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Contact: Jasmine Kahani Shanti (NASS)

202-503-5907 jasmine.shanti@nass.usda.gov

Sylvia Rainford (NRCS)

(202) 720-2536 Sylvia.Rainford@wdc.usda.gov

USDA Nationwide Farm Management and Conservation Data Gathering Begins Second Phase

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14, 2015 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is contacting farmers and ranchers now through February 2016 as part of the second [National Resources Inventory – Conservation Effects Assessment Project \(NRI-CEAP-2\)](#) survey of agricultural producers’ conservation practices.

CEAP is a multi-agency study of the environmental impacts of conservation practices and programs on cultivated and non-cultivated agricultural lands. The survey will gather field management data and conservation implementation information from scientifically-selected National Resources Inventory (NRI) points on farms and ranches nationwide. That information will be used to measure the environmental impacts associated with farm management and conservation practice implementation. USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is the lead agency for the collaborative project and NASS conducts the CEAP survey under a cooperative agreement with NRCS.

“CEAP is a critical tool for quantifying the impacts of the good conservation work done by millions of farmers and ranchers partnering with USDA,” said NRCS Chief Jason Weller. “Results from CEAP assessments help to shape USDA policies and practices that improve voluntary conservation delivery and the resulting benefits on the landscape.”

Trained by NASS, enumerators or surveyors from the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) will interview approximately 23,500 farmers and ranchers in 2,150 counties throughout the continental United States to obtain field data for the NRI-CEAP-2 survey. The enumerators will gather data on management and conservation practices such as cropping and tillage methods, pesticide and livestock manure applications, and other field activities. Information gathered from the NRI-CEAP-2 survey will be used to evaluate changes that have occurred on the land since the first nationwide CEAP survey (NRI-CEAP-1), conducted in 2003-2006. These two surveys are the only two CEAP surveys conducted nationwide on cropland. The NRI-CEAP-2 survey will also include pastureland.

The entire survey process will take two years. Some producers will be surveyed through February 2016, and the rest in fall 2016 through the winter of 2017.

“The NRI-CEAP-2 survey gives producers a great opportunity to provide a more complete and accurate picture of the conservation and management practices they use on their lands and in their operations,” said NASS Administrator, Joseph T. Reilly. “While participation is voluntary, documenting the significant

efforts made by farmers to conserve natural resources while producing food, fuel, feed, and fiber is very important. These findings encourage continued support for conservation programs that protect natural resources while respecting farmers' livelihoods."

This survey provides a way to capture the farmer's or rancher's voice, identify the conservation practices applied with or without formal participation in conservation programs, and document the current trends in voluntary conservation and farm management practices on the landscape. The survey data will be used in conjunction with sophisticated modeling approaches to determine the impacts adopted practices are having on resource concerns such as soil health and water quality. Project findings will be used to guide USDA conservation policy and program development and help conservationists, farmers and ranchers make more informed conservation decisions.

NASS safeguards the privacy of all respondents, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified, as required by Federal law. Participants' responses cannot be used for the purposes of taxation, investigation, or regulation (Title 7, U.S. Code, and CIPSEA, Public Law 107-347).

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