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# NRCS Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations Survey

Interviewer's Manual  
Version 3: Grazing Practices

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# Chapter 1: NRCS Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations

## Background

The Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations Survey (CPAMS) is a reimbursable survey that the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has contracted the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to collect. A pilot study, of all four versions, was conducted in 2021. The information collected during the pilot survey conducted in Nebraska, Oregon, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania was used to make decisions going forward for a larger, national survey conducted in 2022 and 2024.

There are four different questionnaire versions for the CPAMS:

- Version 1 – Crop Practices (2022)
- Version 2 – Confined Livestock Practices (2022)
- Version 3 – Grazing Practices (2024)
- Version 4 – Forestry Practices (2024)

The questionnaires are designed to obtain information about producer adoption of various conservation practices, past and present, participation in technical and financial assistance programs, and motivations for practice adoption or non-adoption (e.g., on-farm conservation, financial return, producer time and effort, and off-farm environmental benefits). The question format between all the versions is very similar, though the specific questions and practices are different for each version. There are some classification and demographic questions that are similar across versions to facilitate comparisons between versions.

## Employer

You are an employee of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA). Work on this survey is covered by a cooperative agreement between NASDA and NASS. Introduce yourself as a NASDA employee working for the (your State) Field Office of the USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service.

## Responsibility

Accurate information collected directly from farmers and ranchers by trained interviewers provides the best possible information. When you contact survey respondents, it is your responsibility to:

- obtain cooperation from selected operations,
- remind respondents of the confidential nature of the data,
- explain the uses of the data collected,
- collect quality data on survey items.

Once you have completed data collection, you are responsible for returning all completed questionnaires to your RFO in a timely manner and before the survey due date. Keep in mind the confidential nature of the data you have collected. Protect the data and the respondent's personal information with utmost care and respect.

## Survey Results

There will be published highlights from the CPAMS survey in October 2024. The data collected will be for research and to inform NRCS. Most operations will be using only a subset of the practices asked about in each questionnaire version. In fact, there will be some practices that are in use on only a handful of operations, making it important that we collect as many surveys as possible.

## Chapter 2 – Terms and Definitions

**AUM** – Animal Unit Month, or the amount of forage required by an animal unit for one month. An animal unit is generally one mature cow of approximately 1,000 pounds and a calf as old as 6 months, or their equivalent. Animal unit equivalents vary somewhat according to kind and size of animals.

**Breeding Livestock** – Livestock used for the purpose of breeding and reproduction.

**Breeding Sire** – A male animal (e.g., bull, ram) used for breeding purposes.

**Brush** – Woody plants (e.g., shrubs, trees, cacti) including invasive, noxious, or undesirable plants.

**Conservation Stewardship Program** - The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) helps producers build on their existing conservation efforts by providing technical and financial assistance to attain higher stewardship levels in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner. For example, if you have a grazing plan, you may decide to try an enhancement to incorporate wildlife refuge areas. Payments are annual to support ongoing improvements on the operation, as opposed to other programs that typically provide financial assistance for specific practices when the practice is completed.

**Financial Assistance** – A payment or grant that helps defray the cost of installing or implementing conservation practices.

**Grazing Land** – Includes permanent pasture, rangeland, and woodland pastured.

**Pasture** – Land composed of forage plants used primarily for livestock production. Pastures receive periodic renovation and cultural treatments, such as tillage, fertilization, mowing, weed control, and may be irrigated. Pastures are not in rotation with crops.

**Rangeland** – Land where plant cover is primarily native grasses, some introduced grasses (such as crested wheatgrass), grass-like plants, forbs, or shrubs suitable for grazing. Range land may include natural grasslands, savannas, shrublands, tundra, alpine communities, marshes and meadows.

**Stocker/Feeder** – Stockers are livestock that are being raised to be slaughtered once they have reached a mature weight.

**Technical Assistance** – Direct consultation with the farmer, rancher, or landowner that may include developing a conservation plan for the operation or the planning, design, and layout for structures (such as fences and livestock water facilities in pastures) and management practices (such as grazing management, controlled burning, or brush and weed control). Technical assistance does not include community workshops, internet resources, farm shows and conventions, and information not directly specific to your operation.

**Weed** – non-woody plants (e.g., grasses, herbs) that are undesirable in a particular situation or location.

## Chapter 3 – Enumerator Procedures

### Questionnaire

The Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations Survey (CPAMS) has 4 different questionnaire versions. This manual contains information for version 3, grazing practices. The questionnaire was developed in cooperation with the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and is directed at finding out what conservation practices are currently being used or have been used in the past, whether technical or financial assistance was received, why operators choose to adopt the practice, and why they may have chosen to continue, expand, or discontinue the practice.

### Method of Interviewing

The Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations Survey may be collected by mail, phone (CATI), fax, internet, personal phone interview by Computer Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI), or in-person interview. All sampled operations receive a copy of the questionnaire through the mail, with telephone follow-up by field enumerators via CAPI and associated Data Collection Centers (DCCs). Telephone enumerators at the DCCs will utilize the Blaise CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) Instrument, which automatically delivers forms and manages call backs and appointments.

All respondents will receive a pressure sealed mailer with their individual survey code and AgCounts online reporting instructions. Any operations not responding to that mailer will receive a letter and a copy of the questionnaire in the mail. A second letter and questionnaire will be sent to respondents that have not responded approximately 3 weeks later. The respondent may choose to complete and return either questionnaire by mail or complete the questionnaire online at [agcounts.usda.gov](http://agcounts.usda.gov). If the operation reports data by either of these methods, they will become ineligible for calling through CATI or CAPI.

Some operations will be held for Regional Field Office enumeration and will be collected by telephone, mail, fax, or field phone interview.

