



United States
Department of
Agriculture



National Agricultural
Statistics Service

Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP)

NRCS Supplement

2011 Handbook

NRCS Supplement Handbook CEAP 2011

CEAP & the NRCS Supplement

As part of the Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP), NRCS has been working with NASS and FSA to update assessment of the environmental effects of conservation programs and practices implemented within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. NRCS is partnering with USDA-NASS to obtain revised NRI-CEAP survey data in order to develop an updated assessment. NASS will conduct a survey of approximately 1,500 farmers within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed from November 2011 through February 2012. This survey will provide farm-field level land management and conservation practice data for cropland fields associated with selected NRI sample sites throughout the region. The NRI-CEAP survey data will provide needed input into existing physical process models which assess water quality, soil quality, and associated resource concerns and document the environmental effects of conservation practices implemented within the watershed.

Data for each NRI point will be collected using a respondent (operator) questionnaire, aerial image for the CEAP point, and an NRCS Supplement. NASS enumerators (data collectors) will contact the operators of the selected field to complete the respondent questionnaire. The data for the NRCS Supplement must be acquired from the local NRCS offices that have the official records for the selected fields. NRCS will be contacted to assist in completing the matching NRCS Supplement. Both the questionnaire and the NRCS Supplement are required for a complete response. One without the other is not complete and cannot be utilized for the CEAP project.

Purpose

This handbook is provided to NRCS personnel to assist in understanding the role of the local offices for the CEAP survey. The information contained in this document is an attempt to identify the data that will be collected using the NRCS Supplement Questionnaire for the field identified for the 2011 CEAP sample.

Enumerators have been instructed to contact the appropriate NRCS offices to determine the best plan of action to accommodate each NRCS office and the data collection time frame. Responses for the NRCS Supplement Questionnaires should use the Conservation Plan on file as the resource for the questions asked.

Enumerators will deliver the following materials to the NRCS office:

- **Aerial photograph** with point location and NRI point identification. Note that a digital version is also available at <http://www.nrisurvey.org/ceapSupplemental/>.
- **NRCS Supplement Questionnaire** to be filled out by NRCS staff.
- **NRCS Name and Address Sheet** containing FSA Common Land Unit information (County FIPS, Tract Number and Land Unit Number), operator name, and respondent name. The FSA Common Land Unit information was obtained from the FSA database in 2010 and may not reflect the current Conservation Plan. Note that the operator and respondent names are confidential information. Do not write names or other operator information on the NRCS Supplement Questionnaire.

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH. By reviewing the aerial photograph, county NRCS personnel will be able to identify the correct records to use in compiling information for the NRCS Supplement Questionnaire. The aerial image (which is used to locate the selected fields and identify the decision makers) is required to complete the NRCS Supplement Questionnaire and ensure that the data is for the same selected field.

CONSERVATION PLAN AND CORRECT NAME. The name on the Conservation Plan may or may not be the same as the respondent on the NRCS Name and Address Sheet. This can occur when a field with an existing Conservation Plan is rented or leased to someone after a Conservation Plan was developed and/or implemented under another operator or owner. The NRCS Supplement Questionnaire must be completed for the field in question regardless of who is currently operating the field.

COMPLETING THE NRCS SUPPLEMENT

Notes

Notes may provide important information. General notes should be written on page 2 of the NRCS Supplemental Questionnaire. Specific notes should be recorded near the item to which they pertain.

Identifying Information (page 2)

Each NRCS Supplement will have a unique identification number (CEAP ID). The CEAP ID is specific to an NRI point that originated from NRCS in the 2011 sample. This information is used by NASS to link the operator questionnaire with the correct NRCS questionnaire during the key entry process and is not related to the data collection process. No editing should be done for this information.

General notes should be written on page 2.

Conservation Plan Reference (page 3)

Implementation of conservation programs has resulted in cooperation between the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and NRCS. This cooperative effort extends to a record keeping system that crosses Agencies. Official records for Conservation Plans are maintained at the local NRCS office.

