



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

helping people help the land

Eduardo Ramos, Raisin Grower

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— Eduardo Ramos



ABOVE: Eduardo Ramos says his experience working with NRCS has been a positive one.

BELOW: Ramos checks the flow of water with NRCS Soil Conservationist Hugo Calvillo (left). Brian Ziegler photos



When he arrived in United States at the age of 17, **Eduardo Ramos** had never attended school.

But when he found work with a grape grower in California, Ramos received quite a bit of on-the-job training with an emphasis on viticulture.

Over the next twenty years, Ramos saved enough money from his job as a farm manager to acquire several parcels of land near Selma, Calif. He eventually struck out on his own and today grows Thompson seedless grapes, which he turns into raisins.

When he first bought his land, Ramos flood irrigated all of his vines. He then learned about drip irrigation from a friend who works at an irrigation parts supply company. The friend told him about the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and its Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Ramos found out that EQIP funds can be used to purchase a drip irrigation system to supply a precise amount of water to his vines. It would conserve water and be especially useful on his land where it wasn't level. "It took me ten days to flood irrigate 80 acres. With drip irrigation, it only takes 24 hours," said Ramos.

NRCS Soil Conservationist **Hugo Calvillo** believes drip irrigation will save Ramos money over time. "He won't have to make as many tractor passes cultivating between rows to control weeds," said Calvillo. "That's because there's no water flowing in the middle of a row for seeds to germinate."

Calvillo adds that fewer passes means Ramos will not be creating as much dust so he will be helping improve air quality too. Ramos says his future conservation plans include applying oil to his unpaved farm roads to further control particulate matter being released into the air.

He says his experience working with NRCS has been a positive one. "The EQIP program is good. If farmers are thinking of seeking assistance from NRCS, I would recommend the agency to them 100 percent."



Ramos uses drip irrigation to conserve water and save money. Brian Ziegler photo