

2026 LWG State Resource Concerns	LWG Meeting Occurrence (no.)	LWG Meeting Occurrence (%)	Area 1 (no.)	Area 1 (%)	Area 2 (no.)	Area 2 (%)	Area 3 (no.)	Area 3 (%)	Area 4 (no.)	Area 4 (%)
Cropland Resource Concerns:										
•Concern for a need to expand soil health practices (no-till/cover crops). Keep the soil biologically active	30	70%	6	60%	8	67%	10	83%	6	86%
•Active ephemeral gully erosion in cropland fields...worked shut every year, but reform annually	17	40%	1	10%	5	42%	6	50%	5	71%
•Concern with overall nutrient management implementation...efficient/proper use of fertilizers	17	40%	2	20%	7	58%	6	50%	2	29%
•Concern with lack of diversified crop rotations...moving more to row crops...driven by economics and crop insurance safety nets	14	33%	3	30%	8	67%	1	8%	2	29%
•Concern with structural practices past life span and failing...active erosion is occurring in unmaintained structural practice systems. (terraces, waterways, etc...)	11	26%	1	10%	4	33%	2	17%	4	57%
•Concern with marginal cropland being brought into production from grasslands (sodbuster) and not being adequately treated	11	26%	3	30%	4	33%	1	8%	3	43%
•Concern that benefits from soil health practices take years to realize...perception there is a general apprehension to commit to the multi-year time frame needed to realize benefits...associated with farm	10	23%	4	40%	1	8%	2	17%	3	43%
•Concern it's difficult to justify the implementation of cover crops unless they're grazed...how do we sell cover crop adoption based on "intrinsic" soil health benefits	9	21%	3	30%	1	8%	1	8%	4	57%
•concern with insurance rules/policy with planting wheat as a cover crop...want more flexibility to decide after wheat is planted as to whether the wheat crop can be used cover, for grazing , or for grain harvest	9	21%	3	30%	3	25%	2	17%	1	14%
•Perceived impediments to increased utilization of soil health practices...economic...generational...cultural...lack of patience	9	21%	2	20%	2	17%	2	17%	3	43%
•concern that existing ephemeral erosion areas in cropland are not being adequately treated and continue to worsen to the point they're transitioning to classic gully erosion	9	21%	2	20%	2	17%	3	25%	2	29%
•concern interest in cover crops has been negatively affected by drought conditions	8	19%	5	50%	2	17%	0	0%	1	14%
•Wind erosion in cropland fields...due to lack of cover (cover crop or residue) in some cases crops don't produce enough residue to control erosion...residue blowing off...dust concern	8	19%	6	60%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
•concern that lack of soil health (cover crops) acceptance may be attributed to the lack of private industry/university data and research that is available to support the benefits of cover crops (mainly the economic benefits in fall seeded cover crops in the absence of grazing)	7	16%	1	10%	2	17%	2	17%	2	29%
•concern cover crop adoption is hindered by single year failures...one failure and the producers don't want to continue...can't economically absorb a failure	7	16%	2	20%	2	17%	1	8%	2	29%
•Concern with chemical resistance weeds in no-till	6	14%	2	20%	2	17%	1	8%	1	14%
•Concern with the "risk of transitioning" to regenerative practices/agricultural from traditional practices/agriculture...economic risk, management risk, cultural risk, ag survival risk	6	14%	1	10%	2	17%	1	8%	2	29%
•concern that grassed waterway and terrace (structural practice) maintenance has declined due to farmers lacking time to perform maintenance, lack of landlord commitment, and cost	6	14%	0	0%	2	17%	3	25%	1	14%
•Need to adopt grazing exchange system to connect grain (cover crop) producers with livestock producers to more efficiently utilize cover crops for grazing	5	12%	2	20%	2	17%	1	8%	0	0%
•Concern with phosphorous transfer from cropland to surface waters and ground water	4	9%	0	0%	1	8%	1	8%	2	29%
•Concern there seems to be a hesitancy to move to cover crops because of a perceived fear of losing moisture	4	9%	2	20%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern that cover crops are not utilized on fallow ground...no living cover...worked repeatedly during fallow period...a source of water/wind erosion	4	9%	4	40%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern with residue blowing off and/or being washed off fields causing concerns in waterways, streams, riparian areas, and fencelines...piling up and/or blocking water flow	4	9%	1	10%	3	25%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern cover crop rotations do not match local growing conditions...lack of long term acceptance of cover crops...covers on dryland cropland in western Kansas is difficult	3	7%	1	10%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern with excessive nitrogen application (need for better soil testing)	3	7%	1	10%	1	8%	1	8%	0	0%
•Concern with decreased organic matter and overall soil health on dryland soils. Biomass removal of harvested crop residue for dairy bedding	3	7%	1	10%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern with the timing and success of applying cover crops in a corn/bean rotation (limited cover crop species/limited growing period)	2	5%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	29%
•Concern the interest in cover crops has leveled out...due to current ag economics/insurance policy guidelines	2	5%	1	10%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern exists with the perceived excessive use of pesticides...needs to be an overall reduction in the use of these products to maintain/improve water quality...also a concern with drift	2	5%	1	10%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern with re-vegetating irrigated soils not suitable for dryland production (sandhills south of Arkansas River)...education needed on how to successfully make the conversion by non-traditional means (small area conversions, natural succession, etc.)...programs (outside of CRP) are needed to support the non-traditional	1	2%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern with erosion occurring in county and township right-of-way's (road ditches)	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	14%
Grazing Lands Resource Concerns:										
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush on grazing lands...primarily cedar	32	74%	7	70%	8	67%	11	92%	6	86%
•Concern with performing "prescribed burns" and overall risk involved. Prescribed burning is not implemented as it has been in the past due to changing environmental conditions, increased fuel loads (cedars), and fear of potential undesirable outcomes (i.e. out of control fires, litigation, etc.)	29	67%	5	50%	8	67%	10	83%	6	86%
•concern with the lack of resources available to producers to support prescribed burning (burn associations & districts/groups, rural/municipal fire departments)	25	58%	5	50%	7	58%	8	67%	5	71%
•Concern with the growing number of absentee landowners and perceived lack of concern for, or understanding of, grassland management needs	21	49%	4	40%	7	58%	7	58%	3	43%
•Concern with overgrazing and lack of adoption of prescribed grazing practices	19	44%	4	40%	5	42%	7	58%	3	43%
•Concern with the invasive species of old world bluestem	18	42%	2	20%	5	42%	5	42%	6	86%
•Concern with lack of water availability...lack of available/reliable watering points for proper grazing distribution...on both large and small grazing operations	15	35%	3	30%	4	33%	4	33%	4	57%
•concern with challenges associated with managing grazing lands adjacent to tracts of land that are generally managed for deer hunting...fear of prescribed burning, fear of spraying, dealing with perennial seed sources of undesirable invasive species (cedars, hedge, locust, etc.)	15	35%	3	30%	4	33%	5	42%	3	43%
•Concern with the growing number of grassland acres that are being purchased for "hunting" and are not properly managed	12	28%	1	10%	3	25%	5	42%	3	43%
•Concern with invasive species harbored on county/township right-of-way's	9	21%	1	10%	3	25%	3	25%	2	29%
•Concern with the invasive species of phragmites	8	19%	3	30%	2	17%	1	8%	2	29%
•Concern with ponds that have outlived their lifespan and can no longer provide adequate water storage...loss of capacity due to sedimentation	8	19%	3	30%	2	17%	1	8%	2	29%
•Concern that producers may not be able to identify weed pests in grazing lands properly and subsequently the proper treatment/management of those weeds	7	16%	2	20%	3	25%	2	17%	0	0%
•Concern with the invasive species of sericea lespedeza	7	16%	1	10%	2	17%	4	33%	0	0%
•Concern with smoke management and effects on "urban" population	7	16%	0	0%	2	17%	2	17%	3	43%
•Concern with a general complacency about tree/brush control...we'll get to it when we can...and by then the tree growth has almost become unmanageable	6	14%	2	20%	1	8%	2	17%	1	14%

•Concern with grazing lands being converted to cropland...primarily economically driven (cash rent)	4	9%	2	20%	1	8%	1	8%	0	0%
•Concern with the invasive species of honeysuckle	4	9%	0	0%	2	17%	2	17%	0	0%
•Concern with the invasive species of callery pears	3	7%	0	0%	1	8%	2	17%	0	0%
•concern that late summer burns should be implemented to assist in the effective control of invasive species	3	7%	1	10%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern with the invasive species of teasel	3	7%	0	0%	0	0%	1	8%	2	29%
•Concern with the invasive species of salt cedar	2	5%	1	10%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern with the invasive species of windmill grass	1	2%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern with the invasive species of bineweed	1	2%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern with the invasive species of fescue	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%
•Concern with the invasive specie of russian olive	1	2%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
Streambank/Riparian Area Resource Concerns:										
•Concern with lack of riparian area management...degraded riparian area conditions, livestock winter feeding areas, woody/vegetative invasive species encroachment	8	19%	1	10%	3	25%	2	17%	2	25%
•Concern with streambank erosion and increased occurrence of active streambank erosion...stream channel width and incision concerns that are advancing up smaller tribs and into adjacent land uses...forming advancing gully erosion...loss or riparian areas, cropland, infrastructure stability	8	19%	1	10%	3	25%	2	17%	2	25%
•Concern with the amount of sediment delivery that's associated with active streambank erosion	5	12%	2	20%	1	8%	0	0%	2	25%
•Concern trees and grass adjacent to streams are no longer holding the banks during high runoff events.	4	9%	1	10%	1	8%	0	0%	2	25%
•Concern that streambank armoring is too expensive for landowners and alternative affordable means of streambank erosion control be should be investigated	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%
Surface Water Quantity (flooding) Resource Concerns:										
•Perception that more soil health practices (cover crops) would help with water infiltration and subsequently help reduce excessive water runoff, both a ground and surface water concern	7	16%	2	20%	2	17%	1	8%	2	25%
•Concern that township/rural roads are a major contributor of sedimentation to surface waters...especially in those situations where inadequate road ditches exist	7	16%	1	10%	2	17%	2	17%	2	25%
•Concern that flood intensity/events have increased substantially over the last number of years	3	7%	0	0%	1	8%	1	8%	1	13%
•Concern with surface water GMD's ability to maintain and improve existing water infrastructure delivery for irrigation	1	2%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Surface Water Quality Resource Concerns:										
•Concern with nutrient delivery to surface waters	14	33%	1	10%	4	33%	6	50%	3	38%
•Concern with sedimentation delivery to surface waters	11	26%	1	10%	4	33%	3	25%	3	38%
•Concern with livestock and municipal waste in surface waters	4	9%	2	20%	1	8%	0	0%	1	13%
Groundwater Quantity Resource Concerns:										
•Concern with declining ground water levels...need adoption of drought tolerant crops and/or incentives to reduce irrigation rates...improve infiltration rates on cropland...need for more efficient irrigation systems and less water intensive crops...need to utilize moisture probes for irrigation water management	16	37%	6	60%	8	67%	1	8%	1	13%
•concern with increasing irrigation efficiencies, economic challenges associated with transitioning from irrigated to dryland cropland, and working under LEMA's	7	16%	4	40%	2	17%	0	0%	1	13%
•Concern with declining ground water levels...having to drill wells deeper to find reliable water levels	5	12%	4	40%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
•Need for more small watershed structures, impoundments, level terraces, and playa's to help aquifer recharge	5	12%	2	20%	3	25%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern with losing farm income when reducing irrigation acres	3	7%	2	20%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
•concern industry and municipalities are not held to the same ground water use standards as irrigators	2	5%	1	10%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
•concern State water right rules provide no incentive for conservation of water outside of GMD's...if you don't use it, you lose the water right...no incentives for conserving water	1	2%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern irrigation districts need resoures to update outdated infrastructure that cannot support modern irrigation methods	1	2%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Public/Private Water Supply Quality Resource Concerns:										
•Concern with groundwater water supply nitrate impairment	6	14%	1	10%	4	33%	1	8%	0	0%
•Concern with surface water supply sedimentation impairment	5	12%	2	20%	1	8%	2	17%	0	0%
•Concern with surface water supply atrazine impairment	4	9%	1	10%	3	25%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern with surface water supply phosphate impairment	3	7%	0	0%	1	8%	2	17%	0	0%
•Concern with surface water supply blue green algae impairment	2	5%	0	0%	1	8%	1	8%	0	0%
Animal Resource Concerns:										
Wildlife:										
•Concern with upland bird habitat degradation and/or loss of brood rearing habitat, habitat connectivity, native grassland (including CRP) , riparian areas, as well as loss of habitat "edge"...lack of diversity across the landscape	29	67%	7	70%	8	67%	9	75%	5	63%
•Concern with brush/tree/invasive species...cedar, hedge, locust, honeysuckle, phragmites, teasel, winter creeper, sericea lespedeza, etc...and the detrimental effect on wildlife habitat	26	60%	6	60%	7	58%	9	75%	4	50%
•concern with the management of land owned/controlled by "out of area" landowners, or local landowners that are leasing land to "out of area" lessees for hunting	17	40%	2	20%	5	42%	6	50%	4	50%
•Concern with the declining populations of ground nesting game birds and non-game birds	11	26%	5	50%	3	25%	1	8%	2	25%
•Concern with lack of cover crops...perception that cover crops have been beneficial to upland game bird populations	7	16%	2	20%	3	25%	1	8%	1	13%
•concern there is a need to educate landowners whose main objective is deer hunting that a grass biome-based habitat is better than a woody (cedar) based habitat	4	9%	0	0%	2	17%	2	17%	0	0%
•Concern with brome encroachment in native grass/CRP	4	9%	2	20%	0	0%	1	8%	1	13%
•Concern with the decreased turkey population	4	9%	1	10%	1	8%	1	8%	1	13%
•Concern with the habitat fragmentation in and surrounding large urban areas/counties	4	9%	1	10%	2	17%	1	8%	0	0%
•Concern with the declining numbers of mule deer and pronghorn	3	7%	2	20%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern with tick populations and associated diseases	3	7%	0	0%	1	8%	2	17%	0	0%
•Concern with hedgerows and other "pockets" of wildlife cover being dozed out	3	7%	0	0%	1	8%	2	17%	0	0%
•Concern with the excessive resident goose population in urban setting	3	7%	0	0%	1	8%	2	17%	0	0%
Domestic:										
•Concern with water availability for proper grazing systems	6	14%	2	20%	2	17%	2	17%	0	0%
•Concern with livestock and municipal waste in surface waters	6	14%	2	20%	2	17%	2	17%	0	0%
•Concern with growing interest in large scale on-farm composting of old biomass (hay bales) as well as dead animal	1	2%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%

