



East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District

Headwaters Farm Entering its Third Year Supporting

New Farmers through the Farm Incubator Program

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<http://emswcd.org/>

Headwaters Farm Entering its Third Year Supporting New Farmers through the Farm Incubator Program

East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District (EMSWCD) is accepting applications for the Headwaters Farm Incubator Program from October 1st through the 30th. The Headwaters Farm Incubator Program was established in 2012 with the goal of providing leased farmland to motivated, experienced individuals who would use it as a launching pad to start their own farming business. The farm also serves as a demonstration site for agricultural conservation practices, illustrating how farms can increase yield while protecting or enhancing local natural resources. The program has had a very successful first two years, with this last year seeing a growing number of participating farms and farmers, improved and expanded facilities, and higher sales from the farms.

New farmers looking to start their own business often face a combination of financial, cultural and institutional barriers. These barriers often consist of a lack of access to capital, training, and farm networks. In Oregon and nationwide, these issues are compounded by an aging farmer demographic. The Headwaters Farm Incubator Program seeks to help new farmers overcome these barriers by providing low-cost land, infrastructure, and equipment to program participants, while also assisting with business development, training opportunities, and a peer support network.

Headwaters Farm is a 60-acre property in the town of Orient that is owned and managed by EMSWCD. When it was purchased, the property showed significant soil quality, erosion, and invasive weed problems. With the work EMSWCD staff and incubator farmers have put in since then, the quality of the soil has improved, runoff issues have been greatly reduced, and the volume and quality of yield has increased. The program has also received national attention, including being chosen as the site for the 2014 National Farm Incubator Training Initiative's Field School, coming up in early October.



Early signs indicate a strong application class for the 2015 growing season at Headwaters Farm. Building on the program’s development, EMSWCD looks forward to continued support of these fledgling farm businesses and promoting a vibrant and healthy local agricultural landscape for years to come.

The East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District (EMSWCD) is a unit of local government whose mission is to conserve and restore the natural resources for current and future generations by making conservation technical, financial, and educational assistance available to all residents and ensuring equitable distribution of benefits and responsibilities. They are led by an elected board of five directors. They work entirely on a voluntary, non-regulatory basis. All of the District’s work is geared toward keeping water clean, conserving water and keeping soil healthy.

Contact Rowan Steele, our Farm Incubator Manager, with any questions about Headwaters Farm or the Farm Incubator Program at Rowan@emswcd.org or (503) 935-5355. Learn more about the program at <http://emswcd.org/farm-incubator/>, or read about our progress at Headwaters at <http://emswcd.org/updates-from-headwaters/>.



The EMSWCD service area includes all Multnomah County east of the Willamette River. The location of Headwaters Farm is also shown here.

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