Today’s Agenda

• Response to Urban-related Agency Priorities (Purpose)
• Project Planning
• Definitions of Urban Agriculture and Conservation
• Strategic Plan Key Elements
Background

USDA

• **2022-2026 Strategic Plan - Strategic Goal 2: Ensure America’s Agricultural System is Equitable, Resilient, and Prosperous**
  
  • The Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production established under the 2018 Farm Bill

NRCS

• **FY22 Agency Priorities: Expand the conservation tools and support to address the unique needs of urban farmers and communities nationwide.**

NRCS Nebraska...
Purpose

1. How is your state servicing Urban Ag producers?
   - Assigned responsibility to existing staff and local field offices
   - Hired new NRCS staff specifically to service urban producers
   - Through agreements with conservation partners (SWCD, extension, etc.)
   - Rely on partners not under an agreement
   - Strategy for servicing urban farmers is still being developed
   - Other

5. Are those in your state responsible for providing urban producers assistance properly trained and equipped?
   - Highly Trained
   - Moderately Trained
   - Additional Training Needed
3. Select the top 4 NRCS conservation practices/activities being requested by urban producers.

- High Tunnel System (325)
- Conservation Crop Rotation (328)
- Residue Tillage Management, No-Till (329)
- Cover Crop (340)
- Residue Tillage Management, Reduced Till (345)
- Nutrient Management (590)
- Pest Management Conservation System (595)
- Irrigation System, Micro irrigation (441)
- Soil Health Management Plan (CPA-116)
- Conservation Plan Supporting Organic Transition (CPA-138)
- Site Assessment and Soil testing for Contaminants Activity (CEMA-207)
- Soil Health Testing (CEMA-216)
- Soil and Source Testing for Nutrient Management (CEMA-217)
- Other*

*Pollinator plantings was the most requested “other”

4. Are there obstacles for planning any of the above selected conservation practices/activities for urban producers?

- Yes
- No
Questions that need answers

• How are we servicing urban ag customers?
• Can we identify conservation assistance barriers?
• What is urban agriculture and conservation?
• What are our expectations for ourselves, our customers, and our partners?
NRCS NE Urban Agriculture and Conservation Strategic Plan

- Oct. 2021 – Formed a committee to write the plan
  - Geographical and technical representation
- Nov. 2021/Jan. 2022 – Hosted four planning sessions
- Jan. 2022/Mar. 2022 – Leadership and STC Review
- Apr. 2022 – Approval from Leadership and STC

**Next Steps**
- Present to STAC and Partners
- Develop Annual Business Plan
Our Must Haves

inclusion / science-based / multi-cultural / service / interdisciplinary
Mission Statement

Growing Conservation Opportunities for Every Nebraskan
Five Key Elements

1. PARTNERSHIPS, COOPERATION, AND INCLUSION

2. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

3. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

4. EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

5. OUTREACH AND EDUCATION
PARTNERSHIPS, COOPERATION, AND INCLUSION

• Recruitment of an internal and external team of staff/subject matter experts to lead the urban conservation campaign

• Support innovation and demonstration projects that expand our capacity to deliver or improve urban conservation assistance

• Recognize monitoring methods to measure success in urban areas
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

• Develop an understanding of resource concerns and planning criteria for urban land uses and projects
• Improve availability and access of resources
  • Technical Guides
  • Assistance portal (virtual kiosk)

Soil organism habitat loss or degradation
Quantity, quality, diversity or connectivity of food, cover, space, shelter and/or water is inadequate to meet requirements of beneficial soil organisms.

Objective: Improve habitat for beneficial soil organisms.

When land use is: Crop, Forest, Developed Land, or Associated Ag Land

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>Planning Criteria</th>
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<tr>
<td>State-modified In-Field Soil Health Assessment Worksheet</td>
<td>No resource concern results</td>
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<td>based on the national template</td>
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Host eligibility and urban scenario discussions with Farm Service Agency (FSA)

- Discuss local municipal barriers to providing FA
- How to obtain a farm number
- Who has jurisdiction
- Types of leases

Urban Agriculture and Conservation – Program Initiatives
EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT/INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

- Urban SME’s and Professionals Roster
- Urban Agriculture Training Curriculum
- How to Assist/Working Effectively with Urban and Small Farm Producers
OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Improve NRCS’s availability, access, and reputation with urban agriculture and conservation customers.

Build confidence with our constituents as the leading conservation agency who supports all conservation interests.