

ARS National Program in Natural Resources and Sustainable Agricultural Systems

The focus of ARS research in agricultural systems and natural resources is for abundant clean water, clean air, energy alternatives, and healthy ecosystems that form the basis of the U.S. agricultural economy and rural America.

ARS is developing strategic and action plans that will define research priorities for the next decade. Based on past experience and recent dialog with our customers and stakeholders, this program area will address the following national priorities:

- Soil and water management
- Air quality and global change
- Bioenergy and agricultural energy systems
- Agricultural systems management
- Range, pasture, and forage systems

To achieve these goals and objectives effectively, we will conduct our research projects based on three overarching strategies:

1. Watershed-based approach: Developing agricultural and natural resources research priorities that can be easily extended to the local, regional, and national levels to be useful to the broadest groups of customers and stakeholders.

2. Market-based approach: Encouraging the private sector to invest in and adopt science-based practices and technologies that we've developed.

3. Coordinated national approach: Seeking and promoting cooperative research partnerships within USDA and with other U.S. federal agencies and international partners to achieve our mission goals/objectives effectively and efficiently.

The scientific knowledge generated by ARS research will enable farmers, ranchers, policymakers, and the public to better use, conserve, maintain, or improve agricultural lands and natural resources. This stewardship involves research alternatives to maintain the condition of the land through new management practices; to prevent unintended consequences to land where assessments of social, economic, and environmental factors together indicate a high potential for environmental harm; to enhance land for expanded productivity while maintaining environmental health; and to restore degraded land to a healthy condition.

The ARS National Program in natural resources and sustainable agricultural systems is poised to explore new and creative ways to achieve these goals in the 21st century. *

 = States Where ARS Does Research on Natural Resources and Sustainable Agricultural Systems.

