



Mini-FARMS Program Applicant Handbook

Mini-FARMS Program

For Agricultural Water Conservation Best Management Practices

A 75% Cost share program with up to \$10,000 per reimbursement

Facilitated by:

Southwest Florida Water Management District

Amended Fiscal Year 2024



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The Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) does not discriminate on the basis of disability. This nondiscrimination policy involves every aspect of the District's functions, including access to and participation in the District's programs, services and activities. Anyone requiring reasonable accommodation, or who would like information as to the existence and location of accessible services, activities, and facilities, as provided for in the Americans with Disabilities Act, should contact the Human Resources Office Chief, at 2379 Broad St., Brooksville, FL 34604-6899; telephone (352) 796-7211 or 1-800-423-1476 (FL only); or email ADACoordinator@WaterMatters.org. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the agency using the Florida Relay Service, 1-800-955-8771 (TDD) or 1-800-955-8770 (Voice). If requested, appropriate auxiliary aids and services will be provided at any public meeting, forum, or event of the District. In the event of a complaint, please follow the grievance procedure located at WaterMatters.org/ADA.

Introduction

This handbook, amended in Fiscal Year 2024, provides information to applicants wishing to participate in the Mini-FARMS Program. The Mini-FARMS Program is a cost share program that assists agricultural operations to conserve water and protect water quality within the District's 16 counties.

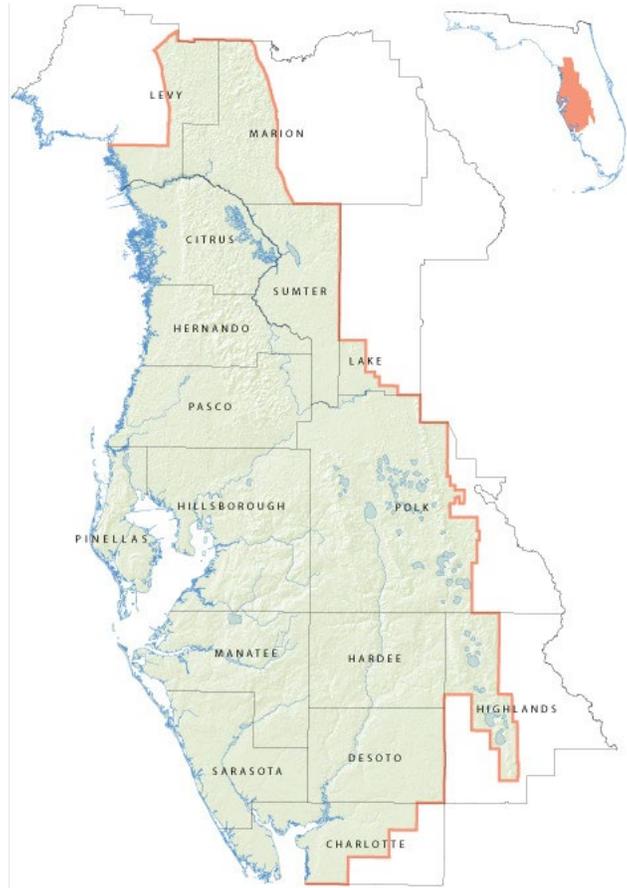


Figure 1. Map of the District

The Mini-FARMS Program promotes agricultural water quality and water quantity best management practices (BMPs) and provides overall water resource benefits to agriculture properties. The Mini-FARMS Program works with and provides a mechanism for enrollment in the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) adopted agricultural BMPs program, through a Notice of Intent (NOI) to implement BMPs. Through the Mini-FARMS Program, the District will reimburse growers for select agricultural practices that have water conservation potential and/or water quality improvement benefits.

Program Guidelines

To be eligible to participate in the Mini-FARMS Program, the application must meet the following guidelines:

- ◆ The property must be actively engaged in agriculture for the last two years.
- ◆ The property must be located within the District's boundary.
- ◆ The property must enroll in the applicable FDACS BMP program.
<https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Water/Agricultural-Best-Management-Practices>
- ◆ The property must be in compliance with District regulatory requirements.
- ◆ The irrigation system must have been evaluated by a Mobile Irrigation Lab (MIL) within the last 18 months or must be scheduled for an evaluation within 18 months following project approval. Contact FDACS and/or District staff for MIL information or visit.
WaterMatters.org/Mobile
- ◆ Applicants may be approved for up to two (2) projects per NOI and/or Water Use Permit (WUP) area within the same District fiscal year not to exceed five (5) applications during the Mini-FARMS Program lifetime. The number of approved projects will be tracked by NOI and/or WUP area by FARMS staff.

Reimbursement Amount and Percentages

The District is offering cost share incentives, up to 75% of total project cost, not to exceed \$10,000 towards the following potential groundwater savings BMP practices:

Eligible BMPs:

- Soil moisture probes, tensiometers or equivalent technology
- Weather stations
- Culverts with riser board structures
- Surface water pumps
- Shed for surface water pump stations
- Surface water filtration systems
- Surface water disinfection systems
- Surface water pump station automation
- Mainline pipe for surface water delivery
- Groundwater pump station automation
- Zone automation
- Flow meters (for systems not required to meter by the District)
- Rainwater harvest cisterns
- Irrigation conversions (from high to low volume irrigation systems)
- Fixed location fertigation systems
- Other approved water conservation BMP practices

The Application Process

- Interested applicants that meet the Mini-FARMS Program guidelines should schedule a pre-application meeting with the appropriate District staff.
- Applicant must enroll with the Department's BMP program by signing a NOI form under the appropriate BMP Program. If the applicant is already enrolled in the BMP Program, staff will locate the NOI number and note it on the application.
- Submit a complete Mini-FARMS cost share application (provided with this handbook) consisting of:
 - a. A complete application that will be signed and dated through the District's DocuSign process and will include the Mini-FARMS Maintenance Agreement form.
 - b. Two itemized budget or vendor quotes with the costs involved in the installation of the BMP practice if the total cost is greater than \$10,000.
 - c. A *Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Supplier Classification* form (the District's substitute W-9) completed by the applicant(s). *See vendor registration process below.

