

U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

Customer Satisfaction Survey – Non-Successful Participants

Final Report
October 2008



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Overall Findings and Recommendations

While the satisfaction index score for non-successful participants was a modest 63, which is lower than the government average (68). Given the respondents did not receive the benefit or assistance that they sought, a score of 63 should be viewed positively. Performance ratings for helpfulness of personnel were in the high 70s (77) – indicating that respondents were mostly satisfied with the personnel. They may not have been as satisfied with the outcome of their application.

A few areas in the application process and response may be opportunities to improve and drive up satisfaction with the non-successful participants. Giving them a clearer explanation of point and prioritization systems, or providing an easier to interpret scoring and prioritization system is one area to focus on. In the response to customers, being more clear in communicating their score and the reason they did not receive funding is another area to target. Despite not receiving assistance, respondents indicated a relatively high likelihood to return for assistance and to recommend EQIP to others.

There were also some other factors that influenced the satisfaction of the respondent. These are provided in detail in Appendix B of the report. The following is a summary of the findings. Respondents who had assistance in filling out the application were 14 points more satisfied than those who did not have assistance. Explanations from NRCS also accounted for large gaps in satisfaction. Those who claimed NRCS explained application Ranking Tool and criteria on selection process rated satisfaction 22 points higher than those who did not (69 compared to 47). Similarly, those respondents who said NRCS gave them an explanation of why they were not funded scored satisfaction 23 points higher than those who did not get an explanation (69 compared to 46). The same is true with advising customers about appeal rights – 19-point gap in satisfaction, and informing the customer their application will be in the next round – 23-point gap.

These differences show that communication is critical to customer satisfaction, even for those who were not successful. If customers receive explanations on the process and are informed about their appeal rights they are more satisfied than if that information is not communicated to them.

DETAILED REPORT

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Introduction & Methodology

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) is the national indicator of customer evaluations of the quality of goods and services available to U.S. residents. It is the only uniform, cross-industry/government measure of customer satisfaction. Since 1994, the ACSI has measured satisfaction, its causes, and its effects, for seven economic sectors, 41 industries, more than 200 private-sector companies, two types of local government services, the U.S. Postal Service, and the Internal Revenue Service. ACSI has measured more than 100 programs of federal government agencies since 1999. This allows benchmarking between the public and private sectors and provides information unique to each agency on how its activities that interface with the public affect the satisfaction of customers. The effects of satisfaction are estimated, in turn, on specific objectives (such as public trust).

ACSI is produced by the University of Michigan in partnership with CFI Group, and the American Society for Quality. This report was produced by CFI Group in collaboration with the University of Michigan. If you have any questions regarding this report, please contact CFI Group at 734-930-9090.

Segment Choice

This report is about non-successful participants who applied for assistance from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Customer Sample and Data Collection

The USDA NRCS provided CFI Group with a sample of names and phone numbers of customers who received assistance during the past two years. A total 6,356 unique phone numbers were provided. Data were collected from July 3rd through July 10th 2008. A total of 250 responses were collected. The cooperation rate for the study was 76.7%. This is the percentage of successfully contacted eligible respondents that participated. The response rate was 10.5%, this rate takes into account those respondents who could not successfully be reached.

Questionnaire and Reporting

The questionnaire used is shown in Appendix A. It was designed to be agency-specific in terms of activities, outcomes, and introductions to the questionnaire and specific question areas. However, it follows a format common to all the federal agency questionnaires that allow cause-and-effect modeling using the ACSI model. CFI Group collaborated with NRCS to develop the questionnaire for the survey.

Most of the questions in the survey asked the respondent to rate items on a 1 to 10 scale, where "1" is "poor" and "10" is "excellent." Scores are converted to a 0 to 100 scale for reporting purposes. Appendix B contains score tables for questions that were rated on a 1 to 10 scale at an aggregate level and segmented by groups based on responses to Yes/No question. Appendix C contains verbatim comments to the responses for open-ended questions.

Call Dispositions and Response Rate Calculation

ACSI Code	AAPOR Code	Definition	n
U		UNIVERSE OF SAMPLED TELEPHONE NUMBERS	6356
		1 Interviews	
I	1.1	Total completed interviews	250
P	1.2	Partial interviews	5
I+P		Total interviews	255
		2 Eligible cases that are not interviewed (Non-respondents)	
	2.1	Break-offs	0
	2.11	Refusal, qualified cases	71
RQ		Total qualified cases refusals	71
		3 Cases of unknown eligibility (Unknown eligibility/No contact—Non-interview)	
	3.9	Cases of unknown eligibility (Unknown eligibility/No contact—Non-interview)	5209
	3.9	Foreign language/hard of hearing	33
UE		Total unknown eligibility	5242
		Cases that are not eligible (Non-eligible Respondents)	
	4.32	Disconnect/out of service	274
	4.2	Computer/FAX	52
		Wrong number	0
		Filter	319
		Other Non-eligible respondent	41
NER		Total Non-eligible Respondents	686
		Quota Filled so respondent not eligible for interview	
	4.8	Case of quota-filled subgroup	0
	4.8	Scheduled for callback, but subgroup quota filled or interview period ended	100
QF		Total Quota Filled Respondents	100
U		Universe of Sampled Numbers	6356
NER		Less Non-eligible Respondents	686
QF		Less Quota Filled Respondents	100
EU		Universe of Eligible Numbers	5570

