

**TO: Landowner,
NRI Grazing Land Onsite Study Site**

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) realizes how valuable your time is and greatly appreciates your cooperation in a survey to help determine the effects of grazing land management on the environment. The survey is part of the National Resources Inventory (NRI), a nationwide statistical accounting of natural resource status, condition, and trends on U.S. non-Federal land. The study site on your property is one of only about 2,500 grazing lands onsite survey locations nationwide.

Confidentiality of site locations

Some landowners have expressed concern regarding confidentiality of information. We understand those concerns. That's why ***we do not link the data that we gather here to your name or other personal information. NRCS will not provide your name, ownership information, or other personal information to any other Federal, State, local, or private agency or organization.***

The NRI is based on scientific and rigorous sample survey protocols; these protocols include maintaining and protecting the integrity and confidentiality of the data gathering sites to safeguard both the survey and your rights as a private landowner. USDA and NRCS policies state that "the geographic locations of data gathering sites used for USDA's National Resources Inventory are not public information and are to be used only for purposes of official NRI data gathering activities or for other purposes approved by the Secretary [of Agriculture]."

Why here?

Onsite data collection is necessary to obtain data that cannot be obtained or monitored in other ways. NRCS grassland specialists and other conservation specialists visit the sample site to observe resource conditions and make measurements of vegetation. Sampling takes only a few hours. The data collectors use hand-held equipment to locate the collection site and record observed natural resource information. These activities do not disturb the landscape and are similar to the kinds of activities used in normal NRCS conservation planning.

By allowing access to your land, you are helping demonstrate the valuable contributions made by America's farmers and ranchers to the environment. Your cooperation can help improve conservation programs for America's working lands. And the information we glean will also help set the foundation for a new generation of conservation practices to support improved grazing lands.

How will the data be used?

The study site on your land, along with all other sites in the survey, was selected at random to represent much larger acreages of grazing land. Expansion factors applied to each survey site allow NRCS to estimate conditions on rangeland and pastureland across the nation. NRCS will also use the data to assist in allocating Farm Bill program resources and staff.

The scientific questions that shaped the survey include these:

- Can we define our knowledge about the impact of conservation practices on the hydrologic cycle for rangeland and pastureland?
- What do we know about the impact of conservation practices on soil quality, plant communities and plant community dynamics, and conditions at landscape and ecoregion scales?
- What do we know, and what can we recommend, concerning the effects of grazing lands conservation practices on carbon sequestration for rangelands, pasturelands, and grazed forest?

The data collected about range and pastureland provide data on land use, vegetative cover and composition, and extent of invasive species. Combining these data with other local, regional, and national data provides a clearer picture of the extent and severity of resource problems requiring management intervention. It also gives researchers important information for formulating science-based solutions to these problems and data for ecological site descriptions.

Further information

Visit <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/nri> for more information about the NRI, or contact the NRCS State Resources Inventory Coordinator.

About the NRI

The National Resources Inventory is a statistical survey designed to help gauge natural resource status, conditions, and trends on the Nation's non-Federal land. Non-Federal land—which includes privately owned lands, tribal and trust lands, and lands controlled by State and local governments—represents nearly 75 percent of the Nation's total land area.

The NRI is conducted by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with the Iowa State University Center for Survey Statistics and Methodology. This partnership ensures that the NRI employs well-established scientific survey principles.

The NRI provides nationally consistent statistical data that support analysis of resource trends on rural and developed land over all regions of the United States since 1982. It provides information for addressing a broad range of natural resource issues. Its primary purpose is to support agricultural and environmental policy development and program implementation.



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National Resources Inventory Grazing Land Onsite Study