The Conservation Plan references will include the County FIPS, Tract Number and Land Unit Number (FSA Field Number) that are used by both Agencies for the official documentation.

Identify the Conservation Plan for the field where the NRI-CEAP point is located

The NRI-CEAP survey is conducted for a set of NRI points. NRI point identification (i.e., state, county, segment, and point) and aerial photos marked with the NRI point must be used to identify the Conservation Plan on file for the field where the sample point is located.

An aerial photograph with point location and NRI point identification will be included in the materials delivered by the enumerator. The aerial photograph can also be viewed on the CEAP Supplemental Survey web application available at <http://www.nrisurvey.org/ceapSupplemental/>. The web application displays the aerial photo with the location, field delineation, and provides the state, county, segment and point identification. Links within the application include: (1) Google Earth image with the marked location and street view near the site; and (2) a county map that displays all CEAP sample sites. Contact Roni Lessard (vlessard@iastate.edu) to obtain the password for the web application.

Verify/Enter the FIPS code, tract number and land unit number (page 3)

Verify/enter the correct County FIPS, Tract Number and Land Unit Number (FSA Field Number) in the appropriate boxes. If incorrect information was written there, cross it out and enter the

correct identification. The correct information must be obtained from the Conservation Plan in the local NRCS office. Note that the 2010 version of the County FIPS, Tract Number and Land Unit Number displayed in the CEAP Supplemental Survey web application and on the NRCS Name and Address Sheet may no longer be current.

Enter contract numbers (page 3)

All contract numbers associated with the Conservation Plan should be recorded in the boxes reserved for Contract Number(s). The contracts listed should include those eligible for federal conservation program money.

Item 1: Conservation Plan for NRI Point (page 3)

Identify if a Conservation Plan exists for the selected field **AND** if that plan is at the NRCS office. The Conservation Plan is specific for the selected field.

1. Determine if the selected field containing the NRI point has a Conservation Plan.

Enter "1" for "YES", and continue. If "NO", enter "3" and conclude the interview.

If a Conservation Plan is on file in the NRCS office, determine if the name on the current plan is the person verified as the current operator of the selected field.

In some instances the owner of the property may have implemented some structural conservation practices, discontinued operating the property but leased it out to another individual. The conservation practices may still be in place and may be considered as part of the lease agreement. The current operator may not be receiving the incentive payments, but benefits from conservation practices that were put into place.

1a. If Item 1 = YES, then ask: Is the Conservation Plan for the current operator of the selected field.

If "YES", enter "1" and continue. If "NO", leave blank and continue.

If a Conservation Plan is on file in the NRCS office, determine if the name on the current plan is the person verified as the current land owner of the selected field.

A Conservation Plan may have been developed for the selected field by a previous owner of the property. The current owner may not have implemented the original plan but the plan stayed with the property and may or may not reflect the new owner.

1b. If Item 1b = YES, then ask: Is the Conservation Plan for the current land owner of the selected field.

If "YES", enter "1" and continue. If "NO", leave blank and continue.

Item 2: Program(s) Associated with the Conservation Plan (page 4)

Identify the program(s) that are associated with the Conservation Plan. More than one program could be associated with the producer's Conservation Plan.

If "YES", then enter a "1" for all programs associated with the plan.

For each program(s) associated with the Conservation Plan, record the most recent year in which the Conservation Plan was approved. The date of approval is considered a critical element and must be completed. If you do not know the year approved, write "Don't know" on the margin outside the box.

If "YES", then enter the most recent year (yyyy) that the program was approved for the selected field.

Item 2 includes a list of programs commonly associated with Conservation Plans. Options are available to write in other Federal, State or Non-governmental programs. Please indicate the sponsor and name of the programs on the appropriate line. A list of other programs identified in previous years can be found on pages 11 and 12 of the NRCS Supplement.