### Burden Statement

Federal regulations require that all questionnaires used by agencies of the Federal government provide a burden statement – an estimate of the average time required to complete the questionnaire. This regulation is administered by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), which has the duty of approving and overseeing all government data collection efforts. The public may respond to the Office of Management and Budget regarding any aspect of a survey.

The burden statement appears on the front page of each version of the CPAMS Questionnaire. The average time indicated on the burden statement represents the average completion time estimated for completion. If respondents ask, "How long will this take?" note the burden statement average time requirement and never directly contradict it. However, you may provide additional information, such as, "The official average for this survey is 60 minutes, but the interviews I have been doing in this area are averaging around 30 - 45 minutes."

## SAMPLE BURDEN STATEMENT

The information you provide will be used for statistical purposes only. Your responses will be kept confidential and any person who willfully discloses ANY identifiable information about you or your operation is subjected to a jail term, a fine or both. This survey is conducted in accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2018. Title III of Pub. L. No. 115-435, codified in 44 U.S.C. Ch.35 and other applicable Federal Laws. For more information on how we protect your information please visit: <https://www.nass.usda.gov/confidentiality>. Response is voluntary.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number is 0535-0272. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 60 minutes per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

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### Confidentiality

Reports received from individual operations remain confidential and are used for NRCS research and will be published as highlights using the information collected during the CPAMS.

It is your responsibility to inform the respondent that this is a voluntary survey and assure them their report is confidential. A respondent has the right to know under what authority the information is being collected, the purpose for the information collected, and how information about their operation will be used. See your NASDA handbook for additional information regarding confidentiality.

### Completing the Interview

The primary operator for the targeted operation, or a partner, should be your first point of contact. The person on the operation who is most familiar with conservation practices will be best able to provide the information that is being asked in the CPAMS questionnaire.

Encourage respondents to have any records of conservation contracts or easements on hand, or other records that involve the use of conservation practices such as written plans. Using records makes for more reliable reporting.

Make sure you are familiar with and understand the questionnaire. Review the survey letter, survey instructions, and other materials. Prepare an introduction and be prepared to answer questions about the survey purpose, uses of the data, and items on the questionnaire.

Ask questions in the order they appear on the questionnaire. Do not skip questions unless instructions printed on the questionnaire allow you to do so. Read statements and questions fully and exactly as written.

Following are examples of the type of instructions that you may find on the questionnaire.



## Enumerator Instructions

Enumerator instructions may be included with some questions. Enumerator instructions are provided to you so that you will complete the questionnaire correctly. Enumerator instructions are enclosed in square brackets. They should not be read to the respondent.

Example:

[Verify name and mailing address of this operation. Make any corrections necessary (including the correct operation name) on the label and continue.]

### “Include” and “Exclude” Statements

“Include” and “exclude” statements appear with many questions. “Include” and “exclude” statements are provided to help you and the respondent clarify the meaning of the question. Read the “include/exclude” statements so that the meaning of the question is clear.

### “Skip” Instructions

Sometimes you may encounter questions which instruct you to skip a question or section based on a particular response. Follow the “skip” instructions when they appear with questions. If the interview is being completed via CATI or CAPI, the instrument is programmed to automatically “skip” when appropriate.

#### Example:

Note that depending on the response (‘Yes’ or ‘No’), you may continue or skip to the next question or next section.

201  Yes - Go to Item 2

3  No - Complete Items 1a and 1b below, then go to Section 4 - Nutrient Management on page 9

Sometimes you will need to probe to get an adequate answer to a question, for example, when the answer isn’t precise enough or if you think the respondent didn’t understand the question. Probing is important to verify unusual data or correct misreported data. Be careful that you don’t appear to be questioning or challenging the respondent’s answers, but clarifying an answer given.

## Reference Dates

The CPAMS questionnaire asks about different reference periods such as previous year, within the last 15 years, or at any time in the past. Be sure to read the questions carefully and only refer to the date referenced for each question.

## Important Reminders

As you complete the questionnaire:

Make good notes. This is especially important when you find unusual situations.

Record your answers in whole numbers (no decimals) and pay attention to if the question is asking for acres or percentages.

## Call Back Procedures

Plan each phone call attempt for a different time of day or early evening. Use the following instructions as a guide.

### First Attempt

If the operator or partner is not present, but is expected shortly, make an appointment to call back later or, if interviewing in person, wait for the interview. It is very important for you to keep the appointment or to call back if it cannot be kept.

If the operator or partner will not be available until after the survey is over, interview a knowledgeable person such as a spouse, son, daughter, or hired person. Try to interview the person most knowledgeable about the farming operation.

### Follow-up Attempts

If a follow-up call is required after the first attempt, try again to interview the operator or partner. If they are still unavailable, set up an appointment if possible.

### Final Attempt

If the operation is assigned for CATI or CAPI enumeration, your supervisor will determine the number of attempts for call-backs.

## Refusals

There are always respondents reluctant to provide information and some will refuse completely. When a refusal occurs, note the reason why the operator refused. If possible, try to determine if the operation is still in business and what commodities (crops, livestock, etc.) are produced. Do not become discouraged when you get a refusal. On the next interview, continue to greet the operator with an easy, friendly manner.

## Supervision

All questions regarding data collection should be directed to your NASDA supervisor. Contact your supervisor with questions or problems as soon as they arise. Your supervisor or Regional Field Office may contact some of your respondents after you interview them as part of a Quality Check.

## Materials

Materials used in the Conservation Practice Adoption Motivations Survey are listed below. Your supervisor is responsible for furnishing all necessary materials. Notify your supervisor if you are running low on supplies. All manuals, letters, questionnaires will be available as electronic copies.