COOPERATION RATE (AAPOR (2)) = I/(I+P)+RQ	76.7%
e = (I+P+RQ+QF)/(I+P+RQ+QF+NER)	38.3%
RESPONSE RATE (AAPOR RR(3)) = I+COOP(QF)/(I+P+RQ+QF+NER+e(UE))	10.5%

Respondent background

The table below provides information on the respondents' background with respect to the application process, information provided by NRCS, intention to pursue funding and the like. All questions below were asked as Yes/No/Don't Know.

Statistics about the application include the following. Most did have assistance in the process as four-fifths (80%) of respondents had assistance in filling out the application. Two-thirds (68%) of respondents claimed that NRCS explained the application Ranking Tool and criteria on selection process. Slightly more (71%) indicated the NRCS gave an explanation of why they were not funded. Compared to the explanation of their application score fewer were getting information about appeals as only three-fifths (60%) of respondents claimed they were advised on appeal rights. Three-fourths (75%) were informed their application would be in the next round for consideration. Most were not discouraged to pursue funding as 70% of respondents intended to pursue funding. However, for actually improving the application numbers drop dramatically. Only one-third (34%) were able to schedule an appointment to improve their application and only 13% were given an opportunity or information to improve their application. One-fifth (19%) claimed they were able to improve their application.

Fewer than one-third (31%) had been denied funding more than once. About half (51%) would complete an application online. Just over half (56%) had received conservation planning assistance before the application process. For those receiving planning assistance in 70% of the cases potential improvements and resource concerns were discussed.

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Q4a Did you have assistance in filling out the application?	80%	18%	2%
Q9 Did NRCS explain the application Ranking Tool and criteria on selection process?	68%	26%	6%
Q10 Did NRCS give an explanation of why you were not funded?	71%	25%	4%
Q11 Were you advised on appeal rights for your application denial?	60%	33%	7%
Q12 Were you informed your application would be in the next round for consideration for funding?	75%	21%	4%
Q13 Do you intend to pursue funding?	70%	22%	8%
Q14 Have you been able to schedule an appointment to improve your application?	34%	62%	4%
Q15 Were you given an opportunity to or information to improve your application?	13%	77%	10%
Q16 Have you been able to improve your application?	19%	73%	8%
Q17 Have you been denied funding more than once?	31%	67%	2%
Q24 Would you complete an EQIP application online?	51%	48%	1%
Q25 Did you receive conservation planning assistance before the application process?	56%	40%	4%
Q26 Were potential improvements and identified resource concerns discussed in the planning process?	70%	22%	8%

In 60% of the cases, a conservation plan was developed before the application for EQIP funding.

Q5	Was a conservation plan developed before or after your application for EQIP funding?	Before	After	Don't Know
		60%	19%	21%

Direct mailings was the preferred method for receiving information with over half (55%) indicating a preference for this method. Printed materials and newsletters was mentioned by 18% and only 9% preferred online.

Q23	How do you prefer to receive information?	In-person	Printed materials and newsletters	Online	Direct Mailings	Other
		14%	18%	9%	55%	4%

Demographics

Respondent demographics are provided in the table below.

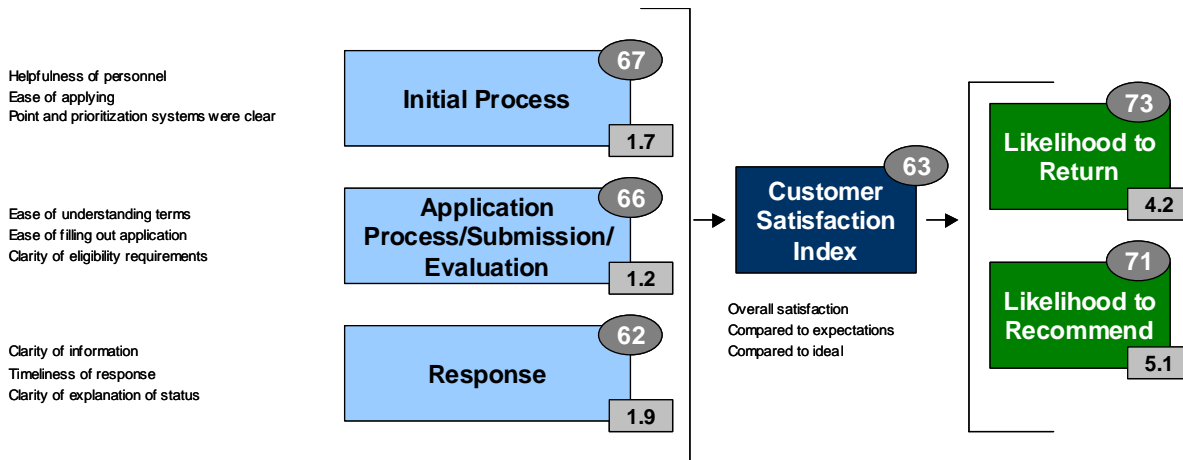
Age	
Under 40	8.8%
40-49	18.0%
50-59	33.6%
60-69	28.4%
70 and over	10.8%
Refused	0.4%
Total	100%