Other Federal Programs

If any other Federal programs that are associated with the producers Conservation Plan, please identify the Federal Program. Two new federal programs used in Chesapeake Bay are:

- CBWI Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative
- CSP Conservation Stewardship Program

These programs may be written in 2.o. and 2.p. (*See NRCS Supplement, Page 13 for previous identified Other Federal Programs.*)

State or County Programs

If any State or county program(s) associated with their Conservation Plan, please identify the State or county program(s). These programs may be written in 2.q. and 2.r. (*See NRCS Supplement, Page 14 for previous identified Other State or County Programs.*)

Non-governmental Programs

If any non-governmental program is associated with the producer's Conservation Plan, identify the program. (*See NRCS Supplement, Page 14 for previous identified Other Non-governmental Programs.*)

Item 3: Resource Concerns Addressed by Conservation Plan (page 5)

Item 3 is used to identify those resource concerns that are targeted by the Conservation Plans that have been identified for the selected point. Identifying the most prevalent concerns provides a measure of the effectiveness of the programs in place and those areas that may need additional resources applied either through research or public awareness.

Common natural resource concern(s) that a Conservation Plan may address includes:

1 -Soil erosion caused by wind, 2 -Soil erosion caused by rainfall or runoff, 3 -Animal waste management, 4 -Water quality protection (leaching and runoff of nutrients and pesticides, 5 - Water conservation,

6 -Wildlife habitat enhancement, 7 -Soil quality, including salinity concerns 8 -Air quality 9 - Drainage 10 -Forage for livestock 11 -Hayland management 12 - Other, identify 13 –Don't know.

Enter a "1" for each resource concern addressed in the Conservation Plan. For "other", please identify the concern and do not code the office use box.

Item 4: Principle Resource Concern Addressed by Conservation Plan (page 5)

Item 4 is considered a critical element and MUST be completed. Item 4 identifies the MAJOR resource concern that is addressed in each Conservation Plan. Select from the concerns that are identified as being included in the Conservation Plan (from above: codes 1 through 12).

Identify the most important resource in Item 3 and record the corresponding code as the response.

If only one code is identified in Item 3, then leave Item 4 blank. By default, the single resource concern identified becomes the principle concern.

Item 5: Wetland Designation (page 5)

Wetlands are areas where the normal condition of the soil is wet enough for a prolonged period to support the continued growth of the kinds of plants that prefer wet soil conditions. For the purposes of this survey Prior Converted (PC) and Farmed Wetlands (FW) are not considered wetlands. They are a part of the NRI cropland base and managed for active crop production.

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) would have evaluated the selected field and notified the operator of its classification as a wetland if the operator had requested any kind of federal program benefits for the selected field.

Enter a "1" if any part of this field is identified as meeting the criteria for a wetland. If "NO", then leave blank and continue.

Item 6: NRCS Classification of Highly Erodible Land (page 5)

Whether a field is classified as Highly Erodible depends on rainfall, the potential for soil erosion, and the length and slope of the field. NRCS uses these characteristics and other information to classify fields as Highly Erodible or not.

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) would have evaluated the selected field and notified the operator of its classification if the operator had requested any kind of federal program benefits for the selected field.

Enter a "1" if any part of this field is identified as Highly Erodible Land (HEL). If "NO", then leave blank and continue.

Item 7: Annual Management Practices in Conservation Plan (page 6)

Identify the annual management practice(s) included in the Conservation Plan that apply to the selected field. The annual practices and practice codes are identified above Item 7.

Column 1: List all the annual practices that apply.

Column 2. Enter the corresponding NRCS practice codes.

Column 3. For each crop year, indicate if the practice was used. Enter the appropriate code. (YES=1, DON'T KNOW=2, or NO=3).

Column 4. If the practice was applied to meet the mitigation requirements of the Pest Management Standard (Code 595), enter "1" for "YES". Otherwise leave blank.

Item 7a: Pest Management (Practice Code 595) (page 7)

If a Pest Management Practice (Code 595) is identified in Item 7 as an annual management practice in the Conservation Plan, then ask the questions concerning the objective(s) of the pest management plan.

If Code 595 (Pest Management) is identified in Item 7, check the "YES" box and ask 7a. (i). Otherwise, check the "NO" box and go to Item 7b.

If Item 7a(i) is "YES", enter "1" and go to Item 7b and skip (2), (3), and (4).