Forestry Resource Concerns:										
•Concern with lack of proper management and maintenance of forestland...plant vigor, density thinning, removal of undesirable trees, control of invasive species	10	23%	1	10%	3	25%	3	25%	3	38%
•concern for loss of native hardwoods in forested area...desirable native species being replaced with less desirable species	7	16%	1	10%	2	17%	1	8%	3	38%
•need for viable alternative tree species to replace cedars in windbreaks	7	16%	4	40%	3	25%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern with loss of windbreaks/shelterbelts, or windbreaks/shelterbelts not being properly managed/maintained	6	14%	2	20%	2	17%	1	8%	1	13%
•concern with Emerald Ash Borer	3	7%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%	2	25%
•concern with the lack of prescribed burns being applied in forestland	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%
Urban/Small Farm Resource Concerns:										
•Concern conservation partnership is not properly prepared to assist urban/small farms...not aware of or coming to conservation partnership for technical assistance	12	28%	2	20%	3	25%	4	33%	3	38%
•Concern with increased fracturing of rural lands...being sold into smaller parcels (20-40 acres)...utilized for houses/small ranchettes	5	12%	0	0%	2	17%	3	25%	0	0%
•Concern with people moving into rural areas and having unrealistic expectations dealing with traditional agriculture interactions...dust, odors, smoke, noise, etc.	5	12%	0	0%	2	17%	3	25%	0	0%
•Concern with urban/housing developments in rural areas...specifically in grassland areas...fire hazard awareness, dangerous fuel loads close to homes	4	9%	0	0%	2	17%	2	17%	0	0%
•concern educational needs exist for urban/small farms and conservation partners...need to have a better understanding of urban/small farm perspectives and needs	3	7%	0	0%	1	8%	2	17%	0	0%
•Concern with speculative properties neglected or essentially abandon until decision is made to develop or sell...no land management	2	5%	0	0%	1	8%	1	8%	0	0%
•Concern with the frequency and magnitude of ownership changes in a fragmented ownership landscape	2	5%	0	0%	1	8%	1	8%	0	0%
•Concern with water quality in ponds in housing development areas...high nutrient and pest contamination from lawns...grass species used (fescue and Kentucky Bluegrass require fertilization)...adoption of water conserving lawn species that reduce supplemental groundwater use	2	5%	0	0%	1	8%	1	8%	0	0%
•Concern with chemical drift on specialty crops (vineyards, orchards, vegetables).	2	5%	0	0%	0	0%	1	8%	1	13%
•Perceived urban population lack of understanding of "traditional agriculture" ...additional education is needed to address lack of knowledge...lingo, practices, etc.	1	2%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
•concern with increased runoff flows associated with non-permeable urban surfaces...roofs, roads, parking lots...and the issues it's causing on "traditional" ag lands	1	2%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
•concern with the amount of streambank erosion that is occurring in the urban setting	1	2%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
•concern with number private wells within city limits being used for lawn watering...water conservation concern	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%
Climate Resource Concerns:										
•Concern with adapting to changing growing conditions...drought, heat, rainfall intensities, etc.	13	30%	4	40%	5	42%	2	17%	2	25%
•Concern (general) with drought from a water availability standpoint across all land uses...drought mitigation	13	30%	4	40%	5	42%	2	17%	2	25%
•Concern with increased intensity/frequency of heavy rainfall events and subsequent effects (maintaining conservation practices, controlling erosion, infrastructure, etc.)	7	16%	3	30%	3	25%	1	8%	0	0%
•concern that more drought tolerant cropping system research is needed looking at alternatives to row crops (primarily corn)	4	9%	2	20%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
Training/Education Concerns:										
•Concern that new employees (NRCS and Partners) need timely training, appropriate training, field training	30	70%	7	70%	8	67%	9	75%	6	75%
•Perceived need for additional trainings on prescribed burning and burning workshops (staff and producers)	25	58%	7	70%	7	58%	8	67%	3	38%
•need to provide additional training and educational materials on the control of old world bluestem	15	35%	2	20%	3	25%	4	33%	6	75%
•Perceived need for additional trainings on soil health (staff & producers)...what are the long term benefits of soil health practices (cover crops, no-till, etc.)	14	33%	3	30%	3	25%	4	33%	4	50%
•Perceived need for additional training/education/resources needed to promote grazing lands health...proper	13	30%	3	30%	4	33%	5	42%	1	13%
•Concern with challenges associated with partnership staff being the "experts" on all available programs...the programs are constantly changing...tough to keep up on all of them	13	30%	3	30%	4	33%	3	25%	3	38%
•Perceived need for additional training on brush mgmt and follow-up needs after completion of brush mgmt	11	26%	4	40%	3	25%	3	25%	1	13%
•perceived need for additional training on nutrient management (staff and producers)	11	26%	2	20%	4	33%	4	33%	1	13%
•concern there is need for education/training on basic structural conservation maintenance of structural conservation practices using producer owned equipment	5	12%	1	10%	1	8%	2	17%	1	13%
•concern more "local" information/support is needed on alternative crops and associated markets	4	9%	2	20%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
•Perceived need for additional training/education addressing conversion from irrigated cropland to dryland cropland production	4	9%	2	20%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
•Need training on phragmites control	3	7%	1	10%	0	0%	1	8%	1	13%
•offer more scholarship opportunities to rangeland workshops/conferences.	3	7%	1	10%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
specifications.	2	5%	1	10%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
•Perceived need for additional trainings on the use of native grass species in lawns to reduce fertilization and water needs	1	2%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
Outreach Concerns:										
•Concern there is a relatively uncoordinated effort between local/state/federal/TSP entities to promote, advertise, and implement resource protection programs...landowners/producers find it challenging to understand and locate all local sources of information, technical assistance, and FA opportunities	28	65%	7	70%	8	67%	8	67%	5	63%
•Concern reaching and providing outreach/education to absentee landowners	25	58%	7	70%	7	58%	7	58%	4	50%
•concern with absentee landowners and their understanding of conservation practices and willingness to apply conservation practices	19	44%	5	50%	4	33%	7	58%	3	38%
•Need for conservation partnership to become more familiar with "all" available programs...or at least have a familiarity with where to find this information	16	37%	4	40%	5	42%	5	42%	2	25%
•Utilize available mentoring programs to transfer knowledge...farmer to farmer...need to encourage more peer to peer training/learning	14	33%	3	30%	4	33%	3	25%	4	50%
•Understanding how age demographics plays a role in customer outreach...older generation (written material, newsletter, field days, radio) vs younger generation (text, Facebook, email, internet, YouTube, podcasts,	10	23%	2	20%	5	42%	3	25%	0	0%
•Lack of resources/technical ability to share information and target groups via social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, twitter and internet. Younger generation is increasingly using these platforms to instantly access information or technical knowledge they are seeking	10	23%	1	10%	4	33%	3	25%	2	25%
•Concern with NRCS not utilizing all forms of social media outreach...specifically electronic emails and text messages...why can FSA do this and not NRCS	10	23%	2	20%	3	25%	3	25%	2	25%
•Concern with lack of overall producer participation in available trainings/meetings/field days	9	21%	2	20%	2	17%	3	25%	2	25%

