



NEWS

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ILLINOIS FARMERS URGED TO PARTICIPATE IN USDA-NASS SURVEY

Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy Survey of Best Management Practices

Springfield, IL. – Illinois farmers should keep an eye on their mailboxes this month for an important survey that could help change the future of Illinois agriculture. On July 1, 2016, the Heartland Regional Field Office of the United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA-NASS) began mailing out surveys asking Illinois farmers about the techniques they utilize in accordance with the state's Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRS).

The Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRS) is a joint effort by the Illinois Department of Agriculture, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Illinois Water Resources Center, and several public and private stakeholders. The Illinois effort is one of 31 other state strategies developed and implemented across the Mississippi River basin, intended to improve our nation's water quality. Illinois' strategy provides a framework for reducing both point and non-point nutrient losses to improve our state's overall water quality, as well as the quality of the water leaving the state and making its way down the Mississippi River into the Gulf of Mexico.

This NLRS survey will ask farmers about crop production practices, including: use of cover crops, tillage strategies and nutrient application strategies. The survey will also ask some questions about fields and tiling. A high participation rate will help the state of Illinois prove that Illinois does not need additional mandates; that our state's farmers and ranchers can make a difference through voluntary involvement; and that our producers have taken ownership of the issue and are willing and able to meet the challenge.

Representatives with USDA-NASS hope to have all survey data collection complete by September 15, but in order to do this a prompt return of this survey is necessary. These surveys will be a part of the Strategy's bi-annual progress report. This requirement of the state strategy is designed to help evaluate what best management practices are working throughout the state.

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