If Item 7a(ii) is "YES", enter "1" and continue. If "NO", enter a dash and continue.

If Item 7a(iii) is "YES", enter "1" and continue. If "NO", enter a dash and continue.

If Item 7a(iv) is "YES", enter "1" and continue. If "NO", enter a dash and continue.

Item 7b: Nutrient Management (Practice Code 590) (page 7)

If a Nutrient Management Practice (Code 590) is identified in Item 7 as an annual management practice in the Conservation Plan, then ask the questions concerning the objective(s) of the nutrient management plan.

If Code 590 (Nutrient Management) identified in Item 7, check the "YES" box and ask 7b. (i) through (iv). Otherwise, go to Item 8.

If Item 7b(i) is "YES", enter "1" and continue. If "NO", enter a dash and continue.

If Item 7b(ii) is “YES”, enter “1” and continue. If “NO”, enter a dash and continue.

If Item 7b(iii) is “YES”, enter “1” and continue. If “NO”, enter a dash and continue.

If Item 7b(iv) is “YES”, enter “1” and continue. If “NO”, enter a dash and continue.

Item 8: Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan on File? (page 7)

Detailed livestock information is not collected on the questionnaire but if the operator has a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) on file with NRCS, please complete Item 8.

If a comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP) is on file, check the “YES” box and enter “1”. Otherwise, check the “NO” box and enter 3 for “NO”.

Item 9: Structural Conservation Practices (page 8)

Item 9 is designed to capture structural practices that have been recommended for the selected field as part of the Conservation Plan that was developed for the selected field.

A listing of NRCS structural conservation practices is included in the NRCS Supplement (pages 9-12) as a ready reference to complete Item 9. The listing includes the practice name, practice number, and the units in which the practice is reported and is sorted in alphabetic practice name order. Any structural practices not on the list should be written in and identified with the corresponding NRCS practice code. If this occurs include detailed notes explaining the practice being used.

From the Conservation Plan for the selected field, record the structural Conservation practices which are applied to the sampled field.

Column 1: Structural Practice Name

Column 1: List all the structural practices that apply.

Record the name of the structural practice(s) in the sampled field. If a structural practice is not listed on the listing, record the name of the practice as it appears in the Conservation Plan.

Column 2: Structural Practice Code

Column 2. Enter the corresponding NRCS structural practice code(s).

Record the practice number for the structural practice(s). Some practices may have letters in them. For example, a cross wind ridge is practice code 589A. Record the practice in column 2 as “589A”. If a structural practice number is not listed on the listing, record the practice number as it appears in the Conservation Plan.

Column 3: Structural Practice Units

Column 3. For each structural practice, indicate the units used to represent the practice in the plan. Enter the appropriate code. (1 = linear feet, 2 = acres, or 3 = number).

Record the unit of measure that the structural practice is measured in.

Unit codes are:

Column 4: Quantity of Structural Practice Installed

Column 4. For each structural practice, enter the quantity of the structural practice installed in the field.

Record the quantity of the structural practice installed in the sampled field. Record all responses to the nearest tenth. For example, if the sampled field has 2 wildlife watering facilities (code 648), record "2.0" in Column 4.

Column 5: Most Recent Year Structural Practice Installed

Column 5. For each structural practice, indicate the most recent year installed or applied.

Record the most recent year in which the structural practice listed in Column 1 was installed in the sampled field.

Column 6: Pest Management Mitigation requirements

Column 6. If the structural practice was applied to meet the mitigation requirements of the Pest Management Standard (Code 595), enter "1" for "YES". Otherwise leave blank.

If the practice was applied to meet the mitigation requirements of the Pest Management Standard (Code 595), enter "1" for ""YES"". Otherwise leave blank.

ADMINISTRATIVE (page 16)

NRCS Contact Name Include the name or names of the personnel in the NRCS county office that assisted in obtaining the data for the NRCS Supplement.

Enumerator Name Include the name of the enumerator who contacted the NRCS county office to obtain data for the NRCS Supplement.