



NEWS RELEASE

VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

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CONSERVATION EFFECTS ASSESSMENT PROJECT

Are conservation practices improving water, soil, and air quality? Do conservation practices enhance wildlife habitats 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 in October.

"The advantages of conservation programs are widely recognized," said Kevin Barnes of the Virginia Agricultural Statistics Service. "However, the environmental benefits of these programs have not been measured. This effort will provide an accounting of the benefits achieved through conservation programs."

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.

"We safeguard the confidentiality of all survey responses," Kevin Barnes, said. "Data from individual operations is combined with other responses to provide the needed data. We will not disclose any data about an individual operation."

Annual progress reports will be published by the National Resource Conservation Service beginning in 2005. All agricultural statistics published by NASS are available at www.usda.gov/nass/. For more information, call 1/800/772-0670.

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