•concern there is a lack of outreach to local schools, school organizations, and local civic groups	9	21%	2	20%	3	25%	2	17%	2	25%
•concern we're not properly engaging and educating new landowners on resource management and conservation needs/practices	8	19%	3	30%	2	17%	2	17%	1	13%
•concern with the lack of knowledgeable producer/professional "mentors" that are available to assist producers adopting new conservation practices	7	16%	2	20%	2	17%	2	17%	1	13%
•concern with gaining input from ordinary citizens/producers/board members on LWG's	7	16%	2	20%	2	17%	2	17%	1	13%
•NRCS needs a more user friendly website...too wordy...too many links...and requires too many clicks to get desired information	5	12%	2	20%	1	8%	1	8%	1	13%
•perception that additional partnering is needed with cities/municipalities to address identified resource concerns	5	12%	2	20%	2	17%	1	8%	0	0%
•concern financial professionals (bankers) and ag leaders have a great influence over producers in the consideration of adopting/applying conservation practices...need to work with the group	4	9%	1	10%	1	8%	1	8%	1	13%
•Need to tap into available resources of entities for information/outreach sharing...City Governments, County Commissions, various other entities/NGO's	4	9%	1	10%	2	17%	1	8%	0	0%
•Concern that there is a lack of funding for outreach at the local level (cost of speakers, field days, workshops, etc.)	4	9%	1	10%	1	8%	2	17%	0	0%
•Need for locally produced/theme videos addressing local resource concerns/opportunities	3	7%	1	10%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
•Need to do a better job of promoting programs for playas....WRE and CRP	3	7%	2	20%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
•Crop consultants need access to USDA texts and emails as they have regular contact with producers and could help with the transfer of information	3	7%	1	10%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern that an unintended specialty crop grower's "barrier" exists with USDA as compared to traditional agriculture	3	7%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%	2	25%
•Concern with education/outreach needs for urban/small farms...small farms (10-80 acres)... a focused outreach to these landowners/producers is needed (have been traditionally over-looked)...need improved/emphasized outreach to them	2	5%	0	0%	1	8%	1	8%	0	0%
•Concern with training, outreach, and interactions with "urban/small producers" and the urban population in general...how to identify a resource concern they may have...many have fulltime jobs and have a hard time making educational events...what are USDA's efforts to serve urban ag producers...what constitutes urban land	2	5%	0	0%	1	8%	1	8%	0	0%
•Concern that specialty crop growers or "out of the loop" with potential USDA services/programs	2	5%	0	0%	1	8%	1	8%	0	0%
•hold more customer appreciation days	1	2%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
•utilize more summer interns	1	2%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Program Concerns:										
NRCS Programs:										
•concern with lack of outreach promoting available conservation programs	19	44%	4	40%	5	42%	7	58%	3	38%
•concern the EQIP application/approval process is too complex, complicated, cumbersome, and lengthy	18	42%	5	50%	4	33%	6	50%	3	38%
•Concern with time from application to potential funding...too much time in between...basically waiting to hear and not addressing resource concern in a timely manner...hinders their decision-making process...especially with deferred applications	15	35%	4	40%	3	25%	5	42%	3	38%
•Concern payments rates are too low for many practices...magnified by current inflation rates and supply issues	15	35%	5	50%	3	25%	5	42%	2	25%
•Inadequate livestock water "water availability" should be a stand alone resource concern for EQIP...not always tied to plant resource concern...old watering sources are failing (ponds/wells) or have lost their capacity/integrity and not eligible for FA...considered maintenance	14	33%	4	40%	4	33%	3	25%	3	38%
•Concern available FA funds are insufficient	14	33%	4	40%	2	17%	5	42%	3	38%
•Concern that grazing plans for EQIP applications/contracts are too restrictive and are not economically feasible for producers to implement	11	26%	2	20%	3	25%	3	25%	3	38%
•Recommendation to include "virtual" fencing for livestock as an eligible practice	10	23%	3	30%	3	25%	2	17%	2	25%
•Concern additional FA is needed for structural conservation practices	9	21%	2	20%	2	17%	2	17%	3	38%
•Concern additional FA is needed for rebuilding/replacing structural conservation practices that have outlived their lifespan (i.e. terraces, waterways, etc.)	9	21%	2	20%	2	17%	2	17%	3	38%
•concern that program interpretations varies from office to office	9	21%	3	30%	3	25%	2	17%	1	13%
•Concern EQIP payment rates should be developed on a more "localized" state basis, rather than on a multi-state basis	9	21%	2	20%	2	17%	3	25%	2	25%
•Need funding for irrigation to dryland conversions...need to look at other financial alternatives to encourage landowners to retire water rights and permanently transition to dryland (easements, tax codes, etc.)	9	21%	4	40%	5	42%	0	0%	0	0%
•Need to provide program FA to address ponds that have outlived their lifespan and need to be rehabilitated...similar to prior DOC sediment removal programs	8	19%	2	20%	2	17%	2	17%	2	25%
•Concern that "funding pools" should be refocused back to the MU level	8	19%	2	20%	2	17%	1	8%	3	38%
•additional "act now" funding opportunities are desired	7	16%	3	30%	2	17%	1	8%	1	13%
•Concern with the oversight, implementation of "conservation compliance" by NRCS...seems like a lot of active erosion occurring	7	16%	1	10%	2	17%	2	17%	2	25%
•concern with required brush management treatment thresholds...removal of all trees...steep slopes, floodplains, desirable species	6	14%	1	10%	2	17%	1	8%	2	25%
•concern with the lack of visibility of fund pools...visibility of fund pools would assist landowner/operator in decision making	6	14%	2	20%	2	17%	1	8%	1	13%
•provide greater flexibility and options with program cover crop requirements...expand seeding dates...lower the carbon to nitrogen ratio...the regulations for seeding cover crops under soil health can be restrictive	6	14%	1	10%	2	17%	1	8%	2	25%
•More FA emphasis needs to be placed "soil health" practices	6	14%	1	10%	2	17%	2	17%	1	13%
•Concern that FA programs reward procrastinators and not innovators/adopters	5	12%	2	20%	1	8%	2	17%	0	0%
•Recommendation to allow for mechanical harvesting of cover crops	5	12%	1	10%	1	8%	2	17%	1	13%
•Concern that once FA program incentives are completed, producers will revert back to pre-incentive farming practices	5	12%	2	20%	3	25%	0	0%	0	0%
•concern with disconnect between program decision makers at the State and/or USDA level and local boards with most government programs. Need greater flexibility and authority at the local level.	5	12%	2	20%	2	17%	1	8%	0	0%
•concern that soil erosion calculations are not utilized in program resource assessment and ranking	4	9%	0	0%	1	8%	2	17%	1	13%
•Concern with the 590 practice and the amount of documentation/records required...also concern with the inconsistency of application of this practice across the state	4	9%	1	10%	3	25%	0	0%	0	0%
•need to pay pipe (620) on a per foot/size basis rather than a weight basis	4	9%	0	0%	0	0%	1	8%	3	38%
•concern with limited funding pools for irrigation practices	4	9%	3	30%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
•need for continuation and expansion of the CPGI program	3	7%	1	10%	1	8%	1	8%	0	0%
•concern the stringent nutrient mgmt. requirements of CSP are discouraging program participation	3	7%	1	10%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern windbreaks and shelter belts around farmsteads have to be tied to "energy"...need funds for maintaining/cleaning up/replanting windbreaks...also land use limitations don't allow for windbreaks to be used for livestock	3	7%	2	20%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
•Concern with lack of FA available for streambank stabilization needs	3	7%	0	0%	0	0%	1	8%	2	25%
•Concern with the amount of "paperwork and administration" that exists with implementing federal FA	2	5%	2	20%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

*concern there should be more CSP enhancements that "fit" western Kansas	2	5%	1	10%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
*Recommend a program payment option to "rehab" an existing terraces system vs. "rebuilding" a system. Existing terraces system is functioning properly, but just needs to be rehabbed...a potentially less expensive option.	2	5%	0	0%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
*Concern with lack of FA for water sources on cropland for cover crop use...grazing of cover crops financially justifies the application for cover crops for the majority of producers	2	5%	1	10%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
*recommendation cover crops applied through EQIP in western KS should require fewer species (1-5 species)	2	5%	1	10%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
*Nutrient management alternatives (green-seeker technology, N-rich strips, variable rate application, etc.) are not eligible for financial assistance under EQIP because the 590 specification is already being met...however, meeting the 590 specification does not mean that nutrients are not being overapplied were extreme environmental conditions exist	2	5%	0	0%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
*concern with the amount of time it takes to get a WRE application to WRE contract	1	2%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
*concern with lack of maintenance of existing program high tunnels	1	2%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
*sagebrush and yucca suppression should eligible through EQIP	1	2%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
*EQIP requires that dryland conversion on I-134 soils must be planted to permanent vegetative cover...within the management unit, there are producers who can farm these soils under dryland conditions	1	2%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
FSA Programs:										
*Concern there is inadequate management or maintenance of CRP acres because of participants lack of willingness or ability to perform required management...concern with invasive species and woody vegetation encroachment and effect on intended CRP species composition and habitat benefits	19	44%	5	50%	5	42%	6	50%	3	38%
*Concern CRP payments rates are low and hard to generate interest in participating/renewing	17	40%	5	50%	5	42%	4	33%	3	38%
*Concern with CRP being broken out...need better incentives to keep in grass (such as providing livestock water and fencing)...additional concern CRP is being broken out because absentee landowners (contract holders) that don't have access to or the ability to perform maintenance activities	10	23%	3	30%	2	17%	3	25%	2	25%
*Concern the burning window associated with the primary nesting season is too restrictive	9	21%	2	20%	2	17%	2	17%	3	38%
*Concern increase in emergency haying/grazing is having an adverse effect on wildlife	7	16%	2	20%	3	25%	2	17%	0	0%
*Financial assistance is needed to improve infrastructure on CRP while the land is still under contract...fencing, water development	6	14%	2	20%	1	8%	2	17%	1	13%
*recommendation to extend CRP spring prescribed deadline from April 15th to May 15th	4	9%	0	0%	2	17%	1	8%	1	13%
*concern to expand playa restoration practices	3	7%	3	30%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
*Concern that continuous CRP is not being utilized as much as it could be	1	2%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
*concern with increased use of CRP for haying and grazing...reducing habitat during critical part of year	1	2%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Generalized Concerns/Questions/Comments/TA Needs:										
*Concern with lack of adequate staff, number of vacant positions, retention of staff, training/knowledge of existing staff...how are we going to provide services without staff	38	88%	9	90%	11	92%	11	92%	7	88%
*Concern with the lack of time NRCS is spending on the land with landowners...not enough staff to spend adequate time in the field with producers...planning and follow up	29	67%	6	60%	8	67%	9	75%	6	75%
*concern with cultural resource review process...has resulted in significant delays in practice start/implementation	17	40%	4	40%	5	42%	4	33%	4	50%
*More emphasis needs to be placed on CTA planning vs programs...need time to follow-up with producers after practice/contract implementation	17	40%	5	50%	3	25%	4	33%	5	63%
*contractor availability is a concern...soil contractors, spraying and brush/tree removal, well drilling, prescribed burning, tree planting, etc.	14	33%	4	40%	3	25%	3	25%	4	50%
*Concern with time it takes to receive TA not associated with FA	11	26%	3	30%	4	33%	4	33%	0	0%
*BWG participants would like to know how agency leaders/decision makers are considering/implementing LWG recommendations...what are the results of LWG input	9	21%	2	20%	3	25%	2	17%	2	25%
*Concern with perceived need for more use of outside sources of TA (non NRCS) that have a particular expertise that can be utilized to assist producers in planning and application of conservation practices	7	16%	2	20%	2	17%	2	17%	1	13%
*Concern that institutional policies...primarily crop insurance...inhibit "alternative" crop adoption...issues with insurance requirements when incorporating "new" crops (such as canola) into cropping systems. Some "new" crops require 3 years of yield data to insure subsequent crops	5	12%	1	10%	3	25%	0	0%	1	13%
*Concern with perceived "disconnect" between leadership and local producer/landowner needs...emphasis is on program implementation at the cost of traditional TA (getting back to working on the ground with	5	12%	3	30%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
*Concern with crop insurance program guarantees of revenue coverage...perception this is encouraging farming of marginal soils and conversion of grasslands to cropland	3	7%	2	20%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
*Concern with solar energy farms	3	7%	1	10%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
*Utilization of NRCS Nutrient Management (590) standard and specification does not fully address the proper application of nutrients where other variables (environmental stresses common to southwest Kansas) determine potential yield...use of new technologies would prevent the over application of nutrients (determined by KSU guidelines)	2	5%	0	0%	2	17%	0	0%	0	0%
*Concern with wind energy farms	2	5%	1	10%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
*Concern with wind erosion occurring on dirt roads	2	5%	1	10%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%
*Concern that USDA programs discourage producers from adopting cover crops...FSA crop acreage certification process is not conducive to cover crops practices, inter-seeding, initial crop vs secondary crop, subsequent crops status or of grazing cover crops, FSA ARC/PLC program disincentivizes sound soil health practices	1	2%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
*Concern with the excessive resources utilized by "data centers"	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%
*concern that partner employees are not able to obtain Protracts permissions to assist NRCS with contract workload	1	2%	1	10%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

	NRCS Area	LWG Meeting Date	# of LWG Atten dees
2026 LWG Meetings:			
Goodland MU	1	3/10/26	9
Hill City MU	1	3/5/26	27
Jetmore MU	1	3/24/26	15
Oakley MU	1	2/26/26	12
Oberlin MU	1	3/24/26	10
Russell MU	1	4/2/26	24
Smith Center MU	1	2/19/26	12
Syracuse MU	1	2/18/26	6
Finney/Kearny Counties	1	2/4/26	13