Farming as an individual or as a family farm, or as a member of a business entity	
Individual/Family Farm	86.0%
Member of Business Entity	6.0%
Both Individual/Family and Member of Business Entity	7.2%
Don't Know	0.4%
Refused	0.4%
Total	100%

Total annual income in 2007 before taxes	
Less than \$10,000	7.6%
Between \$10,000 and \$24,999	11.6%
Between \$25,000 and \$99,999	32.8%
Between \$100,000 and \$249,999	20.4%
\$250,000 or more	12.4%
Don't Know	8.0%
Refused	7.2%
Total	100%

Gender	
Male	87.2%
Female	12.8%
Total	100%

USDA NRCS Non-Successful Participants Customer Satisfaction Model



The above figure shows the customer satisfaction model for Non-Successful Participants for EQIP. The three boxes on the left hand side of the model (Initial Process, Application Process/Submission/Evaluation and Response) represent drivers of satisfaction. The performance in each of these areas is show by the scores in the oval, which are on a 0 to 100 scale, where 0 means poor and 100 means excellent. These scores are derived from the weighted average of the ratings from a grouping of questions about each area. The specific items for each driver are shown on the far left of the figure. Detailed scores for each of these areas are provided in this report. Generally, scores in the 80s and 90s indicate a strong level of performance. Given that respondents were not successful in their attempt to receive assistance, ratings may be tempered by this outcome.

These satisfaction drivers have a relationship to satisfaction or impact, the values of which are shown in the rectangles. These impact values are derived from a regression model using data from customer responses. Impacts represent the expected change in the customer satisfaction index given a five-point improvement in a driver area. For example, if the area of Initial Process were to improve by five points from 67 to 72, the customer satisfaction index would increase by the value of its impact – 1.7 points to 64.7 as a result. As with scores, impacts are also relative to one another. A low impact or zero impact does not mean a component is unimportant. Rather, it means that a five-point change in that one component is unlikely to result in much improvement in Satisfaction at this time. Therefore, components with higher impacts are generally recommended for improvement first, especially if scores are lower for those components.

The right hand side of the model shows outcome behaviors such as likelihood to return and likelihood to recommend. These behaviors are driven by satisfaction and the impact satisfaction has on the behaviors is shown with their impact scores. There are two sets of numbers shown for the outcomes, the scores (on a 0 to 100 scale), which show the likelihood, or confidence that the respondent has. These are not percentages but rather are averages. The impacts shown reflect the impact that a five-point improvement in satisfaction would have on the behavior. Thus, a five-point improvement in satisfaction would increase the likelihood to return by 4.2 points to 77.2.

Customer Satisfaction

The **Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI)** is a weighted average of three questions. The questions are answered on 1 to 10 scale and converted to a 0 to 100 scale for reporting purposes. The three questions measure: Overall satisfaction, Satisfaction compared to expectations, and Satisfaction compared to an “ideal” organization. The model assigns the weights to each question in a way that maximizes the ability of the index to predict changes in agency satisfaction.

The 2008 Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) for Non- Successful Participants for EQIP is 63 on a scale of 0 to 100. While this score is lower than the current Federal Government average (68), given that respondents are only those who did not receive the assistance they sought, it is a rather positive outcome. The overall satisfaction, as measured by the first of the three ACSI questions, of these participants is 70. The score for the participants' satisfaction compared to expectations (58) drives down the customer satisfaction index. Given that part of the respondents' expectation is to receive assistance, it should not be too surprising that this score is significantly lower than the score for overall satisfaction.

Customer Satisfaction	63
Overall satisfaction	70
Compared to expectations	58
Compared to ideal	62

Drivers of Satisfaction

Initial Process

Impact on Satisfaction 1.7

The initial process had a sizable impact on customer satisfaction with an impact value of 1.7. Respondents gave personnel high scores in explaining the nature of the program (77). Given that only non-successful applicants are responding and not those who may have had a successful outcome, a rating in the high 70s indicates a high level of performance. Ease of applying for a contract through EQIP was rated 68, which seems to indicate that there is not a high degree of difficulty for most in applying for a contract. The point and prioritization systems seem to be the most problematic item in this area with a rating of 51. To improve customer satisfaction among non-successful applicants, help them to better understand the specifics or the point and prioritization system.