### All Enumerators

- Interviewer's Manual
- Blank questionnaires
- Black lead pencils
- Copy of Survey Letter
- Copy of Pressure Sealed Mailer with EDR Instructions

### Field Enumerators

- CAPI iPad
- NASDA Identification Card
- Motor Vehicle Accident Report Kit
- NASDA Employee Handbook

## Survey Response Rate

A minimum 80% response rate is required by OMB and is expected from all Regional Field Offices.

## Feedback

Everyone involved in the survey is encouraged to recommend changes to clarify or improve survey materials and procedures. Forward all recommendations to the CPAMS administrator in your Regional Field Office, who will forward them to the Survey Administrator in HQ. This will be very important due to the nature of the survey and feedback is greatly welcomed.

## Chapter 4 – Operation Identification and Screening

### Operation Identification – Name and Address Labels

#### Operator

The person responsible for the day-to-day decisions for the land operated is considered the operator and is listed on the label. The operator could be the owner, hired manager, cash tenant, or share tenant. If land is rented or worked on shares, the tenant or renter is the operator.

#### Farm Name

A farming operation may or may not have a farm name listed on the label. If the farm does not have a farm name, the operation will be listed under an individual operator. If the respondent indicates the operation has a farm or ranch name, ask the respondent if this name should appear on the label. This will help the Regional Field Office know whether to update the label for future surveys and can be checked against the List Sampling Frame to identify potential duplication.

Names such as "The Old Smith Place," "Jones Farm," etc., should not be included if they are used only to identify different parcels of land in the respondent's operation. The farm or ranch should do business and be known by the operation name.

#### Name and Address Labels

Here is an example of a questionnaire name and address label. The format of the label in your Regional Field Office may differ from this example but will contain the same basic information.

BARCO B BA BAR BARCO B BA BARCO B C	
State, POID, Tract, Survey ID numbers	
CASI Respondent Survey Code,	Strata, Sequence #
Operation Name,	District, County
Operator Name,	ODStatus, Supervisor, Enumerator
Address	
City, State, Zip-Zip4	

#### Target Operation

The 'target' of this CPAMS survey is going to be the sampled operation. Regardless of other operating arrangements: partnerships, multiple operations, managed operations, etc., the target will be the operation that is listed on the label and the land (owned and leased) that it operates. The respondent should be the person most involved in the conservation practice decision making. If all operators are equally involved in the conservation practice decisions, then any one of them can respond.

## Operation Target Examples

### Example 1. Individual Target Name on label.

```
BARCO B BA BAR BARCO B BA BARCO B C
10 300123890 01 01 2315 125698 00
SURVEY CODE=10-300123891-GMX78Q 71 10000
                                20 129
DENNIS R. SCOTT                 00 307 359
12345 RIVER RD
OURTOWN DE 12590-4582
```

Operator Information Close

CONSERVATION PRACTICE ADOPTION MOTIVATIONS SURVEY

**POID:** 300348740                      **TRA:** 1    **SUB:** 1    **OP DOM:** 0  
**DCMS:** 210                              **STR:**  
**LABELS:** , , , ,  
**Survey Code:** 4631-75WS-HLJF  
**Operator:** DENNIS R SCOTT  
                 12345 RIVER RD  
                 OURTOWN DE 12590-4582

**Operation:**

In the example above, there is no operation name listed, so the target will be Dennis R. Scott. **You should collect data for Dennis R. Scott's grazing operation.** If Dennis is involved in more than one operation, you should collect data only for the operation for which he is the individual operator.

**Example 2. Combination of Names with Individual Target Name on Label.**

BARCO B BA BAR BARCO B BA BARCO B C  
10 300123890 01 01 2315 125698 00  
SURVEY CODE=10-300123891-GMX78Q 71 10000  
BILL & JOE FORD 20 129  
BILL FORD 00 307 359  
12345 RIVER RD  
OURTOWN DE 12590-4582

Operator Information Close

CONSERVATION PRACTICE ADOPTION MOTIVATIONS SURVEY

**POID:** 300348740                      **TRA:** 1    **SUB:** 1    **OP DOM:** 0  
**DCMS:** 210                              **STR:**

**LABELS:** , , , ,

**Survey Code:** 4631-75WS-HLJF

**Operator:** BILL FORD  
                  12345 RIVER RD  
                  OURTOWN DE 12590-4582

**Operation:** BILL & JOE FORD

In example 2, the operation name is Bill & Joe Ford, the target will be the partnership by the name of Bill & Joe Ford. **You should collect data for the partnership named on the label only.** Bill or Joe may also be involved in a different operation, or even jointly in an operation by a different name, but you will only want to complete the survey for the Bill & Joe Ford partnership.

**Example 3. Operation Name and Target Name on label.**

BARCO B BA BAR BARCO B BA BARCO B C  
10 300123890 01 01 2315 125698 00  
SURVEY CODE=10-300123891-GMX78Q 71 10000  
WINDY ACRES FARM 20 129  
RALPH DEAN 00 307 359  
12345 RIVER RD  
OURTOWN DE 12590-4582

Operator Information Close

CONSERVATION PRACTICE ADOPTION MOTIVATIONS SURVEY

**POID:** 300348740                      **TRA:** 1    **SUB:** 1    **OP DOM:** 0  
**DCMS:** 210                              **STR:**  
**LABELS:** , , , ,  
**Survey Code:** 4631-75WS-HLJF  
**Operator:** RALPH DEAN  
                 12345 RIVER RD  
                 OURTOWN DE 12590-4582  
  
**Operation:** WINDY ACRES FARM

In example 3, the operation name is Windy Acre Farm, so Windy Acres Farm is the target. **You should collect data only for Windy Acres Farm, and no other operations.** The operator, Ralph Dean, may be involved in other operations, but you will want to collect data only for the land operated (owned and leased) by Windy Acres Farm.