Scott County	1	3/9/26	12
Dodge City MU	2	3/6/26	16
Hugoton MU	2	2/26/26	11
Kingman MU	2	3/30/26	8
Pratt MU	2	3/23/26	15
Ulysses MU	2	3/12/26	8
Wichita MU	2	3/12/26	11
Barton/Pawnee Counties	2	2/19/26	22
Edwards County	2	3/19/26	10
Marion County	2	3/18/26	18
McPherson County	2	3/30/26	16
Rice County	2	3/23/26	7
Rush County	2	2/12/26	10
Columbus MU	3	2/23/26	12
Emporia MU	3	3/18/26	10
Lawrence MU	3	3/12/26	21
Anderson County	3	3/9/26	7
Bourdon County	3	1/15/26	13
Butler County	3	2/25/26	12
Chautauqua/Elk Counties	3	2/10/26	15
Coffey County	3	2/19/26	40
Cowley County	3	3/12/26	12
Greenwood/Woodson Counties	3	3/18/26	9
Linn County	3	3/2/26	6
Wilson County	3	2/25/26	15
Abilene MU	4	3/30/26	14
Concordia MU	4	1/28/26	28
Hiawatha MU	4	3/5/26	20
Lincoln MU	4	3/10/26	22
Marysville MU	4	2/3/26	6
Manhattan MU	4	3/3/26	19
Atchison/Jefferson/Leavenworth Counties	4	2/18/26	10
Total LWG Attendees:			583

State Resource Concerns

- Concern that there is not enough management or maintenance of CRP acres because of program limitations and/or producers willingness or ability to do management...allow grazing earlier in the season...remove rental rate reduction for grazing...concern with invasive species and woody vegetation encroachment...seedbed preparation for interseeding needs to be cost shared on
- Concern with upland bird habitat degradation and/or loss of brood rearing habitat, habitat connectivity, native grassland (including CRP) , riparian areas, as well as loss of habitat "edge"...lack of diversity across the landscape
- concern that it's difficult to justify the implementation of cover crops unless they're grazed...how do we sell cover crop adoption based on "intrinsic" soil health benefits
- Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...cedar
- Concern with performing "prescribed burns" and overall risk involved. Prescribed burning is not implemented as it has been in the past due to changing environmental conditions, increased fuel loads (cedars), and fear of potential undesirable outcomes (i.e. out of control fires, litigation, etc.)
- Concern available FA funds are insufficient
- Concern that climate smart ag/carbon sequestration education is needed
- Concern with the lack of time NRCS is spending on the land with landowners...not enough staff to spend adequate time in the field with producers
- Concern with lack of adequate staff, number of vacant positions, training/knowledge of existing staff, and retention of staff...competent staff is needed to assist producers addressing resource concerns
- Active gully erosion (ephemeral) in cropland fields...worked shut every year, but reform annually
- Concern with streambank erosion and increased occurrence of active streambank erosion...stream channel width and incision concerns that are advancing up smaller tribs and into adjacent landuses...forming advancing gully erosion...loss or riparian areas, cropland, infrastructure stability
- Concern that conservation partnership is not properly prepared to assist urban/small farms...more use of non-traditional outreach medias focused on this group...YouTube, Facebook, twitter, etc...not aware of or coming to conservation partnership for technical assistance.
- Concern with training, outreach, and interactions with "urban/small producers" and the urban population in general...how to identify a resource concern they may have...many have fulltime jobs and have a hard time making educational events...what are USDA's efforts to serve urban ag producers...what constitutes urban land
- Concern with education/outreach needs for urban/small farms...small farms (10-80 acres)... a focused outreach to these landowners/producers is needed (have been traditionally over-looked)...need improved/emphasized outreach to them...are they aware of NRCS services/offices...potential untapped customer base...more promotion needed...need to have a better understanding of their perspectives and needs
- Concern with the declining populations of ground nesting game birds and non-game birds. (quail, pheasant)

•Concern there is a relatively uncoordinated effort between local/state/federal entities to promote, advertise, and implement resource protection programs...landowners/producers may find it challenging to understand and locate all local sources of information, technical assistance, and FA...suggestion...agencies collaboratively create a media product (i.e. brochure) that outlines what each does and resources that are available...this would be to the benefit of all entities/landowners/producers
•Concern reaching and providing additional outreach/education absentee landowners
•concern NRCS needs to provide a written response (report) to LWG sponsors on the "actions" that were implemented as a result of input recieved through LWG meetings...providing validity to the LWG process
•Concern with lack of diversified crop rotations...moving more to row crops...driven by economics and crop insurance safety nets
•Concern with invasive species of old-world bluestem
•Concern with the amount of sedimentation that's associated with active streambank erosion
•Concern with lack of overall producer participation in available trainings/meetings/field days
•Concern additional FA is needed for rebuilding/replacing structural conservation practices that have outlived their lifespan (i.e. terraces, waterways, ponds)
•Concern that CRP payments rates are low and hard to generate interest in participating/renewing
•Concern with structural practices past life span and failing...active erosion is occuring in unmaintained structural practice systems. (terraces, waterways, ponds, etc....)
•Concern with the amount of "paperwork and administration" that exists with implementing federal FA
•Concern for a need to expand of soil health practices (no-till/cover crops). Keep the soil biologically active
•Concern with the growing number of absentee landowners and perceived lack of concern for, or understanding of, grassland management needs
•Concern with lack of water availability...lack of available watering points for proper grazing distribution...on both large and small grazing operations
•Concern with overgrazing and adoption of prescribed grazing practices
•concern with challenges associated with managing grazing lands that are adjacent to tracts of land that are generally managed for deer hunting...fear of prescribed burning, fear of spraying, dealing with perennial seed sources of undesirable invasive species (cedars, hedge, locust, etc.)
•Perception that more soil health practices (cover crops) would help with water infiltration and subsequently help reduce excessive water runoff, both a ground and surface water concern
•Concern with increased intensity/frequency of heavy rainfall events and subsequent effects (maintaining conservation practices, controlling erosion, infrastructure, etc.)
•Perceived need for additional trainings on soil health (staff & producers)...what are the long term benefits of soil health practices. (cover crops, no-till, etc.)
•Inadequate livestock water "water availability" should be a stand alone resource concern...not always tied to plant resource concern...old watering sources are failing (ponds/wells) or have lost their capacity/integrity and not eligible for FA...considered maintenance
•Concern with CRP being broken out...need better incentives to keep in grass. (Livestock water and fence)...additionally some CRP is getting broken out because of absentee landowners that don't have access to or the ability to perform maintenance activities so rent to someone to farm
•Concern with overall nutrient management implementation...efficient/proper use of fertilizers

•Concern with the growing number of grassland acres that are being purchased for “hunting” and are not properly managed or lack of management
•Concern that FA programs reward procrastinators and not innovators/adopters
•Concern with marginal cropland being brought into production from grasslands (sodbuster) and not being adequately treated
•Concern with invasive species of sericea lespedeza
•Concern that streambank armoring is too expensive for landowners and that alternative affordable means of streambank erosion control be should be looked at
•Concern with brush/tree/invasive species...cedar, hedge, locust, honeysuckle, phragmites, teasal, winter creeper, sericea lespedeza, etc...and the detrimental effect on wildlife habitat
•Perceived need for additional trainings on prescribed burning and burning workshops. Use of spot/patch burning, firebreaks, and offseason burns. (staff and producer)
•concern with gaining input from ordinary citizens/producers/board members on LWG’s...need to pursue different/innovative methods of outreach...how do we get people to hear and adopt the message...hope decision makers (federal and state) listen to producer concerns
•Concern that progressive levels of treatment should be allowed to be implemented rather than always having to meet RMS levels of treatment for FA programs...concern that grazing plans for EQIP applications/contracts are too restrictive and are not economically feasible to producers...this also limits adoption of other practices to address other resource concerns...perhaps increase in 528 payments rate would help in adoption of prescribed grazing plans.
•contractor availability is a concern...soil contractors, spraying and brush/tree removal, well drilling, prescribed burning, tree planting
•More of an emphasis needs to be placed on CTA planning vs programs...need time to follow-up with producers after practice/contract implementation
•concern that drought has had a negative impact on cropland/grassland causing less cover leading to challenges with erosion control, blowing crop stover, pest control, plant vigor, OM, etc.
•Concern that benefits from soil health practices take years to realize...perception there is a general apprehension to commit to the multi-year time frame needed to realize benefits...associated with farm economics...economics of surviving on a year-to-year basis
•Concern that flood intensity/events have increased substantially over the last number of years
•Concern with sedimentation and nutrients
•Concern with surface water supply sedimentation impairment
•RCS needs a more user friendly website...a lot of it is too wordy...has too many links...and requires too many clicks to get desired information
•Concern with the brush management threshold...by the time the minimum threshold is met, trees are fairly large...recommendation to treat trees at a more manageable (smaller) stage...look at number of trees per acre, rather than % of canopy
•Concern with soil health/plant vigor on grazing lands...trailing, compaction, lack of grazing distribution
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...locust
•additional “act now” funding opportunities are desired
•concern with the lack of available resources available to producers to support prescribed burning (burn associations & districts/groups, rural/municipal fire departments)
•Concern with water availability for grazing systems and distribution

• Concern with loss of windbreaks/shelterbelts, or windbreaks/shelterbelts not being properly managed/maintained
• Concern with adapting to changing growing conditions...drought, heat, rainfall intensities, etc.
• Concern (general) with drought from a water availability standpoint across all landuses...drought mitigation
• Perceived need for additional training/education/resources needed to promote grazing lands health and CRP management...drought management on native grazinglands, info/ed on trigger dates for destocking
• Perceived need for education of landowners (generally from out of the area) of tracts purchased/managed for "deer hunting"
• Available programs are addressing most resource concerns (except streambank erosion) but just not enough FA
• Concern with perceived need for use more outside sources of TA (non NRCS) that have a particular expertise that can be utilized to assist producers in planning

MU Occurrence (no.)	MU Occurrence (%)	Area 1 (no.)	Area 1 (%)	Area 2 (no.)	Area 2 (%)	Area 3 (no.)	Area 3 (%)	Area 4 (no.)	Area 4 (%)
27	90%	7	78%	6	75%	7	117%	7	100%
25	83%	8	89%	4	50%	6	100%	7	100%
24	80%	6	67%	7	88%	5	83%	6	86%
24	80%	6	67%	5	63%	6	100%	7	100%
23	77%	7	78%	6	75%	5	83%	5	71%
23	77%	6	67%	6	75%	5	83%	6	86%
22	73%	6	67%	5	63%	5	83%	6	86%
22	73%	6	67%	4	50%	5	83%	7	100%
22	73%	7	78%	3	38%	5	83%	7	100%
21	70%	4	44%	5	63%	6	100%	6	86%
21	70%	6	67%	3	38%	5	83%	7	100%
21	70%	4	44%	6	75%	5	83%	6	86%
21	70%	4	44%	5	63%	6	100%	6	86%
21	70%	4	44%	5	63%	6	100%	6	86%
20	67%	6	67%	4	50%	5	83%	5	71%

20	67%	5	56%	4	50%	5	83%	6	86%
20	67%	5	56%	4	50%	5	83%	6	86%
20	67%	6	67%	5	63%	4	67%	5	71%
19	63%	5	56%	3	38%	5	83%	6	86%
19	63%	3	33%	6	75%	4	67%	6	86%
19	63%	5	56%	2	25%	6	100%	6	86%
19	63%	3	33%	4	50%	5	83%	7	100%
19	63%	5	56%	2	25%	5	83%	7	100%
19	63%	4	44%	3	38%	5	83%	7	100%
18	60%	4	44%	3	38%	5	83%	6	86%
18	60%	4	44%	3	38%	5	83%	6	86%
17	57%	3	33%	3	38%	5	83%	6	86%
17	57%	5	56%	1	13%	5	83%	6	86%
17	57%	5	56%	4	50%	4	67%	4	57%
17	57%	5	56%	2	25%	5	83%	5	71%
17	57%	3	33%	4	50%	5	83%	5	71%
17	57%	3	33%	3	38%	4	67%	7	100%
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15	50%	5	56%	2	25%	3	50%	5	71%
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15	50%	2	22%	6	75%	3	50%	4	57%
15	50%	3	33%	1	13%	5	83%	6	86%
14	47%	7	78%	4	50%	2	33%	1	14%
14	47%	3	33%	2	25%	3	50%	6	86%
14	47%	3	33%	1	13%	5	83%	5	71%
14	47%	3	33%			4	67%	7	100%
14	47%	3	33%			5	83%	6	86%
14	47%	3	33%	8	100%	2	33%	1	14%
14	47%	5	56%	1	13%	5	83%	3	43%
13	43%	3	33%	2	25%	4	67%	4	57%
13	43%	3	33%	4	50%	2	33%	4	57%
13	43%	4	44%	4	50%	2	33%	3	43%
12	40%	2	22%	1	13%	3	50%	6	86%
12	40%	4	44%	3	38%	4	67%	2	29%

