The 2002 Farm Bill provides over $38 billion for conservation—the highest level of funding in history for conservation programs that reduce soil erosion, preserve and restore wetlands, clean the air and water, and enhance wildlife. This survey will be used to provide farming communities, the general public, legislators, and other stakeholders with an interest in environmental policy issues an accounting of the environmental benefits obtained from these conservation programs. Even if you are not presently participating in any conservation programs, information about your operation is still important to us. Your answers will be used to estimate the potential benefits that could be achieved by expanding these programs.

Voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs authorized under the 2002 Farm Bill are the most successful and popular environmental programs in the United States. Conservation programs that will use information gathered in this survey include:

**EQIP**—Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. Through EQIP, farmers and ranchers may receive financial and technical help to install or implement structural and management conservation practices on eligible agricultural land.

**WRP**—Wetlands Reserve Program. Provides an opportunity for landowners to receive financial incentives to enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal land from agriculture.

**WHIP**—Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program. Encourages creation of high-quality wildlife habitats that support certain wildlife populations. Through WHIP, NRCS provides technical and financial assistance to landowners who develop upland, wetland, riparian, and aquatic habitat areas on their property.

**CSP**—Conservation Security Program. Provides payment for producers who historically have practiced good stewardship on their agricultural lands and incentives for those who want to do more.

**CRP**—Conservation Reserve Program. Provides annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term, resource-conserving covers on eligible farmland.

**CREP**—Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. Combines an existing program, CRP, with State programs to provide incentive payments for installing conservation practices to meet specific State and national environmental objectives.

**NRCS** Conservation Technical Assistance (CTS). Provides conservation technical assistance to land users, communities, units of State and local government, and other Federal agencies in planning and implementing conservation systems.
I spent my valuable time answering questions about my farming operation on another survey. How does this one benefit me?

Today’s agricultural producers are inundated with requests for information. USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) realizes how valuable your time is and greatly appreciates your participation in our surveys. We assure you that your time is well spent and that information you provide will benefit your livelihood, that of your neighbors and the farming community in which you live.

As you read through this brochure, you will see that the National Resources Inventory—Conservation Effects Assessment Survey (NRI-CEAP) has a unique purpose—to provide information that will aid in determining environmental benefits associated with conservation programs. This information will provide the basis for showing that conservation practices can improve water, soil, and air quality, and enhance wildlife habitat across the country.

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