

# 10-Minute Supervisor Trainings

Kentucky Soil and Water Conservation Commission

## OCTOBER 2012

## **KY Conservation Partnership Survey**

The Kentucky Conservation Partnership Survey was sent out in August to get information from producers, supervisors, district and NRCS employees, partner organizations, government officials and others view on services provided. 214 surveys were received. The Partnership wanted to share the data that was collected across the state with this 10-minute training and show their appreciation to those who took the time to share their views on conservation in Kentucky.

### Question 1: Which category best describes you?

KY Agriculture Producer-36.4%

Conservation District Supervisor-33.6%

Conservation District Employee-28.0%

NRCS Employee-4.2%

Partner Organization-2.8%

Other-1.9%

Local Government Official-0.0%

Question 2: Select the top 3 services you depend on from NRCS and the local conservation district?

- Cost Share Funding (State Cost Share, EQIP, other Farm Bill programs)-84.1%
- Conservation Technical Assistance (expertise in agriculture advice)-68.2%
- Conservation Planning-53.8%
- Conservation Education-32.2%
- Conservation Program Participation Assistance (KY Ag. District program, PACE, equipment loan, etc)-28.5%
- Equipment Rental-17.3%

Question 3: List 3 ways the Conservation District could increase operating efficiency and improve the impact on conserving soil, water and related natural resources. (These answers or some form of them came up many times on the 214 surveys)

- Education-This concerned educating youth and adults alike in conservation and educating district employees.
- Equipment-This included district owned equipment for rental purposes and computer equipment in district offices.
- Staffing-This included staffing in district offices as well as District Conservationists, adding more technicians and having staff available in the office.
- Advertising of current services-This included more paid advertising in local papers about programs, websites, supervisors sharing information at local events and having educational meetings for landowners on programs.
- Streamlining-This involved streamlining of the application process for both state and federal programs, having on-line sign-ups, district working closer with NRCS, and improving office automation.

**Question 4**: Soil and Water districts have proven that they can "do more with less", but what would happen if your district was given the opportunity to "do more with more"? If your district had an additional \$30,000 how would it be spent to provide better service to the citizens of your community?

- Local Cost Share-Answers included pasture renovation, waterways, stream bank stabilization, wildlife habitat, wells, livestock waterers, diversification, etc.
- Equipment-This would include any specialized equipment for landowners who cannot afford to buy the equipment themselves. Suggestions were also made that more than one district to go together to afford the equipment.
- Hiring Technicians-Many see the need for technical assistance locally to assist with local and state cost share practices.
- Education- Answers included educational programs for youth and adults, seminars on practices, displays at more events, more educational programs, scholarships, urban education, field days, hiring educational employee, advertising, etc.

**Question 5:** How many times have you visited the local conservation district office for assistance in the past year?

0 times-8.4%

6-10 times-17.3%

• 1-5 times-43.5%

11 plus times- 30.8%

Question 6: How many times has the NRCS staff visited your farm in the last year?

• 0 times- 41.1%

6-10 times-5.1%

• 1-5 times- 51.4%

11 plus times-2.3%

Question 7: How far are you willing to drive to your local district office?

Less than 15 miles one way-59.8%

50-74 miles one way-0.9%

16-25 miles one way-29.9%

Over 75 miles one way-0.0%

25-49 miles one way-3.7%

I prefer the staff to meet me on my farm-5.6%

Question 8: How often do you use a computer to access USDA computer program information?

0 times-42.5%

6-10 times-8.4%

1-5 times-29.4%

11 plus times-19.6%

Question 9: Prioritize these resource concerns from 1-11 (1= most important to you and your community). Number is the average rating.

- Clean Drinking Water-1.71
- · Healthy Soil (able to support vegetation and crops)-3.34
- · Clean Air- 4.21
- Stable Soil (little to no erosion)-4.51
- Healthy Pastures-5.23
- Healthy Livestock-5.23
- Clean Recreational Waters (fishing, boating, swimming)-6.82
- Renewable energy-7.58
- Healthy forests (for wildlife)-8.09
- Healthy Forests (for timber production)-8.48
- Other-10.79 (included education, safe food, keeping NRCS and district together, renewable fuel, community awareness, pollution prevention, recycling, planting of more trees, and water supply.

#### **DISSCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. What can you, as district supervisors in your local office, do to address the operating efficiency and improve the impact on conserving soil, water and other natural resources?
- 2. What ideas did you see in this survey that could be implemented in your district?
- 3. In what ways could two districts work together to increase efficiency?
- 4. Do you see the need to reevaluate how you communicate or educate the public? Why?
- 5. What is your district's prioritization of resource concerns?