

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service**

2013 National Resources Inventory Conservation Effects Assessment Project - Cropland Assessment

Key Messages

Topic: Building General Awareness

- Conservation programs help agricultural producers reduce soil erosion, enhance water and air quality, conserve energy, further reduce sediment and nutrient losses from cropland, and enhance wildlife habitat. These programs are important to farmers and rural communities who use them to help maintain productive farmland, protect the environment and preserve clean water in their region.
- The 2013 NRI-CEAP survey will help gather information for the entire California Bay-Delta watershed area which is comprised of the following sub-watersheds:
 - Sacramento River Watershed
 - San Joaquin River Watershed
 - Tulare Lake Basin Watershed
- The survey will collect information from producers about farming and conservation practices on cultivated and non-cultivated cropland. This vital information will help policy makers determine what farmers and ranchers need in the future to further protect the soil, water and related resources in the targeted watersheds. Agricultural and research organizations can use the data to document farmers' management activities and the impact they are having on soil and water quality by installing conservation practices.
- NASS representatives will visit approximately 1,764 farms in the three watersheds combined from October through February 2014 to collect information about on-farm conservation practices.
 - Enumerators will visit 1,732 farms in California and 32 farms in Oregon.

Topic: Benefits of the Survey

- The 2013 NRI-CEAP survey will document producers' current farming and management practices, including conservation practices designed to help protect soil and water resources. The survey will provide a complete picture of conservation practices in the California Bay-Delta watershed area. NASS representatives will collect information about on-farm management practices including those that farmers and ranchers installed using government, nonprofit or industry programs as well as their own resources with no external support. This information will be used to maintain, modify, combine and improve programs that assist farmers and ranchers in planning and installing on-farm conservation practices. The alterations made to these conservation programs and practices have the potential to further reduce sediment and nutrient losses from cropland.
- Locally, the survey will:
 - Provide information needed by the USDA-NRCS to determine the effects of conservation practices commonly used on irrigated cropland related to water conservation and water quality enhancement. This survey will capture the efforts farmers and ranchers are currently making to enhance water quality and identify potential benefits of additional treatment.
 - Provide information needed by USDA-NRCS on the effects of conservation practices used in riparian and meadow restoration related to water quality and fish and wildlife habitat restoration. The survey will capture the efforts farmers and ranchers currently make to enhance fish and wildlife habitat restoration and identify potential gains of additional treatment.
 - Producers can use the survey results to demonstrate the breadth and depth of their conservation activities and advocate for additional programs, practices or services needed.
- This survey will focus on the California Bay-Delta watershed area and will use an expanded/larger NRI sample size. This will also give a more in-depth and clearer idea of the current conservation practices in the specific sub-watershed areas that make up the California Bay-Delta study area. This information will capture

all conservation efforts and establish a conservation/management baseline to enhance conservation planning, implementation and management.

- Maintaining conservation programs in the United States benefits the public and producers by protecting the natural resource base upon which their livelihood depends and providing financial incentives such as rental payments and cost-sharing to offset the cost of installing conservation practices. USDA conservation programs currently benefiting farmers and ranchers include:
 - Agricultural Water Enhancement Program
 - Conservation Stewardship Program
 - Environmental Quality Incentives Program
 - Wetlands Reserve Program

Topic: Confidentiality

- Respondents are guaranteed by law (Title 7, U.S. Code, CIPSEA, Public Law 107-347) that their individual information will be kept confidential. NASS and NRCS use the information only for statistical purposes and publish data only in aggregated totals.