



USDA Begins Project to Quantify Effects of Ag Conservation

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service is contacting 450 Michigan farmers to take part in a survey that will more accurately measure the environmental benefits associated with implementation and installation of conservation practices on agricultural land. The results of the Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) survey will help further develop the science-based solutions for managing the agricultural landscape to improve environmental quality.

“The survey gives farmers and ranchers the power to provide a more complete and accurate picture of the conservation practices on their operations,” said NASS Administrator Hubert Hamer. “If contacted, I encourage farmers and ranchers to participate. Their collective responses can directly benefit themselves and all producers by helping leaders focus on what producers need to install conservation practices that are best for their operations environmentally and financially.”

The results of the survey will demonstrate the work of America’s farmers to conserve natural resources while producing the food, fuel and fiber the world requires, participating farmers and ranchers support our cause for continued science-based conservation programs that protect natural resources while supporting farm-related jobs. Survey results will guide USDA conservation policy and program development and help conservationists, farmers and ranchers more efficiently and effectively conserve natural resources.

In addition to helping determine the effectiveness of existing conservation practices, NRI-CEAP analysis provides estimates of resources farmers may need to further protect the soil, water and related resources. Additional information about CEAP is available at the [Conservation Effects Assessment Project](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Conservation_Effects_Assessment_Project/index.php) survey web page at https://www.nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Conservation_Effects_Assessment_Project/index.php

NASS conducts the CEAP survey under a cooperative agreement with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). CEAP results help determine not only the effectiveness of existing conservation practices but also what resources farmers may need to further protect the soil, water and related resources in selected watersheds and to document on-farm conservation accomplishments.

For example, a recent [CEAP report for the Western Lake Erie Basin](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD892606) shows voluntary conservation is making significant headway in reducing nutrient and sediment loss from farms and that there is opportunity to improve conservation management across the basin with no single conservation solution meeting the needs of every field and farm. That report informed the development of the new Western Lake Erie Basin Initiative, which helps support farmers’ efforts to improve water quality in the region. A copy of the report can be found at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/newsroom/releases/?cid=NRCSEPRD892606>

The CEAP survey will be conducted in two parts. In the first survey, which is shorter, NASS will determine eligibility for the more in-depth survey that will take place between October 2016 and February 2017. The privacy of all respondents is safeguarded, ensuring that no individual operation or producer can be identified, as required by Federal law.