# Chapter 5 – Questionnaire

## Face Page and Screening

On the front page, after confirming the address or making updates, use the screener questions to determine whether the operation is in-scope for the survey. The operation is in-scope if it:

- grazed livestock (regardless of ownership) on pasture or grazing land operated by the sampled operation (owned or rented) within the last 10 years.

If the operation meets both conditions, proceed to Section 1. If either of the conditions are not met, ask 1a. to assess the status of the livestock operation, then go to Section 15 on the back page of the questionnaire.

If the operation is not grazing livestock, it may still have other livestock or other types of agricultural production, so make sure to note if they are still operating a farm or ranch. We will not be doing any substitution for the CPAM survey, so if the operation has been turned over to someone else, collect the contact information and then conclude the survey.

## Section 1 – Land Use and Livestock

The purpose of Section 1 is to collect some operational data for all the acres operated in order to classify the operation later for comparison of operations of different sizes and types. This section contains questions about land use, conservation programs, livestock inventories, and organic production.

**Questions 1-2** For land use, there are questions about land owned, rented or leased, along with land rented out to get a total acres operated on December 31, 2023 for both total acres operated and specifically grazing land. Some things to watch:

- Grazing Land on the right is a subset of All Land on the left.

1. On December 31, 2023, how many acres did this operation:	All Land (Acres)	Grazing Land (Acres)
a. Own? .....	901	2800

- For each land category, collect the question for total in operation (left column) and of that how many are grazing (right column).
- How many acres do you own/rent/lease to others (All Land), and then of that how many acres are grazing land.
- Owned land should include all land owned by the operation, not just cropland.
- Land rented or leased, again should include all acres that the operations pays to rent or rents on a share basis or flexible arrangement. This includes any land leased on a short-term basis or AUM basis as of December 31, 2023.
- Land rented to others needs to include any land (owned or leased) that is rented or leased by another operator or operation.
- Calculate a total by following this formula: Owned land + rented land – land rented to others = total land operated on December 31, 2023.



**Questions 3** Of the total grazing land, establish the number of acres irrigated in at least 2 of the last 4 years. Exclude grazed cropland (e.g., crop residue, small grains, abandoned crops) in the acres of irrigated grazing land. The acres reported in item 3 should be less than or equal to the acres reported in item 2.

**Questions 4** Once the total land operated is established you will need to further establish, of the total acres, how many are cropland, woodland not pastured, and other land. The acres reported in question 4 should be accounted for in question 2.

**Question 5** This question establishes the number of cropland acres enrolled in federal long-term land protection programs. The acres reported in question 5 should be less than or equal to the acres reported in item 4a. The intention is to target long-term land protection programs, not short-term incentive programs such as EQIP or CSP.

**Question 6** This question asks about the livestock inventories on the operation on December 31, 2023, or as close an approximation as can be had. The inventories of interest are beef cows, milk cows, ALL other cattle (steers, replacement heifers/heifers that have not calved, calves, bulls, feeder cattle, veal calves, culls, etc.), hogs and pigs, and poultry. Record goats, sheep, and all other livestock (such as horses) not already recorded in item 6f. The purpose of this question is to get context about the overall operation.

**Note:** “other cattle and calves” (item 6c) includes all breeding livestock not recorded in item 6a or 6b such as replacement heifers and bulls.

**Question 7** This question is to find out if the operation produced organic products according to the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) standards or if the operation is in the process of transitioning to the USDA NOP to sell their production as certified organic. Only if the operation has at least some of their production in the USDA NOP they would answer ‘yes’.

## Section 2 – Approach to Conservation

Conservation practices in this section refer to actions adopted to conserve soil, water, and habitat on the operation.

**Question 1** table asks the respondent to classify their agreement with conservation practices.

**Question 2** asks what the respondents' objectives are for considering conservation practices. Multiple practices may be checked.

## Section 3 – Technical Assistance

Technical assistance (See Terms and Definitions in Chapter 2) is available from several different sources. This section is devoted to finding out which sources of technical assistance the operation has used in the past and the operator's opinions about technical assistance. Federal agencies such as NRCS provide technical assistance, but there may be other state or local conservation agencies, university extension services, or even advisors that can be hired.

**Question 1** The respondent may or may not have received technical assistance (TA) in the past. If they have received TA, check 'yes' and ask 1a. If they haven't received TA, skip to 1b. For question 1a, TA from universities (extension services) should be included in the State or local resources. If the respondent is unsure about where a TA source falls in the 3 categories, make a note and it can be researched later.

Regardless of whether the respondent or their operation received or sought out any technical assistance, they should provide their agreement, disagreement, or not applicable with each of the statements in question 1b.

## Section 4 – Herd Composition and Animal Performance Goals

Section 4 asks about the type of livestock grazed, how they are divided among pastures, the ratio of male animals to female, and performance expectations and goals. This section asks specifically about the 3 most common types of grazing livestock: cattle, sheep, and goats. Use the 'other' option for additional grazed animal types such as bison, deer, elk, horses, llamas, alpacas, etc.

**Why collect grazing herd demographics?** This section is included because of a general lack of detailed information about grazing land operations when compared with cropland operations. A better understanding of these operations can inform how USDA carries out conservation programs in partnership with farmers and ranchers.

**Question 1** is a table that asks about the pastures used for grazing in 2023, with the first row asking about the peak number of animals on the operation in 2023. Enter 0 if there were none of the given type of livestock on the operation in 2023. For any livestock where the peak number = 0, skip the remainder of the rows. The second row asks for the number of separate herds grazing land on the operation in 2023.

The third row in the table asks about the number of different pastures used. Each pasture should be defined as a separate containment area where livestock are regularly grazed. This can be land that is owned, rented, or leased on an AUM basis regardless of the length of the lease. Include temporary pastures used in 2023 that may not be grazed in an average year.