12	40%	3	33%	3	38%			6	86%
12	40%	3	33%	1	13%	4	67%	4	57%
12	40%	6	67%	2	25%	1	17%	3	43%
12	40%	3	33%	2	25%	4	67%	3	43%
12	40%	2	22%	2	25%	5	83%	3	43%
12	40%	3	33%			4	67%	5	71%
12	40%	3	33%	1	13%	5	83%	3	43%

State Resource Concerns

- Concern that there is not enough management or maintenance of CRP acres because of program limitations and/or producers willingness or ability to do management...allow grazing earlier in the season...remove rental rate reduction for grazing...concern with invasive species and woody vegetation encroachment...seedbed preparation for interseeding needs to be cost shared on
- Concern with upland bird habitat degradation and/or loss of brood rearing habitat, habitat connectivity, native grassland (including CRP) , riparian areas, as well as loss of habitat "edge"...lack of diversity across the landscape
- concern that it's difficult to justify the implementation of cover crops unless they're grazed...how do we sell cover crop adoption based on "intrinsic" soil health benefits
- Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...cedar
- Concern with performing "prescribed burns" and overall risk involved. Prescribed burning is not implemented as it has been in the past due to changing environmental conditions, increased fuel loads (cedars), and fear of potential nondesirable outcomes (i.e. out of control fires, litigation, etc.)
- Concern available FA funds are insufficient
- Concern that climate smart ag/carbon sequestration education is needed
- Concern with the lack of time NRCS is spending on the land with landowners...not enough staff to spend adequate time in the field with producers
- Concern with lack of adequate staff, number of vacant positions, training/knowledge of existing staff, and retention of staff...competent staff is needed to assist producers addressing resource concerns
- Active gully erosion (ephemeral) in cropland fields...worked shut every year, but reform annually
- Concern with streambank erosion and increased occurrence of active streambank erosion...stream channel width and incision concerns that are advancing up smaller tribs and into adjacent landuses...forming advancing gully erosion...loss or riparian areas, cropland, infrastructure stability
- Concern that conservation partnership is not properly prepared to assist urban/small farms...more use of non-traditional outreach medias focused on this group...YouTube, Facebook, twitter, etc...not aware of or coming to conservation partnership for technical assistance.
- Concern with training, outreach, and interactions with "urban/small producers" and the urban population in general...how to identify a resource concern they may have...many have fulltime jobs and have a hard time making educational events...what are USDA's efforts to serve urban ag producers...what constitutes urban land
- Concern with education/outreach needs for urban/small farms...small farms (10-80 acres)... a focused outreach to these landowners/producers is needed (have been traditionally over-looked)...need improved/emphasized outreach to them...are they aware of NRCS services/offices...potential untapped customer base...more promotion needed...need to have a better understanding of their perspectives and needs
- Concern with the declining populations of ground nesting game birds and non-game birds. (quail, pheasant)

•Concern there is a relatively uncoordinated effort between local/state/federal entities to promote, advertise, and implement resource protection programs...landowners/producers may find it challenging to understand and locate all local sources of information, technical assistance, and FA...suggestion...agencies collaboratively create a media product (i.e. brochure) that outlines what each does and resources that are available...this would be to the benefit of all entities/landowners/producers
•Concern reaching and providing additional outreach/education absentee landowners
•concern NRCS needs to provide a written response (report) to LWG sponsors on the "actions" that were implemented as a result of input recieved through LWG meetings...providing validity to the LWG process
•Concern with lack of diversified crop rotations...moving more to row crops...driven by economics and crop insurance safety nets
•Concern with invasive species of old-world bluestem
•Concern with the amount of sedimentation that's associated with active streambank erosion
•Concern with lack of overall producer participation in available trainings/meetings/field days
•Concern additional FA is needed for rebuilding/replacing structural conservation practices that have outlived their lifespan (i.e. terraces, waterways, ponds)
•Concern that CRP payments rates are low and hard to generate interest in participating/renewing
•Concern with structural practices past life span and failing...active erosion is occuring in unmaintained structural practice systems. (terraces, waterways, ponds, etc....)
•Concern with the amount of "paperwork and administration" that exists with implementing federal FA
•Concern for a need to expand of soil health practices (no-till/cover crops). Keep the soil biologically active
•Concern with the growing number of absentee landowners and perceived lack of concern for, or understanding of, grassland management needs
•Concern with lack of water availability...lack of available watering points for proper grazing distribution...on both large and small grazing operations
•Concern with overgrazing and adoption of prescribed grazing practices
•concern with challenges associated with managing grazing lands that are adjacent to tracts of land that are generally managed for deer hunting...fear of prescribed burning, fear of spraying, dealing with perennial seed sources of undesirable invasive species (cedars, hedge, locust, etc.)
•Perception that more soil health practices (cover crops) would help with water infiltration and subsequently help reduce excessive water runoff, both a ground and surface water concern
•Concern with increased intensity/frequency of heavy rainfall events and subsequent effects (maintaining conservation practices, controlling erosion, infrastructure, etc.)
•Perceived need for additional trainings on soil health (staff & producers)...what are the long term benefits of soil health practices. (cover crops, no-till, etc.)
•Inadequate livestock water "water availability" should be a stand alone resource concern...not always tied to plant resource concern...old watering sources are failing (ponds/wells) or have lost their capacity/integrity and not eligible for FA...considered maintenance
•Concern with CRP being broken out...need better incentives to keep in grass. (Livestock water and fence)...additionally some CRP is getting broken out because of absentee landowners that don't have access to or the ability to perform maintenance activities so rent to someone to farm
•Concern with overall nutrient management implementation...efficient/proper use of fertilizers

•Concern with the growing number of grassland acres that are being purchased for “hunting” and are not properly managed or lack of management
•Concern that FA programs reward procrastinators and not innovators/adopters
•Concern with marginal cropland being brought into production from grasslands (sodbuster) and not being adequately treated
•Concern with invasive species of sericea lespedeza
•Concern that streambank armoring is too expensive for landowners and that alternative affordable means of streambank erosion control be should be looked at
•Concern with brush/tree/invasive species...cedar, hedge, locust, honeysuckle, phragmites, teasal, winter creeper, sericea lespedeza, etc...and the detrimental effect on wildlife habitat
•Perceived need for additional trainings on prescribed burning and burning workshops. Use of spot/patch burning, firebreaks, and offseason burns. (staff and producer)
•concern with gaining input from ordinary citizens/producers/board members on LWG’s...need to pursue different/innovative methods of outreach...how do we get people to hear and adopt the message...hope decision makers (federal and state) listen to producer concerns
•Concern that progressive levels of treatment should be allowed to be implemented rather than always having to meet RMS levels of treatment for FA programs...concern that grazing plans for EQIP applications/contracts are too restrictive and are not economically feasible to producers...this also limits adoption of other practices to address other resource concerns...perhaps increase in 528 payments rate would help in adoption of prescribed grazing plans.
•contractor availability is a concern...soil contractors, spraying and brush/tree removal, well drilling, prescribed burning, tree planting
•More of an emphasis needs to be placed on CTA planning vs programs...need time to follow-up with producers after practice/contract implementation

MU Occurrence (no.)	MU Occurrence (%)	Area 1 (no.)	Area 1 (%)	Area 2 (no.)	Area 2 (%)	Area 3 (no.)	Area 3 (%)	Area 4 (no.)	Area 4 (%)
27	90%	7	78%	6	75%	7	117%	7	100%
25	83%	8	89%	4	50%	6	100%	7	100%
24	80%	6	67%	7	88%	5	83%	6	86%
24	80%	6	67%	5	63%	6	100%	7	100%
23	77%	7	78%	6	75%	5	83%	5	71%
23	77%	6	67%	6	75%	5	83%	6	86%
22	73%	6	67%	5	63%	5	83%	6	86%
22	73%	6	67%	4	50%	5	83%	7	100%
22	73%	7	78%	3	38%	5	83%	7	100%
21	70%	4	44%	5	63%	6	100%	6	86%
21	70%	6	67%	3	38%	5	83%	7	100%
21	70%	4	44%	6	75%	5	83%	6	86%
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State Resource Concerns

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•Concern available FA funds are insufficient
•Concern that climate smart ag/carbon sequestration education is needed
•Concern with the lack of time NRCS is spending on the land with landowners...not enough staff to spend adequate time in the field with producers
•Concern with lack of adequate staff, number of vacant positions, training/knowledge of existing staff, and retention of staff...competent staff is needed to assist producers addressing resource concerns
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•Concern with streambank erosion and increased occurrence of active streambank erosion...stream channel width and incision concerns that are advancing up smaller tribs and into adjacent landuses...forming advancing gully erosion...loss or riparian areas, cropland, infrastructure stability
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•Concern with training, outreach, and interactions with "urban/small producers" and the urban population in general...how to identify a resource concern they may have...many have fulltime jobs and have a hard time making educational events...what are USDA's efforts to serve urban ag producers...what constitutes urban land
•Concern with education/outreach needs for urban/small farms...small farms (10-80 acres)... a focused outreach to these landowners/producers is needed (have been traditionally over-looked)...need improved/emphasized outreach to them...are they aware of NRCS services/offices...potential untapped customer base...more promotion needed...need to have a better understanding of their perspectives and needs

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21	70%	4	44%	5	63%	6	100%	6	86%
21	70%	4	44%	5	63%	6	100%	6	86%

State Resource Concerns

Cropland Resource Concerns:

- Concern that it's difficult to justify the implementation of cover crops unless they're grazed...how do we sell cover crop adoption based on "intrinsic" soil health benefits

- Active gully erosion (ephemeral) in cropland fields...worked shut every year, but reform annually

- Concern with lack of diversified crop rotations...moving more to row crops...driven by economics and crop insurance safety nets

structural practice systems. (terraces, waterways, ponds, etc....)

- Concern for a need to expand of soil health practices (no-till/cover crops). Keep the soil biologically active

- Concern with overall nutrient management implementation...efficient/proper use of fertilizers

- Concern with marginal cropland being brought into production from grasslands (sodbuster) and not being adequately treated

- concern that drought has had a negative impact on cropland/grassland causing less cover leading to challenges with erosion control, blowing crop stover, pest control, plant vigor, OM, etc.

