance Indicators**

- a. Soil health assessments and conservation plans are well developed and address all five principles of soil health. Management alternatives address

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- conservation and farmer needs and are realistic and within the scope of farmer skills and abilities.
- b. Relevant planning programs are well run. Program assessments result in water quality certifications and public awareness of farmer accomplishments and activities.
3. Assist clients with the design & installation of conservation projects.
- a. Provide technical assistance with state & federal conservation programs. Maintain a working knowledge of each program at a level that is adequate to provide technical assistance to SWCD clients.
  - b. Design and supervise the installation of conservation practices, with a focus on cropland best management practices.
  - c. Complete inspections on previously installed conservation practices.
  - d. Professional relationships with landowners and renters are maintained, enhanced and created.
  - e. Maintains and/or obtains applicable technical certifications.
  - f. Coordinate grant programs, including financial tracking, annual and final reporting, and communication with SWCD and NRCS staff.
  - g. Other grant duties as assigned.

### **Responsibility 3 Performance Indicators**

- a. Knowledge of conservation programs is demonstrated by an acceptable level of technical support to clients in person, over the phone, via e-mail and other electronic methods, and other means of communication. Technical assistance provided meets SWCD mission goals.
  - b. Project/plans meet applicable NRCS or SWCD requirements and field work assistance is satisfactorily provided.
  - c. Required inspections on previously completed projects completed by deadlines.
  - d. Client needs are met in a manner that a positive relationship is built or maintained.
  - e. Applicable technical approval authorities for ecological, engineering, and other categories are obtained and maintained. Certified Crop Advisor status is maintained. Participation in training opportunities and applied training learned.
  - f. Grants are coordinated and administered according to grantor rules and guidelines. Local procedures, including fund tracking and reporting, are followed. SWCD and NRCS staff is well informed.
  - g. Other grant related duties are completed.
4. Assist with Education & Outreach
- a. Assist Education & Outreach Coordinator as needed.
  - b. Inform community members of District programs and accomplishments through news articles, tours, field days, newsletters, etc.
  - c. Other education and outreach duties as assigned.

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#### **Responsibility 4 Performance Indicators**

- a. Assistance with education & outreach completed adequately.
  - b. News articles are satisfactorily completed and submitted by the deadlines.
  - c. Other education and outreach duties are completed adequately.
5. Assist with other duties as developed or assigned by the District Manager.

#### **Supervision of Others**

1. This position may monitor other seasonal or temporary staff or interns.

#### **MINIMUM ABILITIES REQUIRED TO PERFORM ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:**

##### **Physical Requirements**

This position requires work indoors and outdoors in environmental conditions common in Minnesota. Common environmental conditions will include heat, cold and wet conditions. Physical activities include sitting for long periods of time, walking over rough, uneven terrain, twisting, bending and lifting up to 50 pounds. Office equipment use includes but is not limited to telephones, computers, and copy machines. Ability to occasionally work during the evening and on weekends.