The fourth row asks the average number of acres for grazing each herd listed in row two. Example, if in 2023 there were 3 herds grazing a total of 1500 acres, the average number of acres per herd would be 1,500 acres/3 herds or 500.

Rows 5 through 7 are to determine the primary purpose of the livestock being grazed. The sampled operation could be primarily breeding, feeding for slaughter (stockers), or a combination of both. For each type of livestock listed in each of the columns only one of the last three rows should be checked 'yes'. If the respondent says that the operation is a mix of breeding and stockers, then check 'no' for both rows 5 and 6 and check 'yes' to row 7.

**Question 2** is a routing question for movement to question 3 for breeding livestock or 4 for stockers and non-breeding livestock. If the operation is strictly for breeding animals (row 5 in question 1 is 'yes' for all livestock species), you will follow the YES instruction to continue to question 3. If the operation is strictly for feeding stockers (row 6 in question 1 is 'yes' for all livestock species), you will follow the NO instruction to go to question 4 on the next page. If the operation is a combination of breeding livestock and stockers, you will ask both question 3 and 4.

**Question 3** is a table asking about the composition and performance of the breeding livestock on the operation. If the operation does not have a particular type of livestock, leave that column blank. The first row is asking the average weight in pounds of the mature sire (bull, ram, buck, etc.) used for breeding. The second row is asking what the average weight of the breeding females (cows, sheep, does, etc.) used for breeding is in pounds.

The third row is asking about the current breeding crop percentage for 2023, or the ratio of offspring to breeding females. For example: if 100 cows were bred, and there were 90 calves that were born alive, then the breeding crop percentage would be 90%. The fourth row is the desired breeding crop percentage, which could be higher or lower than the current breeding rate.

The fifth row is asking how old on average, in months, were the offspring (calves, lambs, kids, etc.) when weaning occurred. The last row is then going to ask, for the offspring that were weaned (or will be) what was the average weight at weaning in pounds, or what is the expected weaning weight.

**Question 4** is a table that is asking about the stockers that were grazed on the sampled operation in 2023. If the operation does not have a particular type of livestock, leave that column blank. Do not include any animals that were fed in confinement. Stockers are livestock that are being raised to be slaughtered once they have reached a mature weight. If the operation did not have any stockers grazed during 2023, then leave the table blank and move to question 5. Otherwise, report the average weight of the stockers when they were first placed on the operation in the first row. Report the average number of days that the stockers were grazed on the operation in the second row. And in the third you report the average weight of stockers when removed from the operation.

**Question 5** is a table that is asking the respondent to rate the importance of different qualities or factors in deciding to purchase livestock either for breeding or stockers. Each factor should be rated in its importance individually.

**Question 6** is a table that is asking the respondent to rate the importance of different factors when deciding to reduce the size of the herd by removing livestock from the operation.

## Section 5 – Grazing Management

Grazing management is the process of making decisions about the harvest of vegetation with livestock, using a variety of different inputs to place or remove livestock on pastures or grazing acres.

**Question 1** is a series of questions on how they manage the livestock on the sampled operation. Decisions can be about moving livestock, resting pasture, stocking rate decisions, or other management decisions.

**Question 2** defines the properties that are typically found in a grazing plan, and asks if, based on the definition, the respondent has a written grazing plan. If the respondent does have a written grazing plan, make the response to question 2 ‘yes’, and then follow the skip instruction to go to question 3. If the respondent doesn’t have a written plan, respond ‘no’ and ask question 2a.

A grazing plan identifies how you intend to manage the harvest of vegetation with grazing and/or browsing animals. It typically captures the following six items: stocking rates, timing, duration and frequency of grazing, a contingency plan for unforeseen events, and a forage monitoring plan.

Example video: <https://youtu.be/JOiyO31rOis>

Question 2a. asks a series of agreement statements if the operation does not have a written grazing plan. Have the respondent rate their agreement or disagreement with all the statements about why they do not have a written grazing plan.

**Question 3** asks if the written grazing plan has contingency plans for events like drought, fire, or flood.

**Question 4** establishes the first year the respondent used a written grazing plan. Make sure that the year recorded in question 4 is the four-digit year, such as 2005, not just 05. Question 4a. asks what percentage of the total grazing land was covered by the written plan for the first year of use from question 4.

Question 4b is about technical or financial assistance that the respondent may have received in the first year a written grazing management plan was used. If the respondent received technical expertise for planning or implementation that was provided by (or reimbursed by) federal, state, local government, check ‘yes’ for technical assistance. If the respondent received financial assistance, from any source, to help defray the cost of writing or implementing the grazing management plan, check ‘yes’ for financial assistance.

Respondents who check ‘yes’ for financial assistance should also provide the number of acres covered by the plan where financial assistance was received and the percentage of actual cost covered by financial assistance. If no financial assistance was received, the last two columns of the table should be left blank. Question 4b.i. asks what percentage of financial assistance was from a federal source such as NRCS. If all financial assistance was from a non-federal source (a state or local government, for example), enter a 0 for the percent and move to question 4c. If no financial assistance was received, leave 4b.i blank.

Question 4c asks the respondent to assess the importance a series of conservation, financial, and other factors when deciding to use a written grazing plan for the first time.

**Question 5** asks whether the respondent expanded the percent of grazing land covered by the written grazing plan since the first year it was used. An operation may have tried out the practice in a small area before deciding to use it on additional pastures or operation wide. If the respondent has expanded the written grazing plan to cover a larger percent of total grazing land, check ‘yes’ and ask question 5a

through 5b. If the operator never expanded use of the grazing plan, answer 'no' and follow the skip logic to question 6.

