

# McCandless Ranch

March 5, 2009

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Financial Assistance Programs Division  
US Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Keith Unger and I manage McCandless Ranch in South Kona on the Big Island of Hawaii. It has recently come to my attention that the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has interpreted the new Farm Bill to no longer allow the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) on public lands if they are not directly adjacent to the rancher's private lands.

As with many ranches in Hawaii, McCandless Ranch has an excellent working relationship with NRCS and we rely on the many financial and technical services provided by them. Programs such as EQIP have helped Hawaii's ranchers improve grazing management, develop water systems, control noxious weeds and build fences for riparian and wildlife habitat

Many of Hawaii's ranches include both public and private land, and often these areas are not adjacent. It is critical to Hawaii's ranchers and to conservation in Hawaii that both public and private ranch lands, regardless of where these lands are located, continue to qualify for enrollment into programs such as EQIP.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on such an important issue.



Keith Unger  
McCandless Ranch