Initial Process	67
Helpfulness of personnel in explaining the nature of the program	77
Ease of applying for a contract through the EQIP program	68
Point and prioritization systems were clear and understandable	51

Application Process/Submission/Evaluation

Impact on Satisfaction 1.2

The application process, submission and evaluation was not found to be that problematic for most respondents. The ratings show that the terms of the program were relatively easy to understand (66) and filling out an application was also relatively easy (70). If there was one item to target in this area it would be the clarity of eligibility requirements (62), which scored slightly lower.

Application Process/Submission/Evaluation	66
Ease of understanding the terms of the program	66
Ease of filling out an application	70
Clarity of eligibility requirements	62

Response

Impact on Satisfaction 1.9

The response from NRCS was both the lowest rated area and the area with the most impact on customer satisfaction. Timeliness (64), while not rated highly, was not the most critical issue with response. The most critical issue was the clarity of the information about the respondents' scores and reason why they did not get funding (59). Clarity of explanation of status of application and next steps also received a relatively modest rating and may be another area for improvement.

Response	62
Clarity of information communicated to you about your score and reason why you did not get funding	59
Timeliness of response	64
Clarity of explanation of status of application and next steps in the process	63

Outcomes

Two outcome behaviors were measured, the likelihood to return to NRCS for assistance and the likelihood to recommend NRCS. Given that respondents were not successful, the scores on these outcomes are relatively positive, in the low 70s.

Likelihood to Return to NRCS for Assistance in the Future	73
Likelihood to Recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to Others	71

APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

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**USDA NRCS – Non-Successful Program Participants-EQIP
Customer Satisfaction Survey
FINAL VERSION**

Verify Respondent

Intro1. Hello. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has hired my company, [Data Collection Company], to call on their behalf to conduct a brief survey about the services they provide. My name is _____. May I please speak with _____?

WAIT FOR RESPONSE

1. Correct Person on Phone (**GO TO INTRO**)
2. Not correct person, but Person is available (**HOLD UNTIL RESPONDENT ANSWERS AND READ BELOW**)

Intro2. Hello. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has hired my company, [Data Collection Company], to call on their behalf. My name is _____. (**GO TO INTRO**)

1. If Person not available (**Schedule a call back**)
2. If No Such Person "**Thank you and have a nice day!**"
3. Refusal/Hung Up

Introduction

IF SPEAKING WITH CORRECT PERSON CONTINUE BELOW

Intro1. ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM FROM THE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)?

1. Yes
2. No/Don't Know (IF NO/DON'T KNOW PLEASE READ BELOW **IN BOLD**)

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) [pronounced E-KWIP] that provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to promote agricultural production and environmental quality and to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land to make sound natural resource decisions and promote conservation.

We ask on behalf of NRCS for your participation in a short survey that asks about your satisfaction with the services it provides to you and other landowners and operators. This survey will take approximately 12 minutes of your time. This survey is authorized by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget Control No. 1505-0191.

(NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: IF THE RESPONDENT HAS ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SURVEY PLEASE RECORD THE NATURE OF THEIR QUESTION AND HAVE THEM CONTACT MAGGIE RHODES 202-690-2264 or maggie.rhodes@wdc.usda.gov)

Intro2. Just to confirm, have you applied for EQIP financial assistance but did NOT receive approval for funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service in the past TWO years?

1. Yes (Continue)
2. No (Terminate) **“Thank you and have a nice day!”**
3. Don't Know (Terminate) **“Thank you and have a nice day!”**

Intro3. Is now a good time?

1. Yes (Continue)
2. No “Can we schedule a time that is more convenient for you?”

(For all questions, please include choices 98 = Don't Know and 99 = Refused/Hung Up)

Now, I would like you to think about the initial stages of applying for a contract through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. I want to ask you specifically about some of the processes leading up to your applying for a contract through the EQIP program...

- Q1. Once you learned about the possibility of receiving conservation cost sharing through EQIP and made initial contact, how helpful were personnel in explaining the nature of the program? We will use a 10-point scale on which "1" means "not at all helpful" and "10" means "very helpful". How helpful were the personnel in explaining the nature of the program?
- Q2. How easy was the process of applying for EQIP assistance through the NRCS, in terms of the amount of paperwork to be completed, the clarity of this paperwork and the time it took to complete this paperwork? We will use a 10-point scale on which "1" means "not at all easy" and "10" means "very easy". How easy was the process of applying for a contract through the EQIP program?
- Q3. How clear and understandable was the NRCS ranking process used to determine which applications will be selected for funding? Using a 10-point scale on which "1" now means "not at all clear and understandable" and "10" means "very clear and understandable", how clear and understandable were the point and prioritization systems?

Application Process/Submission/Evaluation

Please think about the application submission process for EQIP.

Q4a. Did you have assistance in filling out the application?