Question 5a asks for information on technical and financial assistance received for expanding the percent of grazing land managed according to a written grazing plan. Assistance could be for developing or implementing the written grazing plan after the initial year established in question 4. If no financial assistance was received, then the last two columns of the table should be left blank. Question 5a.i. asks what percentage of financial assistance was from a federal source such as NRCS. If all financial assistance was from non-federal sources, enter a 0 for the percent and move to question 5b. If no financial assistance was received, leave 5a.i blank.

Question 5b. asks the respondent to rate the importance of a series of conservation, financial, and other factors in their decision to expand the percent of acres covered by the written grazing plan.

**Question 6** asks what percentage of grazing land followed the written grazing plan in 2023. Question 6a identifies for those operations reporting a grazing plan on less than 100% of their grazing land, land in three land categories. Question 6b asks if the operation did not use a written grazing plan in 2023, do they plan to in the next 3 years. If the answer is 'yes' go to Section 6 on page 13. If the answer is 'no' they don't intend to use a written grazing plan in the next three years, then have the respondent rate the importance of the factors in 6c in the decision to stop managing in accordance with a written grazing management plan.

## Section 6 – Brush and Weed Control

**Question 1** asks about brush management (woody plants) or weed control (non-woody plants) on grazing land during the past 15 years. In the table for question 1, the first row asks if brush management was done on land owned by the operation or leased by the operation. The second row asks if weed control was practiced on owned land or leased land. If the answer is ‘no’ to both brush and weed control practices for both owned and leased land, then ask 1a. If any of the responses were ‘yes’, the operation practiced brush or weed control, skip to question 2 on page 13.

Example videos:

- Brush control <https://youtu.be/jUIWOaa7vw4>
- Weed control <https://youtu.be/tHsMkZ3OWig>

Question 1a should only be asked if no brush or weed control was practiced (all responses in 1 were ‘no’). Have the respondent rate their agreement with each of the statements about why they did not practice any brush/weed control on grazing land that was operated. Once completed, skip to Section 7 on page 15.

**Question 2** is a table that asks about the use of common brush and weed management methods. Ask about each method for both brush removal or control (column 1) and weed control (column 2). If an operation is controlling both brush and weeds in the same area, they may use the same means for both, such as burning or mowing.

Question 2a and 2b ask for the percent of the total grazing land where the operation used brush and/or weed control, respectively. This percentage should be the percent of acreage on which the control was done, not just the acreage where the actual brush or weeds were. For example: If a 100 acre pasture had brush control done on patches scattered everywhere that accounted for 5 acres. All 100 acres had brush control; you would record 100 for question 2a.

**Question 3** is about technical and financial assistance received by the operation for practicing brush or weed control in the past 15 years. The first and second columns ask about receiving technical assistance and financial assistance, respectively. The third and fourth columns are filled out only if the operation received financial assistance. If financial assistance was received, ask how many acres had assistance and the percent of the total cost covered by the financial assistance. Since the question is asking about a span covering 15 years, acres may have had brush or weed control more than once, but each acre should be only counted once. Question 3i asks if the financial assistance was from a federal source like NRCS. If all financial assistance was from a non-federal source (a state or local government, for example), enter a 0 for the percent and move to question 3a. If no financial assistance was received, leave 3i blank.

Question 3a asks the respondent to rate their agreement to seven factors in the respondent’s decision to practice brush or weed control.

## Section 7 – Drinking Water and Source Water for Livestock

This section is designed to gather information about how water is made available to livestock while grazing on the pasture that is operated and challenges associated with livestock watering. There are a wide variety of different methods of providing water, ranging from maintenance-free options such as a stream or spring, to methods that involved transporting water to the pasture location.

**Question 1** is a table that is asking the respondent to rate their agreement with six different statements concerning the livestock watering systems that are currently in use. Ask each factor in turn and record how the respondent would rate the factor for the operation.

**Question 2** is a large table that asks about different structures and/or water sources in use on the operation in 2023. Respondents should include structures or sources that may be in use on grazing land leased from others, including state and federal permit land and short-term grazing arrangements.

Example videos:

- Trough/watering facility <https://youtu.be/z8W6Mw3wAxw>
- Pipeline <https://youtu.be/FMlz3fWRa2I>
- Pumping plant <https://youtu.be/uIw9xdTpmj4>
- Spring Development <https://youtu.be/8Hi1cgpMJYk>
- Water Well <https://youtu.be/HPrw1BgNGbQ>

**Question 3** asks whether any of the livestock water systems or structures listed in response to question 2 were built, replaced, re-built, or upgraded by the operation on land they own. This should exclude routine maintenance such as cleaning or small repairs. If the respondent answers ‘yes’, skip to question 3b. If the respondent answers ‘no’, go to table 3a. which asks the respondent to rate their agreement with the six statements about why the operation did not build, replace, re-build, or upgrade any livestock drinking water storage structure or system. After 3a has been completed, skip to Section 8 on page 18.

Question 3b is a table that asks about water system structures that are commonly found for providing water to livestock. The first column asks if the operation built, re-built, or improved any of the structures that are currently in use. Columns two and three ask if the operation received any technical or financial assistance for building, rebuilding, or improving the system. Column four asks how many acres of grazing land benefitted from the water structure being built, re-built, or improved (how many acres does the water structure service). The last column asks, if there was financial assistance provided, what percentage of the total expense for the water structure was provided by the financial assistance. If no financial assistance was received, leave the last column blank. If financial assistance was received, ask question 3bi to determine if the financial assistance was from a federal source like NRCS. If all financial assistance was from a non-federal source (a state or local government, for example), enter a 0 for the percent and move to question 3c.

Question 3c is a table to have the respondent rate their agreement to various factors in the decision to build, re-build, or improve any livestock drinking water storage systems.

