

NEWS RELEASE
For immediate release

*Partnership of Conservation Organizations Launches Needed Agricultural
Water Quality Practice Assessment*

WASHINGTON, D.C. Jan. 23, 2018): A partnership to assess agricultural practices and strategies to further improve water quality in the U.S. was launched today by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Sand County Foundation, the Noble Research Institute and Farm Foundation.

The National Agricultural Water Quality Practice Assessment seeks to better understand how effective specific agricultural management practices are at improving water quality.

The year-long project will culminate in a comprehensive report identifying current baseline knowledge about managing agricultural lands to improve conservation outcomes. The report will also identify critical gaps in knowledge, as well as strategies to advance agricultural conservation adoption and effectiveness. A key goal of the assessment is to help agricultural producers identify effective management practices that have the potential to yield tangible environmental results while supporting the economic viability of farms.

"Billions of dollars have been spent assessing this issue over the past 25 years. Yet we don't have a sufficient understanding of the effectiveness and costs of on-farm conservation practices," said Kevin McAleese, Sand County Foundation President and CEO.

"Data generated from this assessment will provided researchers and agricultural producers with the critical knowledge to make informed decisions," said Bill Buckner, President and CEO of the Noble Research Institute. "Informed decisions are better decisions which result in improved practices, better conservation and quality land stewardship."

"Farmers and ranchers want practices that support stewardship of water and land resources, as well as the economic viability of their respective operations," noted Farm Foundation President Constance Cullman.

The assessment will be conducted in collaboration with NRCS to advance nationwide farm conservation programs. Funders of the National Water Quality Practice Assessment project include USDA NRCS, The Fertilizer Institute, The McKnight Foundation, and The Ida and Robert Gordon Family Foundation..

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USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service provides America's farmers and ranchers with financial and technical assistance to voluntarily put conservation on the ground, not only to help the environment but agricultural operators too.



Sand County Foundation inspires and enables private landowners to ethically manage the natural resources in their care so future generations have clean and abundant water, healthy soil to support the world's growing food demands, suitable habitat for wildlife and opportunities for outdoor recreation.



Noble Research Institute's mission is to deliver solutions to great agricultural challenges. Its vision is to be the preeminent agricultural research institute, a trusted source of transformational knowledge and products, education and technology to advance agriculture and land stewardship.



Farm Foundation is an agricultural policy institute cultivating dynamic non-partisan collaboration to meet society's needs for food, fiber, feed and energy. Since 1933, the Farm Foundation has connected leaders in farming, business, academia, organizations and government through proactive, rigorous debate and objective issue analysis.



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