



USDA-CSREES 2005 National Water Quality Conference

The CSREES National Integrated Water Quality Program

Abstract:

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The CSREES National Integrated Water Quality Program (NIWQP) develops research, education, and extension projects aimed at improving the quality of water resources in agricultural watersheds. Through a network of regional coordination projects, NIWQP advances and disseminates the knowledge base of information developed at universities to agriculture and rural communities to enhance the management and protection of the Nation's surface water and groundwater resources. The NIWQP brings university scientists, instructors, and extension educators into more effective partnerships with Federal programs while addressing water quality issues in agriculture. The program seeks to solve critical agricultural issues through an integration of research, education, and extension activities and through enhanced coordination within regions and across the Nation. AREERA Section 406 established four project categories: Extension Education, Integrated (Research/Extension/Education), National Facilitation, and Regional Coordination. State Water Quality Coordinators promote regional collaboration, enhance delivery of successful programs and encourage multi-state and multi-region efforts to protect and restore water resources. A national website (<http://www.usawaterquality.org/>) links water quality coordination databases for the regions. Partner organizations include federal agencies such as USEPA, USDA-NRCS, Army Corps of Engineers and US Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as state environmental and agricultural agencies, local governments, citizen watershed organizations and private consultants. NIWQP utilizes integrated funding categories to facilitate multidisciplinary research, extension, and education activities addressing agricultural water quality issues. In addition, regional coordination projects have employed integrated strategic planning and program development efforts to bring to bear the full array of university resources in responding to critical water resource management concerns. The NIWQP coordinates regional programs and enhances linkages among university systems and other federal and state water resource management agencies. Through these efforts, programs and resources from multiple agencies and organizations are being better linked and organized to address critical water resource issues regionally and nationally.

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