## Section 8 – Controlled Burning (Prescribed Burning)

Controlled or prescribed burning is the routine practice of burning pasture that has been practiced for many years to promote forage growth and to help control the spread of weeds. Example video for what it looks like on forest land: <https://youtu.be/T5sEaWKQK5A>

**Question 1** asks if the operator has used controlled burning (prescribed burning) at any time on any portion of their grazing operation. This can be on acres that they no longer operate but have in the past.

If the respondent says ‘no’, they have never used controlled burning on the acres they operate (or have operated in the past), then they will need to complete the table for 1a rating their agreement with each of the statements for why they have never used controlled burning. Once they have completed 1a, they are directed to section 9 on page 22.

If the respondent says ‘yes’, they have used controlled burning in the past they will be directed to question 2.

**Question 2** asks if the respondent first used controlled burning more than 15 years ago. If the operation has used controlled burning for 15 or more years, answer ‘yes’ and go to question 5 on page 21. If the operation hasn’t been using controlled burning for 15 or more years, answer ‘no’ and go to question 3 on the next page.

**Question 3** asks in what year did you first use controlled burning. This value should be 2009-2023, a 4-digit year.

Question 3a asks in that first year, what percentage of the total grazing land was controlled burning used. The percentage should be for the total grazing land that was used that year, even land on a short-term lease or state/federal permit.

Question 3b is a table that asks the respondent about any technical or financial assistance received in the first year using controlled or prescribed burning. If financial assistance was received to offset the cost of burning, fill out the third column (acres covered by financial assistance) and the fourth column (what proportion of actual costs were covered by financial assistance). If no financial assistance was received, then the last two columns of the table should be left blank. For question 3bi, the survey is asking if any of the financial assistance was from a federal source such as NRCS. If all financial assistance was from a non-federal source, enter a 0 for the percent and move to question 3c. If no financial assistance was received, leave 3bi blank.

Question 3c is a table that is aimed at assessing the respondent’s agreement in their decision to use controlled/prescribed burning for the first time.

**Question 4** asks if the respondent has expanded the percentage of grazing acres where controlled burning is regularly used. “Regular use” could mean that the respondent has a schedule for burning or has used burning on an as-needed basis as a part of their pasture management plan. If the respondent has expanded the use of controlled burning since the year reported in question 3, answer ‘yes’ and ask question 4a and all the sub-questions and 4b. If the operator never expanded their use of burning, answer ‘no’ and move on to question 5 on page 21.

Question 4a is a table to gather information on technical and financial assistance for expanding the use of controlled burning after the initial year. If financial assistance was received to offset the cost of burning, fill out the third column (acres covered by financial assistance) and the fourth column (what proportion of



actual costs were covered by financial assistance. If no financial assistance was received, then the last two columns of the table should be left blank. For question 4ai the survey is asking if any of the financial assistance was from a federal source such as NRCS. If all financial assistance was from a non-federal source, enter a 0 for the percent and move to question 4b. If no financial assistance was received, leave 4ai blank.

Question 4b is a table to assess the respondent agreement with reasons to expand the use of controlled burning.

**Question 5** asks what percentage of the grazing land was controlled burned in 2023. If the answer is 100%, then you will skip to section 9 on page 22. If the answer is 1-99%, ask 5a. and 5b. If the answer is 0% go to question 5b.

Question 5a is a series of yes/no questions about factors that may or may not be a reason that limit use of controlled burning.

Question 5b identifies intention to use controlled or prescribed burning again in the next three years. If they answer yes, then they are directed to skip to section 9 on page 22. If they answer no, then they have stopped using the practice and they should answer question 5c.

Question 5c asks the respondents agreements on a list of reasons they stopped using controlled or prescribed burning.

## Section 9 – Forage Improvement or Establishment

Forage improvement or establishment is the process of seeding or reseeding grazing land to ensure that plant species and plant populations provide more and more nutritious feed for the animals being grazed. This may also be to plant species with specific qualities such as drought tolerance or for erosion or weed control.

**Question 1** asks if the operator has seeded or re-seeded pastures at any time in the last 15 years (since 2009). This can be on acres that are no longer operated but have been seeded in the past. In the table for question 1, the first row asks if seeding or re-seeding pasture was practiced on land owned or leased by the operation. The second row asks if seeding or re-seeding rangeland was practiced on owned land or leased land. If the answer is ‘no’ to seeding or re-seeding pasture or rangeland for both owned and leased land, then ask 1a. If any of the responses were ‘yes’, the operation seed or re-seeded pasture or rangeland, skip to question 2 on page 23.

Question 1a table records the respondent’s agreement with each of the statements for why they don’t seed or re-seed any grazing land (pasture or rangeland). This should only be answered if all responses in table 1 are “no”. Once they have completed 1a, they are directed to section 10 on page 24.

**Question 2** is a table to gather information on technical assistance and financial assistance for pasture or range planting on land the operation owns. If financial assistance was received to offset the cost of seeding, fill out the third column (acres covered by financial assistance) and the fourth column (what percentage of actual costs were covered by financial assistance). If no financial assistance was received, then the last two columns of the table should be left blank. For question 2i. the survey is asking if any of the financial assistance was from a federal source such as NRCS. If the financial assistance was from another source, enter a 0 for the percent and move to section 10. If no financial assistance was received, leave 2i blank.

Question 2a asks the respondent to rate their agreement to several factors in the respondent’s decision to seed or re-seed their grazing land.

## Section 10 –Wildlife Habitat Management

Wildlife habitat is often a consideration is managing grazing land. This section asks ranchers to share how they’ve adjusted their use of their grazed lands to provide food, water, cover, and passage/connectivity for wildlife.

