



SD-FS-74

April 2012

Overview

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is mandated (through the Rural Development Act of 1972, the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977, and other supporting legislation) to assess the status, condition, and trends of soil, water, and related resources on the Nation’s non-federal lands. The NRI program serves as the federal government’s principle source of information on natural resources in the United States (U.S.). The NRI provides a nationally consistent database that allows for resources assessment. Analyses of the NRI database are useful for public policy considerations because the database:

- has a high degree of reliability;
- looks at the natural resources over a period of time; and
- permits analysis at national, regional, and local levels.

The NRI plays a key role in development of conservation policy and programs for the nation. It serves to educate the public regarding natural resource issues and provides a comprehensive, nationally consistent source of data for researchers in many fields. It is also used by policy makers to make decisions about funding of natural resources programs. Informed and valid decisions are best made when based upon scientifically derived data. The NRI has been developed to supply this type of information.



Photo courtesy of SD NRCS.

NRI on Grazing Lands

This survey is being conducted on private grazing lands across the country. This includes native and nonnative seeded grazing lands. It does not include hayland. Types of data collected about grazing land include:

Land cover/use

- Landscape and soils
- Ecological Site/Forage Suitability Groups
- Pasture Condition/Range Health
- Plant census
- Disturbance indicators
- Conservation practices and resource concerns
- Plant composition and patterns
- Biomass/production, cover, density, and height

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is doing the survey?

The survey is being coordinated by the NRCS State Office (SO) (contact information on the back). The survey team typically consists of field office personnel or individuals who have been hired by the NRCS to conduct the survey.

How did you select my land/name?

The inventory locations were randomly selected across the U.S.. These same points have typically been surveyed every 5-10 years.

Why is this survey being done? What is the purpose?

This survey is done in order to help answer questions about the amount, condition, and trends of range and pasture vegetation and the soils resources. Some of the things we will be estimating from the sample data are the amount of vegetation, its condition, type of vegetation, and type of conservation practices installed on these lands.

These estimates of natural resource conditions are critical to ensuring that this country continues to have such things as high quality drinking water, timber and grazing products, and the most productive farmlands in the world.

What will you do with the information from my land?

The data will be entered into a data-recording device in the field. Data recorded will not contain any personal identifiable information. Your name and address will not be entered. The information will then be combined with data from throughout the entire nation to produce summary reports. The individual plot data from your land will not be published.

Can I obtain a copy of the results?

Yes. Please provide your mailing address (or e-mail address) to the individuals conducting the survey and they will ensure that a copy of the results is sent to you.

Will you be recording information on threatened and endangered species?

No. We are only recording general information related to the plants on the range and pasture lands.

Will you be recording information on wetlands?

No. This field study is not designed to collect wetland information and no data is collected regarding wetland determinations or delineations.

Contact Information

The South Dakota NRCS SO is coordinating this survey. For more information, please contact:

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