1. Yes (Ask Q4b)
2. No (Skip to Q5)
3. Don't Know (Skip to Q5)

Q4b. Who assisted you in filling out the application?

Q5. Was a conservation plan developed before or after your application for EQIP funding?

1. Before
2. After

3. Don't Know

Again, thinking about the application submission process for EQIP. On a scale from "1" to "10," where "1" is "poor" and "10" is "excellent," please rate the following. If a question does not apply, please answer "does not apply":

Q6. Ease of understanding the terms of the program

Q7a. Ease of filling out application

ASK Q7b if Q7a = 6 or lower

Q7b. What suggestions do you have for improving the application process?

Q8. Clarity of eligibility requirements

Q9. Did NRCS explain the application Ranking Tool and criteria on selection process?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

Q10. Did NRCS give an explanation of why you were not funded?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

Q11. Were you advised on appeal rights for you application denial?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

Q12. Were you informed your application would be in the next round for consideration for funding?

1. Yes (Continue to Q13 and Q14)
2. No (Skip to Q15)
3. Don't Know (Skip to Q15)

Q13. Do you intend to pursue funding?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Know

Q14. Have you been able to schedule an appointment to improve your application?

- 1. Yes (Skip to Q16)
- 2. No (Skip to Q16)
- 3. Don't Know (Skip to Q16)

Q15. Were you given an opportunity to or information to improve your application?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't Know

Q16. Have you been able to improve your application?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't Know

Q17. Have you been denied funding more than once?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Don't Know

Response

Now think about the response that you received from NRCS on your application.

Q18. Please rate how clearly the information about your score and the reason why you did not get funding was communicated to you. Use a scale where "1" means "not very clearly" and "10" means "very clearly."

Think about the response that you received regarding the application you submitted to EQIP. On a scale from "1" to "10," where "1" is "poor" and "10" is "excellent," please rate the following:

Q19. Timeliness of response

Q20. Clarity of explanation of status of application and next steps in the process

Q21. Why you were not selected for funding at this time? *(NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Do not read answer choices. Capture verbatim comments and code answer)*

- 1. Lack of available funding
- 2. Limited conservation benefits
- 3. Implementation too costly
- 4. Practice not eligible for funding
- 5. Other
- 6. Unknown/Don't Know

Communication

Q22. How did you hear about the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service? *(NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Do not read answer choices. Capture verbatim comments and code answer)*

- 1. Referral from another Government agency

2. Referral from Non-government organization (NGO)
 3. Workshop/Information session
 4. Direct visit from staff
 5. From USDA or NRCS website
 6. Other
- Q23. How do you prefer to receive information?
1. In-person
 2. Printed materials and newsletters
 3. Online
 4. Direct mailings
 5. Other (Specify)
- Q24. Would you complete an EQIP application online?
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Don't Know
- Q25. Did you receive conservation planning assistance before the application process?
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Don't Know
- Q26. Were potential improvements and identified resource concerns discussed in the planning process?
1. Yes
 2. No
 3. Don't Know
- Q27. What thing(s) can NRCS do to let more producers know about the programs and technical assistance it provides?

ACSI Benchmark Questions

Now we are going to ask you to please consider your experiences with the assistance you have received from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in answering the following.

- Q28. First, please consider all your experiences to date in getting assistance from NRCS. Using a 10-point scale on which "1" means "Very dissatisfied" and "10" means "Very satisfied," how satisfied are you with the assistance that you have received from NRCS?

- Q29. To what extent has the assistance you have received from NRCS fallen short of your expectations or exceeded your expectations? Please use a 10-point scale on which "1" now means "Falls short of your expectations" and "10" means "Exceeds your expectations."
- Q30. Forget about the assistance that you have received from NRCS a moment. Now, imagine what an ideal provider of this type of assistance may be like.
How well do you think assistance from NRCS compares with that ideal? Please use a 10-point scale on which "1" means "Not very close to the ideal" and "10" means "Very close to the ideal."

Outcomes

- Q31. How likely are you to return to NRCS for assistance in the future? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where "1" means "not very likely" and "10" means "very likely."
- Q32. How likely are you to recommend USDA NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program to others? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where "1" means "not very likely" and "10" means "very likely."

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Open-Ends

- Q33. How has your farming operations changed since you were notified that you were not eligible for funding from NRCS?
- Q34. How do you expect the new Farm Bill to impact you and your farming operations?

Demographics

Now, I have a few last questions that will help us in grouping your responses with other producers that are similar to you.

QD1. What is your age, please?

- [RECORD NUMBER OF YEARS]
- Don't Know
- REFUSED

QD2. Are you farming as an individual or as a family farm, or are you farming as a member of a business entity? (Interview Read: A Business entity would include corporations, partnerships, estates, trusts, and other types of businesses.)

