



Released: September 26, 2003

Media Contact: Michael Hunst, State Statistician, 1-800-453-7502

CONSERVATION EFFECTS ASSESSMENT PROJECT

St. Paul, MN, September 26, 2003 - Do conservation practices improve water, soil, and air quality? Do conservation practices enhance wildlife habitat across this country? To help answer these questions, the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will conduct the National Resource Inventory - Conservation Effects Assessment Project during October through December.

The resulting information will be added to other sources to create a complete picture of environmental and conservation management conditions. Answers from this survey will be used to estimate the potential benefits that have been achieved by farm conservation programs.

NASS works with farmers and ranchers to provide meaningful, accurate, and objective statistics that help keep U.S. Agriculture informed. This survey provides farmers and ranchers with an important opportunity to help ensure that conservation programs continue to provide America's working lands with the assistance needed to remain both healthy and productive in the future.

The nearly 600 Minnesota farm operators selected to participate in this survey will soon be notified by letter, and interviewers will visit them personally to collect their reports at their convenience.

"We safeguard the confidentiality of all survey responses," Michael Hunst, Minnesota State Statistician, said. "Information from individual operations is combined with other responses to provide the needed data. We will not disclose any information about an individual operation."

Annual progress reports will be published by the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service beginning in 2005. All agricultural statistics published by NASS are available at www.usda.gov/nass/.

#