

# Soil Amendments

The **USDA Partnership for Climate Smart Commodities Grant** was developed to help a diverse set of farmers and ranchers expand markets for agricultural commodities. Growers will get to choose from one of the six Climate Smart Practices below to trial in their operation with the support of the USDA so these practices can be observed across a variety of settings.

## USDA Climate-Smart Practices: Climate Smart Commodities Grant

1. **Soil Amendments**
2. Nutrient Management
3. Residue and Tillage Management
4. Alley Cropping
5. Water Management
6. Short Season Cover Crops

The "**A Vibrant Future**" pilot project is intended to incentivize growers of specialty crops to adopt climate-smart production practices in order to establish a consumer-driven, climate-smart market for fruits and vegetables. The project is funded by the USDA Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities Grant.

This informational fact sheet provides a brief overview of the Climate Smart Practice **Soil Amendments**. These practices aim to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHGs) associated with agricultural operations and promote Carbon sequestration.

## **NRCS Description and code (required by USDA)**

**Soil Carbon Amendment (Ac. 336)**- Application of carbon-based amendments derived from plant materials or treated animal byproducts.

[For more information view the Conservation Practice Standard](#)

**Mulching (Ac. 484)**- Applying plant residues or other suitable materials to the land surface.

[For more information view the Conservation Practice Standard](#)

## **Incentives for Growers:**

**Funding**- Negotiated prior to enrollment and customized based on growers chosen practice and trial acreage

Up to 90% reimbursement for the direct cost associated with the implementation of climate-smart production practices (Materials, labor, testing, equipment, rentals, etc.), not to exceed \$10,000 per grower per year.

Remaining 10% of direct costs associated with practice implementation will be treated as cost share with grower

Each grower will receive a modest cash incentives for the adoption of practices, the amount of the incentive will depend on the complexity of the practice, acreage committed and market value of the crop per acre

**Technical support**- provided by and through a network of partners and resources available to accommodate producer inquiries and needs

International Fresh Produce Association (IFPA) conducting field days, fostering communities of practice, demonstration projects, virtual town halls, case studies, podcasts, peer-peer information sharing

Measure to Improve (MTI) providing grower support, one on one meetings, site visits, access and networking with Agronomists, PCAs, Crop Advisors, USDA researchers

Vibrant Future Grant Partners- International Fresh Produce Association, University of Florida, Data Services Provider, Measure to Improve, and Alcorn State University

Vendors provide technical support as required under program participation rules

### **Criteria For Participation:**

**Commitment** - grower must commit to carry out climate smart practice during 4 year trial period and commit 50 work hours/year

**Eligibility** - grower must complete all required forms and establish farm records with USDA Farm Service Agency

**Data Collection/Sharing** - must allow access to sites for data collection and be willing to document and share practices and \*data outcomes for modeling purposes

*\*data will remain anonymous and aggregated without personal identifiable information*

**New Practice**- demonstrate that the practice is new to the operation and/or site

### **Conservation Practice Benefits**

**Soil Carbon Amendment** - Improve or maintain soil organic matter, sequester carbon and enhance soil carbon (C) stocks, improve soil aggregate stability, improve habitat for soil organisms

### **Academic Resources:**

- a. Biochar's uses in agriculture, and suitable settings: [View resource here](#)
- b. Compost use in Agriculture: [View resource here](#)
- c. Biochar effect on Soil Properties and Wheat Biomass vary with Fertility Management: [View resource here](#)
- d. Compost to improve sustainable soil cultivation and crop productivity: [View resource here](#)
- e. Benefits of using compost in agricultural operation: [View resource here](#)
- f. Biochar Impacts on Crop Yield and Water Availability: [View resource here](#)
- g. [Mulching: A Soil and Water Conservation practice: View resource here](#)

### **Informational Links:**

IFPA Opportunities to Participate Climate Smart Practices Pilot Program [here](#)

IFPA Grower Participation Form Webpage [here](#)

USDA Partnerships for Climate Smart Commodities webpage [here](#)

### **Contact Information**

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