- 1. Individual/Family Farm
 - 2. Member of Business Entity
 - 3. Both Individual/Family and Member of Business Entity
 - 98. Don't Know
 - 99. Refused
- (Family farm: A family farm is defined as a farm not operated by a hired manager and that is organized as a sole or family proprietorship.)

QD3. What was your total annual income in 2007 before taxes? (READ CODES 1-7 AS NECESSARY)

- 1. Less than \$10,000
- 2. Between \$10,000 and \$24,999
- 3. Between \$25,000 and \$99,999
- 4. Between \$100,000 and \$249,999
- 5. \$250,000 or more

6. Don't Know
7. Refused

QD4. Gender (By Observation)

1. Male
2. Female

Closing

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) would like to thank you for your time and participation today. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

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APPENDIX B: RESULTS TABLES

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Aggregate Scores

	2008 Scores
Initial Process	67
Helpfulness of personnel in explaining the nature of the program	77
Ease of applying for a contract through the EQIP program	68
Point and prioritization systems were clear and understandable	51
Application Process/Submission/Evaluation	66
Ease of understanding the terms of the program	66
Ease of filling out an application	70
Clarity of eligibility requirements	62
Response	62
Clarity of information communicated to you about your score and reason why you did not get funding	59
Timeliness of response	64
Clarity of explanation of status of application and next steps in the process	63
Customer Satisfaction	63
Overall satisfaction	70
Compared to expectations	58
Compared to ideal	62
Likelihood to Return to NRCS for Assistance in the Future	73
Likelihood to return to NRCS for assistance in the future	73
Likelihood to Recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to Others	71
Likelihood to recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to others	71
Sample Size	249

Scores by Assistance in filling out the application

	Had assistance in filling out the application	Did not have assistance in filling out the application	Significant Difference
Initial Process	70	55	✓
Helpfulness of personnel in explaining the nature of the program	80	62	✓
Ease of applying for a contract through the EQIP program	69	62	
Point and prioritization systems were clear and understandable	55	36	✓
Application Process/Submission/Evaluation	67	59	✓
Ease of understanding the terms of the program	68	59	✓
Ease of filling out an application	71	66	
Clarity of eligibility requirements	64	52	✓
Response	66	47	✓
Clarity of information communicated to you about your score and reason why you did not get funding	63	42	✓
Timeliness of response	68	49	✓
Clarity of explanation of status of application and next steps in the process	67	47	✓
Customer Satisfaction	66	52	✓
Overall satisfaction	74	58	✓
Compared to expectations	61	45	✓
Compared to ideal	64	52	✓
Likelihood to Return to NRCS for Assistance in the Future	76	64	✓
Likelihood to return to NRCS for assistance in the future	76	64	✓
Likelihood to Recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to Others	74	57	✓
Likelihood to recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to others	74	57	✓
Sample Size	201	44	

Scores by NRCS explaining application Ranking Tool and Criteria

	NRCS explained application Ranking Tool and criteria on selection process	NRCS did not explain application Ranking Tool and criteria on selection process	Significant Difference
Initial Process	71	53	✓
Helpfulness of personnel in explaining the nature of the program	81	63	✓
Ease of applying for a contract through the EQIP program	71	58	✓
Point and prioritization systems were clear and understandable	57	30	✓
Application Process/Submission/Evaluation	70	54	✓
Ease of understanding the terms of the program	70	53	✓
Ease of filling out an application	72	60	✓
Clarity of eligibility requirements	66	48	✓
Response	68	44	✓
Clarity of information communicated to you about your score and reason why you did not get funding	67	35	✓
Timeliness of response	68	50	✓
Clarity of explanation of status of application and next steps in the process	70	43	✓
Customer Satisfaction	69	47	✓
Overall satisfaction	76	54	✓
Compared to expectations	64	40	✓
Compared to ideal	66	47	✓
Likelihood to Return to NRCS for Assistance in the Future	79	56	✓
Likelihood to return to NRCS for assistance in the future	79	56	✓
Likelihood to Recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to Others	76	53	✓
Likelihood to recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to others	76	53	✓
Sample Size	170	65	

Scores by NRCS explaining why not funded

	NRCS gave an explanation of why you were not funded	NRCS did not give an explanation of why you were not funded	Significant Difference
Initial Process	71	53	✓
Helpfulness of personnel in explaining the nature of the program	81	63	✓
Ease of applying for a contract through the EQIP program	71	55	✓
Point and prioritization systems were clear and understandable	56	36	✓
Application Process/Submission/Evaluation	70	53	✓
Ease of understanding the terms of the program	70	53	✓
Ease of filling out an application	73	59	✓
Clarity of eligibility requirements	66	48	✓
Response	69	38	✓
Clarity of information communicated to you about your score and reason why you did not get funding	69	28	✓
Timeliness of response	69	45	✓
Clarity of explanation of status of application and next steps in the process	70	38	✓
Customer Satisfaction	69	46	✓
Overall satisfaction	76	53	✓
Compared to expectations	64	40	✓
Compared to ideal	66	46	✓
Likelihood to Return to NRCS for Assistance in the Future	78	60	✓
Likelihood to return to NRCS for assistance in the future	78	60	✓
Likelihood to Recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to Others	76	54	✓
Likelihood to recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to others	76	54	✓
Sample Size	178	62	

