

National Resources Inventory (NRI)--Fall, '99 Update--*Terry Barney, NRCS*

terryb@mo.nrcs.usda.gov

1997 Data Available. Under congressional mandate, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has the responsibility to carry out a comprehensive inventory of the nation's natural resource base every five years. The most recent inventory was completed in 1997. The data is undergoing a final review and is scheduled for release on November 10, 1999. The NRI estimates are based on a sample of over 300,000 tracts of land averaging about 160 acres in size. More detailed erosion data are collected on three point locations within each of the sample land tracts. The 1997 data, and trending data for 1982, 1987, and 1992 will be available on the Internet. In addition to standard national and state tables of statistics, users will be able to initiate their own queries.

1999 Field Data Collection Underway Historically, the NRCS has conducted its National Resources Inventory once every five years. Future inventories will be done on a continuous basis using a combination of remote sensing and on site data collection techniques. This year the NRCS is testing a data collection protocol using hand held data collection computers and GPS to locate and collect data at sample site locations in the field. Land cover, tillage, erosion, and conservation practices data are being collected to support an ongoing carbon sequestration study; continue to assess the impacts of the current Farm Bill; transition to erosion estimates based on a revised universal soil loss equation; and test data gathering protocols to transition to a continuous inventory process. Data will be collected in 15 Missouri counties between now and the end of December.