



The National Association of Conservation Districts on

Resource Stewardship Evaluation

Do you know how your operation measures up?

The Resource Stewardship Evaluation Tool can help.

NACD and NRCS are working together to expand the use of RSET – short for Resource Stewardship Evaluation Tool – among agricultural producers nationwide.

RSET is the future of conservation planning. In the development of the tool, NRCS has integrated the best attributes of all its existing and past science-based, resource evaluation tools to give producers one holistic look at their agricultural operation's current management and conservation activities.

How does it work?

RSET compares your operations attributes and activities to NRCS' stewardship thresholds for five natural resource concerns: soil management, water quality, water quantity, air quality, and wildlife habitat. Then, RSET provides the results of the evaluation in an easy-to-read, color-coded bar graph that shows how a producer's management decisions affect the natural resources under his or her care.

RSET can help you answer field-specific questions like:

- Is soil erosion under control on my farm? And are my fields gaining or losing soil organic matter?
- Are nutrients being used by crops or are they being lost to leaching or run-off?
- Are my irrigation methods as efficient as possible?
- Are my farm and ranch operations resulting in net greenhouse gas emissions?
- What, if any, opportunities do I have for improving wildlife habitat on my land?

Pictured at right is Brad Wenz, a conservation planner for Stearns County Soil and Water Conservation District in Minnesota, explaining the RSET results for Mill Creek Dairy, a farm owned and operated by brothers Tom and Ed Gregory. As you can see, RSET results are displayed as easy-to-read, color-coded bar charts.

Wenz is impressed with RSET. "Planning starts with people. That's what I love about this program," he told NACD. "A conversation leads to developing a plan, before a program."





Why use RSET?

RSET helps producers continue to improve their operations with conservation practices. After using the free service, you – the producer – determine the next steps. Here are some benefits of trying RSET:

- **Learn the expected benefits of certain management and conservation practices.** Some of the practices recommended in an RSET conservation plan may enhance steps you've already taken to increase the resiliency of your operation to extreme weather events and patterns.
- **Save time and money.** If the evaluation points out a potential problem, conservation professionals can use more detailed analyses to confirm concerns and recommend conservation practice planning and design that will save you time and money in the long-run.
- **Quantify the environmental benefits of using conservation systems on working lands.** Understanding and communicating the environmental benefits of using conservation practices can help boost demand for your product and improve the public's perception of agriculture.

How long does it take to use the tool, and what does it cost?

If you already have a conservation plan and/or nutrient and pesticide records, it may be just a quick field walk and data entry by a conservationist to run RSET on your land.

RSET is a **free** service offered to producers on crop and grazing land across the country. Forest land will be added later in 2017. To have a Resource Stewardship Evaluation completed on your property, contact NACD Northern Plains Representative Laura Demmel at laura-demmel@nacdnet.org

How can I become an RSET Trailblazer?

The answers supplied by RSET are completely confidential and can help you achieve your desired stewardship goals. If you elect to, though, you may join the growing list of producers who have been recognized for using RSET.

NACD has established an RSET Trailblazer Recognition Program in cooperation with NRCS and your local conservation district to honor those who have met their stewardship objectives through RSET. Have you used RSET? Or are considering it? Please contact NACD Northern Plains Representative Laura Demmel at laura-demmel@nacdnet.org.