Scores by advised on appeal rights

	Advised on appeal rights for your application denial	Not advised on appeal rights for your application denial	Significant Difference
Initial Process	71	60	✓
Helpfulness of personnel in explaining the nature of the program	81	69	✓
Ease of applying for a contract through the EQIP program	72	61	✓
Point and prioritization systems were clear and understandable	56	44	✓
Application Process/Submission/Evaluation	71	58	✓
Ease of understanding the terms of the program	72	58	✓
Ease of filling out an application	73	64	✓
Clarity of eligibility requirements	67	53	✓
Response	71	47	✓
Clarity of information communicated to you about your score and reason why you did not get funding	67	44	✓
Timeliness of response	72	50	✓
Clarity of explanation of status of application and next steps in the process	73	44	✓
Customer Satisfaction	70	51	✓
Overall satisfaction	77	59	✓
Compared to expectations	65	43	✓
Compared to ideal	68	50	✓
Likelihood to Return to NRCS for Assistance in the Future	80	63	✓
Likelihood to return to NRCS for assistance in the future	80	63	✓
Likelihood to Recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to Others	77	59	✓
Likelihood to recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to others	77	59	✓
Sample Size	149	82	

Scores by informed application would be in the next round

	Informed your application would be in the next round for consideration	Not informed your application would be in the next round for consideration	Significant Difference
Initial Process	71	54	✓
Helpfulness of personnel in explaining the nature of the program	80	67	✓
Ease of applying for a contract through the EQIP program	72	53	✓
Point and prioritization systems were clear and understandable	55	37	✓
Application Process/Submission/Evaluation	70	53	✓
Ease of understanding the terms of the program	70	54	✓
Ease of filling out an application	73	57	✓
Clarity of eligibility requirements	66	47	✓
Response	68	41	✓
Clarity of information communicated to you about your score and reason why you did not get funding	64	40	✓
Timeliness of response	69	44	✓
Clarity of explanation of status of application and next steps in the process	70	37	✓
Customer Satisfaction	68	45	✓
Overall satisfaction	76	52	✓
Compared to expectations	62	41	✓
Compared to ideal	67	43	✓
Likelihood to Return to NRCS for Assistance in the Future	77	59	✓
Likelihood to return to NRCS for assistance in the future	77	59	✓
Likelihood to Recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to Others	76	53	✓
Likelihood to recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to others	76	53	✓
Sample Size	188	52	

Scores by intend to pursue funding

	Intend to pursue funding	Do not intend to pursue funding	Significant Difference
Initial Process	74	60	✓
Helpfulness of personnel in explaining the nature of the program	84	69	✓
Ease of applying for a contract through the EQIP program	74	63	✓
Point and prioritization systems were clear and understandable	59	44	✓
Application Process/Submission/Evaluation	74	58	✓
Ease of understanding the terms of the program	74	57	✓
Ease of filling out an application	77	65	✓
Clarity of eligibility requirements	71	52	✓
Response	71	60	✓
Clarity of information communicated to you about your score and reason why you did not get funding	67	57	
Timeliness of response	72	60	✓
Clarity of explanation of status of application and next steps in the process	72	64	
Customer Satisfaction	73	56	✓
Overall satisfaction	80	65	✓
Compared to expectations	67	51	✓
Compared to ideal	73	51	✓
Likelihood to Return to NRCS for Assistance in the Future	88	48	✓
Likelihood to return to NRCS for assistance in the future	88	48	✓
Likelihood to Recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to Others	84	54	✓
Likelihood to recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to others	84	54	✓
Sample Size	132	41	

Scores by able to schedule an appointment to improve application

	Able to schedule an appointment to improve your application	Not able to schedule an appointment to improve your application	Significant Difference
Initial Process	74	69	
Helpfulness of personnel in explaining the nature of the program	86	77	✓
Ease of applying for a contract through the EQIP program	71	71	
Point and prioritization systems were clear and understandable	58	53	
Application Process/Submission/Evaluation	71	69	
Ease of understanding the terms of the program	70	69	
Ease of filling out an application	74	73	
Clarity of eligibility requirements	69	64	
Response	74	64	✓
Clarity of information communicated to you about your score and reason why you did not get funding	71	60	✓
Timeliness of response	74	66	✓
Clarity of explanation of status of application and next steps in the process	77	65	✓
Customer Satisfaction	79	62	✓
Overall satisfaction	84	71	✓
Compared to expectations	75	56	✓
Compared to ideal	79	60	✓
Likelihood to Return to NRCS for Assistance in the Future	89	72	✓
Likelihood to return to NRCS for assistance in the future	89	72	✓
Likelihood to Recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to Others	86	71	✓
Likelihood to recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to others	86	71	✓
Sample Size	64	117	