Once the application has been received, approved, and DocuSigned, the District will notify the applicant via email and the installation of the BMP practice may start. Items can NOT be purchased/installed before the application has been processed and approved.

*The applicant will receive an email from VendorRegistration@WaterMatters.org with a secure link to register the applicant as a vendor in the District's accounting system. Reimbursement cannot be made until that is completed. Please look for it in your email Inbox or Spam folder/filter.

The Reimbursement Process

- ◆ After project is installed and fully paid for, contact your District representative.
- ◆ Provide the invoice and proof of payment to the District staff.
- ◆ District will conduct a site visit to document the BMP practice installed.
- ◆ Complete a Request for Reimbursement form.

Program Contact

District's Contact

Matt Vinzant

Project Manager - FARMS Program

Office: (863) 220-7250

Fax: (941) 341-1294

Matt.Vinzant@WaterMatters.org

Southwest Florida Water Management District
170 Century Boulevard
Bartow, Florida 33830

APPENDIX

Mini-Farms Cost Share Program Application

Date: _____ County: _____
 Applicant: _____
 Mailing Address: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____
 Parcel ID(s): _____
 Project Acreage: _____ Crop(s): _____ WUP #: _____
 NOI #: _____ GPS: _____

Indicate the BMP practices and their respective costs:

# of Items	Eligible BMP Practices	Estimated Cost
	Soil moisture probes, tensiometers or equivalent technology	
	Weather station	
	Culverts with riser board structures	
	Surface water pump	
	Shed for surface water pump stations	
	Surface water filtration system	
	Surface water chlorination system	
	Surface water pump station automation	
	Groundwater pump station automation	
	Flow meters (for systems not required to meter by the District)	
	Mainline pipe for surface water delivery	
	Crop cloth for cold protection of crops in the DPCWUCA	
	Rainwater harvest cisterns	
	Irrigation conversions (from high to low volume irrigation systems)	
	Other Approved Water Conservation Projects	
	Total Project Cost	
	75% Estimated Reimbursement	
	Maximum Reimbursement \$10,000	

Application must include:

- 1) Two itemized project budget and copies of vendor quotes

Submit application to:
 Matt Vinzant
 SWFWMD - FARMS Program
 Office: (863) 220-7250
 FAX: (941) 341-1294
Matt.Vinzant@WaterMatters.org

The following are Mini-FARMS cost share program qualification requirements.

For each item below, Please select the answer that applies to your project:

Yes No N/A Have you applied for other cost share programs to fund this project? If yes, provide the program name, amount receiving and items funded: _____

Yes No N/A Have you previously participated in the Mini-FARMS cost share program?

Yes No N/A Is the agricultural operation a non-irrigated cow/calf or equine operation?

Yes No N/A Is the project located within the District's boundaries?

Yes No N/A Has the property been actively used for agriculture for the past two years?

Yes No N/A Is the property in compliance with the applicable District's regulatory requirements?

Yes No N/A Is the property enrolled in the applicable Department's adopted BMP Program? If no, please contact Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Yes No N/A If implementing water conservation BMP(s), has a Mobile Irrigation Lab evaluation been completed for the property? If no, please schedule a meeting.

Yes No N/A If the qualifying BMP(s) is not a first-time, new installation, can it be demonstrated that improvements to the system, through replacement items, will have environmental benefits. Please explain how you will demonstrate this: _____

Yes No N/A For a practice that falls under "other approved water conservation projects", can water savings can be demonstrated? Please explain how you will demonstrate this: _____

Yes No N/A Has any work started or equipment been purchased prior to project approval?

Mini-FARMS Maintenance Agreement Form

I, _____ agree to implement and maintain the identified BMP(s) below for the maintenance period of three (3) years, starting the day I submit a request for reimbursement.

Items and materials funded by the cost-share program will remain the property of the Department and/or the District until the established maintenance period has expired.

Participant is responsible for replacement of any program-funded property held in their possession that may be lost, damaged, or stolen.

In the event of property sale or change of land use, the participant shall notify the Department and the District who may elect to recover reimbursement from the participant in an amount equal to the full cost share reimbursement stated in this contract, less depreciation calculated on straight-line basis per year for the number of years equal to the three (3) years maintenance agreement period.

The Department and the District will relinquish to the participant all rights, title and interest in the cost-share items at the end of the three (3) years of maintenance period.

Upon 48-hour notice, the Department and/or District shall be given access to examine or audit all project related records and documents during or following the term of this Agreement. The Participant shall maintain all such records and documents for at least five (5) years following the expiration or termination of this Agreement. All records and documents are subject to the Public Records Act, F.S. Chapter 119.

Both parties understand and agree that the provisions in Nos. 1 and 5 above will survive the termination of this Agreement for any reason.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto, or their lawful representatives, have executed this Agreement on the day and year set forth next to their signatures below.

Applicant signature

Date

District's authorized signature

Date

Any changes to project representative status must be provided in writing to all parties.

Mini-FARMS Request for Reimbursement

Project #:

Name:

Address:

BMP practice	Unit Cost	Total Cost	% Cost Share	Amount Requested

Certification Statement:

I certify that the BMP(s), as indicated on this form have been implemented on the property described herein.

Participant's signature

Date

Total

Reimbursement
Total
(up to \$10,000)

District's authorized signature

Date

Please include the following:

- Invoice(s) and proof of payment.
- Pictures taken during construction and of completed project.