- Concern that benefits from soil health practices take years to realize...perception there is a general apprehension to commit to the multi-year time frame needed to realize benefits...associated with farm economics...economics of surviving on a year-to-year basis

- concern that grassed waterway and terrace (structural practice) maintenance has declined due to farmers lacking time to perform maintenance, lack of landlord commitment, and cost

combination of management and structural conservation practices

- Wind erosion in cropland fields...due to lack of cover (cover crop or residue) in some cases crops don't produce enough residue to control erosion...residue blowing off...dust concern

- concern that "green practices" are possibly being over promoted as the remedy (silver bullet) for all concerns on cropland

- Concern exists with the perceived excessive use of pesticides...needs to be an overall reduction in the use of these products to maintain/improve water quality...also a concern with drift

- Concern with phosphorous transfer from cropland to surface waters and ground water

- concern that existing ephemeral erosion areas in cropland are not being adequately treated and continue to worsen to the point they're transitioning to classic gully erosion

- Concern with the timing and success of applying cover crops in a corn/bean rotation (limited cover crop species/limited growing period)

- concern that cover crop adoption is hindered by single year failures...one failure and the producers don't want to continue...can't economically absorb a failure

- concern that lack of soil health (cover crops) acceptance may be attributed to the lack of private industry/university data and research that is available to support the benefits of cover crops (mainly the economic benefits in fall seeded cover crops in the absence of grazing)

- concern that interest in cover crops has been negatively affected by the current drought conditions

•Concern there seems to be a hesitancy to move to cover crops because of a perceived fear of losing moisture

•Concern landowners are rebuilding/replacing structural practices on their own (without NRCS TA) that may not meet NRCS standards and specs and lead to additional resource concerns...under designed

•Concern cover crop rotations do not match local growing conditions...lack of long term acceptance of cover crops...covers on dryland cropland in western Kansas is difficult

•Concern with decreased organic matter and overall soil health on dryland soils. Biomass removal of harvested crop residue for dairy bedding

•concern with insurance rules/policy with planting wheat as a cover crop...want more flexibility to decide after wheat is planted as to whether the wheat crop can be used cover, for grazing , or for grain harvest

•concern with riparian and timbered areas being converted to cropland

•Concern with residue blowing off and/or being washed off fields causing concerns in waterways, streams, riparian areas and fencelines...piling up and/or blocking water flow

•Concern with excessive nitrogen application (need for better soil testing)

•Concern with the increased size of farming equipment and precision agriculture technology has contributed to overall structural practice maintenance...i.e. farming up and over terraces...contour farming is not being applied as much as it once was

•Concern with soil salinity (especially along the Arkansas River Corridor) in irrigation water from alluvium and surface water diversion

•Concern that cover crops are not utilized on fallow ground...no living cover...worked repeatedly during fallow period...a source of water/wind erosion

problems in neighboring crops (i.e. rye in wheat)...chemical and/or tillage seem to be best termination but

•Concern with kosha and pigweed...chemical resistance weeds in no-till is resulting in long term no-tiller's going back to tillage

•Concern with re-vegetating irrigated soils not suitable for dryland production (sandhills south of Arkansas River)...education needed on how to successfully make the conversion by non-traditional means (small area conversions, natural succession, etc.)...programs (outside of CRP) are needed to support the non-traditional methods

•concern with concentrated flow erosion forming in sprayer tracks going up and over terraces

•Concern with nutrient stratification in no-till operations due to placement and existence of nutrients in the top few inches of soil

Grazing Lands Resource Concerns:

•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...cedar

•Concern with performing "prescribed burns" and overall risk involved. Prescribed burning is not implemented as it has been in the past due to changing environmental conditions, increased fuel loads (cedars), and fear of potential nondesirable outcomes (i.e. out of control fires, litigation, etc.)

•Concern with invasive species of old-world bluestem

•Concern with the growing number of absentee landowners and perceived lack of concern for, or understanding of, grassland management needs

•Concern with lack of water availability...lack of available watering points for proper grazing distribution...on both large and small grazing operations
•Concern with overgrazing and adoption of prescribed grazing practices
•concern with challenges associated with managing grazing lands that are adjacent to tracts of land that are generally managed for deer hunting...fear of prescribed burning, fear of spraying, dealing with perennial seed sources of undesirable invasive species (cedars, hedge, locust, etc.)
•Concern with the growing number of grassland acres that are being purchased for “hunting” and are not properly managed or lack of management
•Concern with invasive species of sericea lespedeza
•Concern with soil health/plant vigor on grazing lands...trailing, compaction, lack of grazing distribution
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...locust
•concern with the lack of available resources available to producers to support prescribed burning (burn associations & districts/groups, rural/municipal fire departments)
•Concern with gully erosion from old structural practices (terraces), cattle trailing, overgrazing invasive species, and intense rainfall events
•Concern with a general complacency about tree/brush control...we’ll get to it when we can...and by then the tree growth has almost become unmanageable
•Concern with grazing lands being converted to cropland...primarily economically driven (cash rent)
•Concern with smoke management and effects on “urban” population
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...hedge
•Concern with the invasive species of phragmites
•concern that late summer burns should be implemented to assist in the effective control of invasive species
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...salt cedar (riparian areas and waterways). Possible use for biochar
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...honeysuckle
•concern that grazing lands were over utilized during drought conditions out of necessity to provide forage for livestock
•concern with aging infrastructure that supports proper grassland management (i.e., ponds, fences, etc.)
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...Russian olive
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...Bradford pears
•Concern with ability to spray (chemicals) to control undesirable plant growth in proximity to urban areas or unmanaged wildlife lands
•concern that the drought conditions are drying up existing ponds reducing available grazing lands watering points
•Concern with invasive species of musk and Canadian thistle
•Concern with encroachment of western wheatgrass
•concern that in some instances prescribed burning isn’t possible due to lack of fuel load (especially with short native grasses)
•concern with grassland recovery after a prescribed burn with drought conditions
•Concern with invasive species of Johnsongrass (grazing lands, cropland, road ditches, miscellaneous areas)
•Concern with invasive species of bindweed (includes cropland)

- Concern that producers may not be able to identify weed pests in grazing lands properly and subsequently the proper treatment/management of those weeds
- restoration of native grasslands after wildfires in the sand hills and drought...effects of wind erosion on susceptible/bare soil surfaces as well
- Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...Japanese Hopps
- Concern with invasive species of teasel
- Concern with broom sedge in cool season pastures
- Concern that woody residue removal is needed following wildfires

Streambank/Riparian Area Resource Concerns:

- Concern with streambank erosion and increased occurrence of active streambank erosion...stream channel width and incision concerns that are advancing up smaller tribs and into adjacent landuses...forming advancing gully erosion...loss or riparian areas, cropland, infrastructure stability
- Concern with the amount of sedimentation that's associated with active streambank erosion
- Concern that streambank armoring is too expensive for landowners and that alternative affordable means of streambank erosion control be should be looked at
- Concern with obstructions in streams...trees jams, crop residue drifts, etc.
- Concern with lack of riparian area management...degraded riparian area conditions, livestock winter feeding areas, woody/vegetative invasive species encroachment
- Concern with producer/landowner lack of clarity/understanding of rules associated with manipulating or working in riparian areas...regulatory vs. voluntary rules/roles/authorities
- concern with the amount of streambank erosion that is occurring in the urban setting
- concern with the population of beavers and the damage they do to riparian areas, watershed dams, etc.
- Concern with maintenance on established COE levees/dikes...who is responsible for maintaining/repairing non-COE levees
- Concern with streambank erosion in association with utility crossings on streams

Surface Water Quantity (flooding) Resource Concerns:

- Perception that more soil health practices (cover crops) would help with water infiltration and subsequently help reduce excessive water runoff, both a ground and surface water concern
- Concern that flood intensity/events have increased substantially over the last number of years
- Concern that township/rural roads are a major contributor of sedimentation to surface waters...especially in those situations where inadequate road ditches exit
- need to encourage installation of wetland practices on the lower end of cropped field drainages to trap nutrients prior to the water flowing off the farm
- Concern that phragmites uses a lot of water
- Concern with maintenance of watershed dams

Surface Water Quality Resource Concerns:

- Concern with sedimentation and nutrients
- Concern with livestock and municipal waste in streams and ponds

•Concern with the perceived negative effects tile terrace systems have on water quality
•consider potential use of more "beaver dam analogs" to improve water quality and quantity
•Concern with trash (appliances, junk, general trash) by individual landowners in pits, holes, low areas
•Concern with water quality for urban gardens. Have to pay to use treated "City" water
•Concern with PFOA chemicals in water sources
Groundwater Quantity Resource Concerns:
•Concern with declining ground water levels...need adoption of drought tolerant crops and/or incentives to reduce irrigation rates...improve infiltration rates on cropland...need for more efficient irrigation systems and less water intensive crops..need to utilize moisture probes for irrigation water management.
•Need for more small watershed structures, impoundments, level terraces, and playa's help in aquifer recharge...concerns over not knowing the engineering design requirements and costs for playa restoration could be a factor in producer's decisions not to enter SAFE program...also need to make info on partner FA availability more readily available.
•Concern with declining ground water levels. Have to drill wells deeper to hit water for livestock water.
•Concern with unplugged abandoned wells and cisterns
•concern with increasing irrigation efficiencies, economic challenges associated with transitioning from irrigated to dryland cropland, and working under LEMA's
•concern that State water right rules provide no incentive for conservation of water outside of GMD's...if you don't use it, you lose the water right...no incentives for conserving water
•Concern that wells and streams go dry during heavy irrigation periods. Several end guns are still being used. May be a policy issue.
•concern that industry and municipalities are not held to the same ground water use standards as irrigators
Public/Private Water Supply Quality Resource Concerns:
•Concern with surface water supply sedimentation impairment
•Concern with groundwater water supply nitrate impairment
•Concern with surface water supply phosphate impairment
•Concern with surface water supply blue green algae impairment
•Concern with surface water supply atrazine impairment
•Concern with groundwater water supply bacteria (E. Coli) impairment
•Concern with uranium levels...high cost to test...FA is need for testing...this is a broader concern than just public water supply...need to monitor above ground biomass for uranium

Animal Resource Concerns:
Wildlife:
•Concern with upland bird habitat degradation and/or loss of brood rearing habitat, habitat connectivity, native grassland (including CRP) , riparian areas, as well as loss of habitat "edge"...lack of diversity across the landscape
•Concern with the declining populations of ground nesting game birds and non-game birds. (quail, pheasant)

•Concern with brush/tree/invasive species...cedar, hedge, locust, honeysuckle, phragmites, teasal, winter creeper, sericea lespedeza, etc...and the detrimental effect on wildlife habitat
•Concern with pest mgmt....clean field effect on upland game birds
•concern with the management of land owned/controlled by “out of area” landowners, or local landowners that are leasing land to “out of area” lessees for hunting
•Concern with the habitat fragmentation in and surrounding large urban areas/counties
•Concern with lack of cover crops...perception that cover crops have been beneficial to upland game bird populations
•Concern with the declining numbers of mule deer and pronghorn
•concern there is a need to educate landowners whose main objective is hunting that a grass biome-based habitat is better than a woody (cedar) based habitat
•Concern with chemical drift on native forbs and the effect on insect populations...perceived more chemical use under a no-till system
•Concern with brome encroachment in native grass/CRP
lands
•Concern with resident geese populations...groups of a couple birds are nesting wherever they can find a place in urban areas
•Concern with tick loads from unmanaged wildlife areas adjacent to grazing lands.
•Concern with the impact of wind turbines on bird and insect populations
•Concern with high populations of whitetail deer
<u>Domestic:</u>
•Concern with water availability for grazing systems and distribution
•Concern with dust from feedlots...is there a conflict with feedlots using water to control dust and declining ground water levels
•Concern with growing interest in large scale on farm composting of old biomass (hay bales) as well as dead animal
•Concern that livestock structures (portable and permanent) are needed for extreme weather events both in the summer and winter months on cropland and grazing land
Forestry Resource Concerns:
•Concern with loss of windbreaks/shelterbelts, or windbreaks/shelterbelts not being properly managed/maintained
•Concern with lack of proper management and maintenance of forestland...plant vigor, density thinning, removal of undesirable trees, control of invasive species
•concern for loss of native hardwoods in forested area...desireable native species being replaced with less desirable species
•concern with the lack of prescribed burns being applied in forestland
Urban/Small Farm Resource Concerns:
•Concern that conservation partnership is not properly prepared to assist urban/small farms...more use of non-traditional outreach medias focused on this group...YouTube, Facebook, twitter, etc...not aware of or coming to conservation partnership for technical assistance.
•Concern with increased fracturing of rural lands...being sold into smaller parcels (20-40 acres)...utilized for houses/small ranchettes

•Concern with people moving into rural areas and having unrealistic expectations dealing with traditional agriculture interactions...dust, odors, smoke, noise, etc.
•Perceived urban population lack of understanding of "traditional agriculture"...additional education is needed to address lack of knowledge...lingo, practices, etc.
•Concern with urban/housing developments in rural areas...specifically in grassland areas...fire hazard awareness, dangerous fuel loads close to homes
•More "urban communities" (20-30 house additions) being built in "rural" areas...urban sprawl
•Concern with over utilizing small acreages...primarily overgrazing...looking for ways they can better utilize their small acreages
•concern educational needs exist for urban/small farms and conservation partners...need to have a better understanding of urban/small farm perspectives and needs
•concern with number private wells within city limits being used for lawn watering...water conservation concern
•concern with increased runoff flows associated with non-permeable urban surfaces...roofs, roads, parking lots...and the issues it's causing on "traditional" ag lands
•Concern with the frequency and magnitude of ownership changes in a fragmented ownership landscape
•concern with the amount of streambank erosion that is occurring in the urban setting
•concern with surface water quality concern associated with animal (pet) waste and over fertilization of lawns
•Concern with specialty animal growers (turkeys, chickens, horses, etc....)
•Concern with water quality in ponds in housing development areas...high nutrient and pest contamination from lawns...grass species used (fescue and Kentucky Bluegrass require fertilization)...adoption of water conserving lawn species that reduce supplemental groundwater use
•concern with degrading soil biology as it exists in the urban setting (housing areas, business areas, green areas, etc.)
•Concern that traditional agriculture is losing its "voice" in areas with "urban" presence
•Concern that any time farming equipment is brought in a more urban setting, neighbors complain
•Concern with dust from construction sites
•Concern with chemical drift on specialty crops (vineyards, orchards, vegetables).
•Concern with "food deserts" in western Kansas, several miles to the nearest grocery store...small/specialty farms could help fill the void
Climate Resource Concerns:
•Concern that climate smart ag/carbon sequestration education is needed