Example videos:

- Structures for wildlife [https://youtu.be/BE6Q6uD9F\\_Q](https://youtu.be/BE6Q6uD9F_Q)
- Upland wildlife habitat management <https://youtu.be/IGBKCe-dOIE>

**Question 1** is a large table that asks about a series of wildlife management practices potentially in use on the operation at any time. The responses should include practices used at any time on grazing land leased from others, including state and federal permit land, or short-term grazing arrangements. Some practices may be a requirement of the permit or lease agreement.

If the response to any factor in the table is ‘yes’, skip to question 3 on page 25. If all the responses to the table in question 1 are ‘no’, only then will you proceed to question 2.

**Question 2** should be completed only if all of question 1 is ‘no’ for the different practices to manage wildlife habitat. Have the respondent rate their agreement or disagreement with all the statements about why they do not practice wildlife habitat management on the operation’s grazing land. Once the table for question 2 is completed, follow the instruction to go to Section 11 on page 27.

**Question 3** asks if the respondent took any action (the list of actions in question 1) to enhance the wildlife habitat on grazing land during 2023. If the answer is ‘yes’, then ask question 3a. which asks what percentage of grazing land action was taken to improve the wildlife habitat. If the answer is ‘no’, follow the instruction to skip to question 4.

**Question 4** asks what was the first year that the operation took action to enhance wildlife habitat on grazing land. Make sure the year is recorded in 4-digits such as ‘2010’.

Question 4a gathers information on technical assistance and financial assistance for wildlife habitat enhancement practices. If financial assistance was received to offset the cost of wildlife practices, fill out the third column (acres covered by financial assistance) and the fourth column (what percentage of actual costs were covered by financial assistance). If no financial assistance was received, then the last two columns of the table should be left blank. For question 4ai the survey is asking if any of the financial assistance was from a federal source such as NRCS. If all financial assistance was from non-federal sources, enter a 0 for the percent and move to question 4b. If no financial assistance was received, leave 4ai blank.

Question 4b asks the respondent to rate their agreement to a series of factors in the decision to enhance wildlife habitat on the sampled operation.

**Question 5** asks if since the first year, has the operation expanded the wildlife habitat enhancement to a larger portion of the grazing acres. If the answer is ‘no’, follow the skip instruction to go to question 6. If the answer is ‘yes’ ask question 5a and 5ai. Question 5a is a table to gather information on technical and financial assistance for expanding the use of wildlife habitat practices after the initial year. If financial assistance was received to offset the cost of these practices, fill out the third column (acres covered by financial assistance) and the fourth column (what percentage of actual costs were covered by financial assistance). If no financial assistance was received, then the last two columns of the table should be left blank. For question 5ai the survey is asking if any of the financial assistance was from a federal source such as NRCS. If all financial assistance was from a non-federal source, enter a 0 for the percent and move to question 6. If no financial assistance was received, leave 5ai blank.

**Question 6** asks if the operation did not take habitat enhancing actions in 2023, is there a plan to do so again in the next 3 years. If the answer is ‘yes’ and go to Section 11. If the operation didn’t practice wildlife habitat enhancement and has no plan to in the next 3 years answer ‘no’ and continue to 6a.

The table for 6a will be completed only if the respondent didn’t practice wildlife habitat enhancement in 2023 and has no plan to for the next 3 years. The respondent needs to rate the level or agreement of each factor in the decision to stop practicing habitat enhancement.

## Section 11 – Conservation Stewardship Program Participation

**Question 1** is a screener to determine if the sampled operation (not the respondent) has ever been enrolled in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). See Terms and Definitions for a description of CSP. If the answer is ‘yes’, you will continue by asking question 1a. If the answer is ‘no’, the operation has never been enrolled in CSP, you will move on to Section 12 on the next page.

Question 1a. is another screener to see if the sampled operation ever received any financial assistance through their enrollment in CSP for the enhancement of a practice. If ‘yes’, the respondent should indicate the number of acres they have received financial assistance for an enhancement to any of the practices listed in question 1b and the percentage of actual costs covered by the CSP payment. If the operation has not received any financial assistance, proceed to Section 12 on the next page.

## Section 12 – Demographics

**Questions 1 – 5** are a series of questions that are to be used for classification purposes of the operator. If there is more than one operator involved with the operation, try to collect the demographics of the principal operator if possible. If there is no principal operator or more than one principal operator, then collect the demographics of the person who would be making a majority of the conservation practice decisions. These are standard questions about the farm operator. The references to “forestry, farming, or ranching” allows for consistency with other questionnaires.

**Question 6** transitions to ask specifically about the legal status of the sampled operation. There are 4 options: family or individual, partnership, corporation, or other. Based on the selection of the operating arrangement, you will then ask the additional questions for the legal status if there are any.

## Section 13 – Value of Sales

The two questions in this section are for classification purposes as well to establish the size and type of operation that was sampled.

**Question 1** is asking about the gross value of sales that the operation had in 2023 for all agricultural products along with any government payments, rent, or landlord share of the production. The respondent is directed to choose which of the nine categories the operation falls into for 2023.

**Question 2** is asking which of the sixteen different operation types does the sample operation fall in terms of largest value of sales for 2023. If the respondent says that two different operation types are equal, then have them choose which operation type is most represented in other ways.

## Section 14 – Conclusion

**Question 1** is to be filled out if the sampled operation is no longer in business and the business has been sold or turned over to someone else. Do your best to collect the operation name, operator's name, address, and phone number. If possible, find out if the operation was in business on June 1, 2023.

**Question 2** can be comments that are related to anything on the survey, changes in the operation, or anything else that was communicated to you, such as reason for refusal.

At the end of the survey try and collect the operation email, the best phone number, the respondent's name, and the respondent's phone number if different from the operation phone number. Fill out the date in the correct month/day/year format. Conclude the survey by thanking the respondent for their time.