



info

An Iowa field puts contour stripcropping and alternating bands of corn and alfalfa into action.

# What is the Natural Resources Conservation Service?

NRCS provides America’s farmers and ranchers with financial and technical assistance to voluntarily put conservation on the ground, not only helping the environment but agricultural operations, too.

## THE AGENCY

Seventy percent of our nation’s land is privately owned. Therefore, the fate of America’s natural resources – soil, water, air, plants and animals – rests in the hands of private landowners.

USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, or NRCS, works closely with these landowners through voluntary incentive-based conservation to ensure private lands are productive, economically profitable, and more resilient to environmental challenges. Created to address the environmental devastation of the Dust Bowl, America made a historic commitment to the stewardship of natural resources.

With 11,000 professionals in nearly every county across the country and an annual budget in excess of \$4 billion, NRCS has worked over the past 75 years

to ensure productive lands co-exist with a healthy environment.

Our expertise across scientific and technical disciplines enables us to provide landowners with conservation solutions that are science-based, economical and resilient.

We pride ourselves in being on-the-ground and closely connected with the people and communities we serve.

From soil biologists to geologists and engineers, our experts work with landowners in the field to develop conservation plans, create and restore wetlands and wildlife habitat, ensure healthy and productive soils and manage animal and nutrient waste.

We are committed to “helping people help the land” and ensuring that cleaner air and water are enjoyed now and for generations to come.

**+  
RUN  
DOWN**

## Enrolled acreage

In NRCS programs by year

- 1** 24.8 million (2013)
- 2** 33.2 million (2012)
- 3** 26.8 million (2011)
- 4** 38 million (2010)
- 5** 12.9 million (2009)

## BY THE NUMBERS

**158,000+**

Contracts in progress with landowners participating in NRCS programs.

**6,000 sq mi**

Of sage grouse habitat was restored from 2010 to 2013 by landowners with help from NRCS.

**\$3.5B**



Value that rice farms in the United States provide in ecological services as wetlands.

Source: USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Ducks Unlimited

LEADERSHIP

**Profile: NRCS Chief Jason Weller**

Jason Weller was appointed NRCS chief in July 2013 but was already leading the agency since December 2012 as acting director. As chief, he oversees programs that protect the environment, preserve our natural resources and improve agricultural sustainability through voluntary, private-lands conservation. He leads a staff of 11,500 employees across the country and manages a budget of about \$4 billion.

Prior to joining NRCS, Weller served as a staff member for the U.S. House of Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture where he provided oversight and crafted bills to fund USDA programs and activities. He also served on the U.S. House Budget Committee where he helped construct the annual congressional budget for agriculture, environment and energy programs. Jason also worked with White House Office of Management and Budget where he assisted with the development and implementation of the budget for USDA conservation programs.

**For more on Jason Weller and NRCS' leadership, visit [www.nrcs.usda.gov/about](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/about).**



UP TO DATE



**THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM, or EQIP,** provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits such as improved water and air quality, conserved ground and surface water, reduced soil erosion and sedimentation or improved or created wildlife habitat.



**THE REGIONAL CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM, or RCPP,** promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements.



**THE AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAM, or ACEP,** consolidates three former programs – the Wetlands Reserve Program, Grassland Reserve Program, and Farm and Ranch Land Protection Program. It provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits.

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