Scores by able to improve application

	Able to improve your application	Not able to improve your application	Significant Difference
Initial Process	73	65	✓
Helpfulness of personnel in explaining the nature of the program	81	75	
Ease of applying for a contract through the EQIP program	74	65	✓
Point and prioritization systems were clear and understandable	60	49	✓
Application Process/Submission/Evaluation	73	64	✓
Ease of understanding the terms of the program	75	64	✓
Ease of filling out an application	76	67	✓
Clarity of eligibility requirements	68	60	✓
Response	70	60	✓
Clarity of information communicated to you about your score and reason why you did not get funding	65	58	
Timeliness of response	71	62	✓
Clarity of explanation of status of application and next steps in the process	72	60	✓
Customer Satisfaction	76	60	✓
Overall satisfaction	80	68	✓
Compared to expectations	73	55	✓
Compared to ideal	75	58	✓
Likelihood to Return to NRCS for Assistance in the Future	86	70	✓
Likelihood to return to NRCS for assistance in the future	86	70	✓
Likelihood to Recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to Others	81	69	✓
Likelihood to recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to others	81	69	✓
Sample Size	48	181	

Scores by denied funding more than once

	Denied funding more than once	Not denied funding more than once	Significant Difference
Initial Process	62	69	✓
Helpfulness of personnel in explaining the nature of the program	74	79	
Ease of applying for a contract through the EQIP program	63	70	✓
Point and prioritization systems were clear and understandable	42	55	✓
Application Process/Submission/Evaluation	63	68	
Ease of understanding the terms of the program	64	67	
Ease of filling out an application	68	71	
Clarity of eligibility requirements	57	64	✓
Response	53	67	✓
Clarity of information communicated to you about your score and reason why you did not get funding	49	64	✓
Timeliness of response	54	69	✓
Clarity of explanation of status of application and next steps in the process	56	67	✓
Customer Satisfaction	58	66	✓
Overall satisfaction	66	73	✓
Compared to expectations	53	61	✓
Compared to ideal	58	64	
Likelihood to Return to NRCS for Assistance in the Future	71	75	
Likelihood to return to NRCS for assistance in the future	71	75	
Likelihood to Recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to Others	64	74	✓
Likelihood to recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to others	64	74	✓
Sample Size	78	167	

Scores by received conservation planning assistance

	Received conservation planning assistance before the application process	Did not receive conservation planning assistance before the application process	Significant Difference
Initial Process	72	59	✓
Helpfulness of personnel in explaining the nature of the program	84	66	✓
Ease of applying for a contract through the EQIP program	71	62	✓
Point and prioritization systems were clear and understandable	56	44	✓
Application Process/Submission/Evaluation	71	58	✓
Ease of understanding the terms of the program	71	59	✓
Ease of filling out an application	73	65	✓
Clarity of eligibility requirements	70	52	✓
Response	69	52	✓
Clarity of information communicated to you about your score and reason why you did not get funding	67	47	✓
Timeliness of response	70	54	✓
Clarity of explanation of status of application and next steps in the process	70	53	✓
Customer Satisfaction	72	53	✓
Overall satisfaction	79	59	✓
Compared to expectations	67	47	✓
Compared to ideal	70	51	✓
Likelihood to Return to NRCS for Assistance in the Future	82	62	✓
Likelihood to return to NRCS for assistance in the future	82	62	✓
Likelihood to Recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to Others	81	58	✓
Likelihood to recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to others	81	58	✓
Sample Size	138	100	

Scores by potential improvements discussed

	Potential improvements/ resource concerns discussed in the planning process	Potential improvements/ resource concerns not discussed in the planning process	Significant Difference
Initial Process	72	51	✓
Helpfulness of personnel in explaining the nature of the program	83	59	✓
Ease of applying for a contract through the EQIP program	72	55	✓
Point and prioritization systems were clear and understandable	57	37	✓
Application Process/Submission/Evaluation	71	51	✓
Ease of understanding the terms of the program	72	52	✓
Ease of filling out an application	74	57	✓
Clarity of eligibility requirements	67	46	✓
Response	69	41	✓
Clarity of information communicated to you about your score and reason why you did not get funding	66	38	✓
Timeliness of response	69	45	✓
Clarity of explanation of status of application and next steps in the process	70	38	✓
Customer Satisfaction	69	46	✓
Overall satisfaction	77	52	✓
Compared to expectations	63	43	✓
Compared to ideal	68	44	✓
Likelihood to Return to NRCS for Assistance in the Future	80	56	✓
Likelihood to return to NRCS for assistance in the future	80	56	✓
Likelihood to Recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to Others	77	50	✓
Likelihood to recommend USDA NRCS EQIP to others	77	50	✓
Sample Size	176	54	