•Concern with increased intensity/frequency of heavy rainfall events and subsequent effects (maintaining conservation practices, controlling erosion, infrastructure, etc.)
•Concern with adapting to changing growing conditions...drought, heat, rainfall intensities, etc.
•Concern (general) with drought from a water availability standpoint across all landuses...drought mitigation
•need for expansion of programs paying producers for carbon credits associated with benefits derived from adopting soil health practices
•Concern that ag producers are generally looking at the “current” year condition...all about this year (economic survival)...and not preparing for the probabilities of continuing intensive climate events
•concern that more drought tolerant cropping system research is needed looking at alternatives to row crops (primarily corn)
•Using nitrogen credits from the nitrates in the ground water to help producers reduce nitrogen inputs
Training/Education Concerns:
•Perceived need for additional trainings on soil health (staff & producers)...what are the long term benefits of soil health practices. (cover crops, no-till, etc.)
•Perceived need for additional trainings on prescribed burning and burning workshops. Use of spot/patch burning, firebreaks, and offseason burns. (staff and producer)
•Perceived need for additional training/education/resources needed to promote grazing lands health and CRP management...drought management on native grazinglands, info/ed on trigger dates for destocking
•Perception that landowners are not recognizing invasive plants (plant ID) on the landscape, lack of awareness of what normal should look like...need to recognize and treat earlier...need for training on treatment options
•Concern with challenges associated with partnership staff being the “experts” on all available programs...the programs are constantly changing...tough to keep up on all of them
training...working with mentors
•concern there is need for education/training on basic structural conservation maintenance of structural conservation practices using producer owned equipment
•need to provide additional training and educational materials on the control of old world bluestem
•Concern that NRCS field staff need to have good basic knowledge of multiple disciplines but are not "specialists".
•concern there is a need for soil sampling education/training/interpretation/implementation (nutrient management) on cropland
•concern that more “local” information/support is needed on alternative crops and associated markets
•Concern with training/education addressing conversion from irrigated cropland to dryland cropland production and how is this economically feasible...including conversion of dryland cropland to grass
•Perceived need for economic benefit analysis be incorporated into NRCS practice standard and specifications.
•Perceived need for additional trainings on water quality concerns...cause and effect

- Perceived need for additional trainings on wildlife habitat development/management

perceived need for additional trainings on the use of native grass species in lawns to reduce fertilization and water needs

Outreach Concerns:

- Concern with training, outreach, and interactions with “urban/small producers” and the urban population in general...how to identify a resource concern they may have...many have fulltime jobs and have a hard time

outreach to these landowners/producers is needed (have been traditionally over-looked)...need improved/emphasized outreach to them...are they aware of NRCS services/offices...potential untapped customer base...more promotion needed...need to have a better understanding of their perspectives and

- Concern there is a relatively uncoordinated effort between local/state/federal entities to promote, advertise, and implement resource protection programs...landowners/producers may find it challenging to understand

- Concern reaching and providing additional outreach/education absentee landowners

- Concern with lack of overall producer participation in available trainings/meetings/field days

different/innovative methods of outreach...how do we get people to hear and adopt the message...hope

- NRCS needs a more user friendly website...a lot of it is too wordy...has too many links...and requires too many clicks to get desired information

for “deer hunting”

- concern with absentee landowners and their understanding of conservation practices and willingness to apply conservation practices

- concern with the lack of knowledgeable producer/professional “mentors” that are available to assist producers adopting new conservation practices

conservation needs/practices

- perception that additional partnering is needed with cities/municipalities to address identified resource concerns

- concern there is a lack of outreach to local schools, school organizations, and local civic groups

adopting/applying conservation practices

- Concern that there is a lack of funding for outreach at the local level (cost of speakers, field days, workshops,

Program Concerns:

NRCS Programs:

- Concern available FA funds are insufficient

- Concern additional FA is needed for rebuilding/replacing structural conservation practices that have outlived their lifespan (i.e. terraces, waterways, ponds)

- Concern with the amount of “paperwork and administration” that exists with implementing federal FA
- Inadequate livestock water "water availability" should be a stand alone resource concern...not always tied to plant resource concern...old watering sources are failing (ponds/wells) or have lost their capacity/integrity and not eligible for FA...considered maintenance
- Concern that FA programs reward procrastinators and not innovators/adopters
- Concern that progressive levels of treatment should be allowed to be implemented rather than always having to meet RMS levels of treatment for FA programs...concern that grazing plans for EQIP applications/contracts are too restrictive and are not economically feasible to producers...this also limits adoption of other practices to address other resource concerns...perhaps increase in 528 payments rate would help in adoption of prescribed grazing plans.
- Concern with the brush management threshold...by the time the minimum threshold is met, trees are fairly large...recommendation to treat trees at a more manageable (smaller) stage...look at number of trees per acre, rather than % of canopy
- additional “act now” funding opportunities are desired
- Available programs are addressing most resource concerns (except streambank erosion) but just not enough FA
- concern the EQIP application/approval process is too complicated, cumbersome, and lengthy
- Concern that payments rates are low for many practices, 30-40% on the dollar. Magnified due to current inflation rates and supply issues
- concern with grazing management requirements (stocking rates) associated with EQIP brush control contracts
- concern with lack of outreach promoting available conservation programs
- Concern with time from application to potential funding...too much time in between...producers can’t wait that long to find out...basically waiting to hear and not addressing resource concern in a timely manner...hinders their decision-making. process...especially with deferred applications...additionally, program/practice requirements make it cost prohibitive
- Concern with definition of “working lands” as it pertains to wildlifeland and EQIP
- the carbon to nitrogen ratio...the regulations for seeding cover crops under soil health can be very restrictive
- Concern that once FA program incentives are completed, producers will revert back to pre-incentive farming practices
- Concern that “funding pools” have become too broad and should be refocused back to the MU level
- concern with targeted areas...producers outside targeted areas still have resource concerns but are not as likely to acquire FA
- suggestion that payment rates for EQIP should be established on more of a sectional basis within the state
- concern with EQIP requirement to cover entire “field” acreage at a minimum...should be able to address areas of concern within a field on an incremental (progressive) basis...FSA assigned field sizes vary greatly

•concern with the effectiveness/efficiencies of some FA programs (primarily CSP)
•Concern with lack of FA for water sources on cropland for cover crop use...grazing of cover crops financially justifies the application for cover crops for the majority of producers
•Dryland conversions (under EQIP) rank low due to low amount of water saving. Need to look at other financial alternatives to get landowners to retire water rights and permanently transition to dryland (easements, tax codes, etc.)
•Concern windbreaks and shelter belts around farmsteads have to be tied to "energy" ..need funds for maintaining/cleaning up/replanting windbreaks...also landuse limitations don't allow for windbreaks to be used for livestock
•More FA emphasis needs to be placed "soil health" practices
•concern with the timeliness of program FA payments
•concern with the grazing restrictions on cover crops through EQIP (to restrictive)
•concern with disconnect between program decision makers at the State and/or USDA level and local boards with most government programs. Need greater flexibility and authority at the local level.
•need for continuation and expansion of the GPCI program
•suggest that some FA should be reserved for “innovative” practices/techniques that encourage “outside the box” thinking
•concern with lack of flexibility associated with CSP enhancements
•recommendation that cover crops applied through EQIP in western KS should require fewer species (1-5 species)
•adjust seeding recommendations and timing during drought periods...limited success in getting a stand of grass, forbs or cover during drought conditions
•suggested change in length of veteran status...you’re a veteran for life not just for 10 years
•concern with requirement that a contract payment has to be made within the first 12 months of contract approval...recommend first contract payment be made within first 18 months
•allow programs to provide FA to producers to purchase equipment (drills, broadcast seeders, combine seeders, inter-seeders, high clearance seeders) associated with making the conversion to soil health practices
•concern the stringent nutrient mgmt requirements of CSP are discouraging program participation
•need to increase program cap levels on surface drip irrigation
•Target greatest amount of water saving by restructuring payment rates and/or ranking points to reward the greatest amount of water savings (regardless of the practice being applied)

•consider providing FA on tempory or moveable water tanks providing more flexibility to implement rotational grazing

•Concern that FA for brush management is not adequate to carry out initial treatment and subsequent treatment of sprouting species...need to evaluate the standard and specs, threshold for treatment is too high for brush species

•Concern that EQIP contract participants don't always totally understand the "payment rate" method of FA...concern that the actual amount they receive is a considerably lower % of the total cost than they anticipated...this is a matter of better communications during contract obligation

•for cross fencing within certain grazing systems look at a 3 wire fence with post every 60 feet with 2 stays in between

•Monarch habitat...need to incentivize people to keep it in...it can be broken out after comes out of the program...5 years...would like to see incentive to keep it in the habitat

•Nutrient management alternatives (green-seeker technology, N-rich strips, variable rate application, etc.) are not eligible for financial assistance under EQIP because the 590 specification is already being met...however, meeting the 590 specification does not mean that nutrients are not being overapplied were extreme environmental conditions exist

•Programs need to invest in new technologies, "NRCS is 10 years behind" - need to be ahead of the game

•EQIP requires that dryland conversion on I-134 soils must be planted to permanent vegetative cover...within the management unit, there are producers who can farm these soils under dryland conditions

FSA Programs:

•Concern that there is not enough management or maintenance of CRP acres because of program limitations and/or producers willingness or ability to do management...allow grazing earlier in the season...remove rental rate reduction for grazing...concern with invasive species and woody vegetation encroachment...seedbed preparation for interseeding needs to be cost shared on

•Concern that CRP payments rates are low and hard to generate interest in participating/renewing

•Concern with CRP being broken out...need better incentives to keep in grass. (Livestock water and fence)...additionally some CRP is getting broken out because of absentee landowners that don't have access to or the ability to perform maintenance activities so rent to someone to farm

•Concern with CRP no activity during the nesting period...can inhibit proper habitat management

•Concern that continuous CRP is not being utilized as much as it could be

•concern with increased use of CRP for haying and grazing...reducing habitat during critical part of year

•Release of CRP for emergency haying and grazing needs to be done in a timely manner

•Expand the CP38B priority area

•recommendation to extend CRP spring prescribed deadline from April 15th to May 15th

•Concern with CRP program – the program is partially administered by FSA, partially by NRCS – this makes it harder for the producer to know who to talk to or where to go to get things done

Other:

•contractor availability is a concern...soil contractors, spraying and brush/tree removal, well drilling, prescribed burning, tree planting
•Concern that USDA programs discourage producers from adopting cover crops...FSA crop acreage certification process is not conducive to cover crops practices, inter-seeding, initial crop vs secondary crop, subsequent crops status or of grazing cover crops, FSA ARC/PLC program disincentivizes sound soil health practices
•Concern with crop insurance program guarantees of revenue coverage...perception this is encouraging farming of marginal soils and conversion of grasslands to cropland
•concern with increased particulate matters in the air (dust, particulates from fire)
Generalized Concerns/Questions/Comments/TA Needs:
•Concern with the lack of time NRCS is spending on the land with landowners...not enough staff to spend adequate time in the field with producers
•Concern with lack of adequate staff, number of vacant positions, training/knowledge of existing staff, and retention of staff...competent staff is needed to assist producers addressing resource concerns
•concern NRCS needs to provide a written response (report) to LWG sponsors on the "actions" that were implemented as a result of input recieved through LWG meetings...providing validity to the LWG process
•More of an emphasis needs to be placed on CTA planning vs programs...need time to follow-up with producers after practice/contract implementation
•Concern with perceived need for use more outside sources of TA (non NRCS) that have a particular expertise that can be utilized to assist producers in planning
•concern with the cultural resource review process...has resulted in significant delays in practice start/implementation...road block for producers and contractors needing to start a project within a reasonable time frame
•Concern with time it takes to receive TA not associated with FA
•Concern with industrial dairies, wind and solar farms coming to the state and the impacts they may have on natural resources...dairies use a lot of water
•concern with the recruitment of staff...need to establish closer recruiting relationships with universities
•question...are higher incentive payment rates having the desired effect...can NRCS provide data to justify higher incentive payment rates
•Does grazing CRP during the nesting season really have that much of a negative impact on nest/eggs?
•Concern with advocating with legislators to obtain more FA...also educating legislators on the environmental benefits associated with obligated FA
•Concern with perceived "disconnect" between NHQ leadership and local producer/landowner needs...emphasis is on program implementation at the cost of traditional TA (getting back to working on the ground with producers/landowners)
•provisions in the last Farm Bill stated that 10% of all NRCS funds were to go to water supply and source water protection. Priority areas were established that included playas around towns and municipal wells...was this 10% requirement met in Kansas...where did the funding go (which priority areas)
•Is there a conflict with feedlots using water to control dust and declining ground water levels

- Question to NRCS...do the programs and initiatives meet the needs of the water concerns...are they working...if not why not...what could be changed to make them work better
- Utilization of NRCS Nutrient Management (590) standard and specification does not fully address the proper application of nutrients where other variables (environmental stresses common to southwest Kansas) determine potential yield...use of new technologies would prevent the over application of nutrients (determined by KSU guidelines)

Participants by MU:	
Garden City	
Goodland	
Jetmore	
Oakley	
Oberlin	
Osborne	
Russell	
Smith Center	
Syracuse	
	Total:

Area 1 (no.)	Area 1 (%)
6	67%
4	44%
5	56%
4	44%
3	33%
2	22%
5	56%
7	78%
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3	33%
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Area	Total	Virtual
1	19	3
1	14	2
1	18	5
1	12	3
1	10	3
1	19	2
1	23	2
1	14	5
1	11	1
	140	26

State Resource Concerns

Cropland Resource Concerns:

- Concern that it's difficult to justify the implementation of cover crops unless they're grazed...how do we sell cover crop adoption based on "intrinsic" soil health benefits

- Active gully erosion (ephemeral) in cropland fields...worked shut every year, but reform annually

- Concern with lack of diversified crop rotations...moving more to row crops...driven by economics and crop insurance safety nets

- Concern with structural practices past life span and failing...active erosion is occurring in unmaintained structural practice systems. (terraces, waterways, ponds, etc....)

- Concern for a need to expand of soil health practices (no-till/cover crops). Keep the soil biologically active

- Concern with overall nutrient management implementation...efficient/proper use of fertilizers

- Concern with marginal cropland being brought into production from grasslands (sodbuster) and not being adequately treated

- concern that drought has had a negative impact on cropland/grassland causing less cover leading to challenges with erosion control, blowing crop stover, pest control, plant vigor, OM, etc.

- Concern that benefits from soil health practices take years to realize...perception there is a general apprehension to commit to the multi-year time frame needed to realize benefits...associated with farm economics...economics of surviving on a year-to-year basis

- concern that grassed waterway and terrace (structural practice) maintenance has declined due to farmers lacking time to perform maintenance, lack of landlord commitment, and cost

- Concern that erosion control can't adequately be treated with only management practices...takes a combination of management and structural conservation practices

- Wind erosion in cropland fields...due to lack of cover (cover crop or residue) in some cases crops don't produce enough residue to control erosion...residue blowing off...dust concern

- concern that "green practices" are possibly being over promoted as the remedy (silver bullet) for all concerns on cropland

- Concern exists with the perceived excessive use of pesticides...needs to be an overall reduction in the use of these products to maintain/improve water quality...also a concern with drift

- Concern with phosphorous transfer from cropland to surface waters and ground water

- concern that existing ephemeral erosion areas in cropland are not being adequately treated and continue to worsen to the point they're transitioning to classic gully erosion

- Concern with the timing and success of applying cover crops in a corn/bean rotation (limited cover crop species/limited growing period)

- concern that cover crop adoption is hindered by single year failures...one failure and the producers don't want to continue...can't economically absorb a failure

- concern that lack of soil health (cover crops) acceptance may be attributed to the lack of private industry/university data and research that is available to support the benefits of cover crops (mainly the economic benefits in fall seeded cover crops in the absence of grazing)

- concern that interest in cover crops has been negatively affected by the current drought conditions

•Concern there seems to be a hesitancy to move to cover crops because of a perceived fear of losing moisture
•Concern landowners are rebuilding/replacing structural practices on their own (without NRCS TA) that may not meet NRCS standards and specs and lead to additional resource concerns...under designed
•Concern cover crop rotations do not match local growing conditions...lack of long term acceptance of cover crops...covers on dryland cropland in western Kansas is difficult
•Concern with decreased organic matter and overall soil health on dryland soils. Biomass removal of harvested crop residue for dairy bedding
•concern with insurance rules/policy with planting wheat as a cover crop...want more flexibility to decide after wheat is planted as to whether the wheat crop can be used cover, for grazing , or for grain harvest
•concern with riparian and timbered areas being converted to cropland
•Concern with residue blowing off and/or being washed off fields causing concerns in waterways, streams, riparian areas and fencelines...piling up and/or blocking water flow
•Concern with excessive nitrogen application (need for better soil testing)
•Concern with the increased size of farming equipment and precision agriculture technology has contributed to overall structural practice maintenance...i.e. farming up and over terraces...contour farming is not being applied as much as it once was
•Concern with soil salinity (especially along the Arkansas River Corridor) in irrigation water from alluvium and surface water diversion
•Concern that cover crops are not utilized on fallow ground...no living cover...worked repeatedly during fallow period...a source of water/wind erosion
•Concern with cover crop termination...if not terminated completely or before going to seed can cause problems in neighboring crops (i.e. rye in wheat)...chemical and/or tillage seem to be best termination but not always compatible with goals or programs requirements
•Concern with kosha and pigweed...chemical resistance weeds in no-till is resulting in long term no-tiller's going back to tillage
•Concern with re-vegetating irrigated soils not suitable for dryland production (sandhills south of Arkansas River)...education needed on how to successfully make the conversion by non-traditional means (small area conversions, natural succession, etc.)...programs (outside of CRP) are needed to support the non-traditional methods
•concern with concentrated flow erosion forming in sprayer tracks going up and over terraces
•Concern with nutrient stratification in no-till operations due to placement and existence of nutrients in the top few inches of soil
Grazing Lands Resource Concerns:
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...cedar
•Concern with performing “prescribed burns” and overall risk involved. Prescribed burning is not implemented as it has been in the past due to changing environmental conditions, increased fuel loads (cedars), and fear of potential nondesirable outcomes (i.e. out of control fires, litigation, etc.)
•Concern with invasive species of old-world bluestem
•Concern with the growing number of absentee landowners and perceived lack of concern for, or understanding of, grassland management needs

•Concern with lack of water availability...lack of available watering points for proper grazing distribution...on both large and small grazing operations
•Concern with overgrazing and adoption of prescribed grazing practices
•concern with challenges associated with managing grazing lands that are adjacent to tracts of land that are generally managed for deer hunting...fear of prescribed burning, fear of spraying, dealing with perennial seed sources of undesirable invasive species (cedars, hedge, locust, etc.)
•Concern with the growing number of grassland acres that are being purchased for “hunting” and are not properly managed or lack of management
•Concern with invasive species of sericea lespedeza
•Concern with soil health/plant vigor on grazing lands...trailing, compaction, lack of grazing distribution
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...locust
•concern with the lack of available resources available to producers to support prescribed burning (burn associations & districts/groups, rural/municipal fire departments)
•Concern with gully erosion from old structural practices (terraces), cattle trailing, overgrazing invasive species, and intense rainfall events
•Concern with a general complacency about tree/brush control...we’ll get to it when we can...and by then the tree growth has almost become unmanageable
•Concern with grazing lands being converted to cropland...primarily economically driven (cash rent)
•Concern with smoke management and effects on “urban” population
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...hedge
•Concern with the invasive species of phragmites
•concern that late summer burns should be implemented to assist in the effective control of invasive species
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...salt cedar (riparian areas and waterways). Possible use for biochar
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...honeysuckle
•concern that grazing lands were over utilized during drought conditions out of necessity to provide forage for livestock
•concern with aging infrastructure that supports proper grassland management (i.e., ponds, fences, etc.)
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...Russian olive
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...Bradford pears
•Concern with ability to spray (chemicals) to control undesirable plant growth in proximity to urban areas or unmanaged wildlife lands
•concern that the drought conditions are drying up existing ponds reducing available grazing lands watering points
•Concern with invasive species of musk and Canadian thistle
•Concern with encroachment of western wheatgrass
•concern that in some instances prescribed burning isn’t possible due to lack of fuel load (especially with short native grasses)
•concern with grassland recovery after a prescribed burn with drought conditions
•Concern with invasive species of Johnsongrass (grazing lands, cropland, road ditches, miscellaneous areas)
•Concern with invasive species of bindweed (includes cropland)

- Concern that producers may not be able to identify weed pests in grazing lands properly and subsequently the proper treatment/management of those weeds
- restoration of native grasslands after wildfires in the sand hills and drought...effects of wind erosion on susceptible/bare soil surfaces as well
- Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...Japanese Hopps
- Concern with invasive species of teasel
- Concern with broom sedge in cool season pastures
- Concern that woody residue removal is needed following wildfires

Streambank/Riparian Area Resource Concerns:

- Concern with streambank erosion and increased occurrence of active streambank erosion...stream channel width and incision concerns that are advancing up smaller tribs and into adjacent landuses...forming advancing gully erosion...loss or riparian areas, cropland, infrastructure stability
- Concern with the amount of sedimentation that's associated with active streambank erosion
- Concern that streambank armoring is too expensive for landowners and that alternative affordable means of streambank erosion control be should be looked at
- Concern with obstructions in streams...trees jams, crop residue drifts, etc.
- Concern with lack of riparian area management...degraded riparian area conditions, livestock winter feeding areas, woody/vegetative invasive species encroachment
- Concern with producer/landowner lack of clarity/understanding of rules associated with manipulating or working in riparian areas...regulatory vs. voluntary rules/roles/authorities
- concern with the amount of streambank erosion that is occurring in the urban setting
- concern with the population of beavers and the damage they do to riparian areas, watershed dams, etc.
- Concern with maintenance on established COE levees/dikes...who is responsible for maintaining/repairing non-COE levees
- Concern with streambank erosion in association with utility crossings on streams

Surface Water Quantity (flooding) Resource Concerns:

- Perception that more soil health practices (cover crops) would help with water infiltration and subsequently help reduce excessive water runoff, both a ground and surface water concern
- Concern that flood intensity/events have increased substantially over the last number of years
- Concern that township/rural roads are a major contributor of sedimentation to surface waters...especially in those situations where inadequate road ditches exit
- need to encourage installation of wetland practices on the lower end of cropped field drainages to trap nutrients prior to the water flowing off the farm
- Concern that phragmites uses a lot of water
- Concern with maintenance of watershed dams

Surface Water Quality Resource Concerns:

- Concern with sedimentation and nutrients
- Concern with livestock and municipal waste in streams and ponds
- Concern with the perceived negative effects tile terrace systems have on water quality
- consider potential use of more "beaver dam analogs" to improve water quality and quantity

- Concern with trash (appliances, junk, general trash) by individual landowners in pits, holes, low areas
- Concern with water quality for urban gardens. Have to pay to use treated "City" water
- Concern with PFOA chemicals in water sources

Groundwater Quantity Resource Concerns:

- Concern with declining ground water levels...need adoption of drought tolerant crops and/or incentives to reduce irrigation rates...improve infiltration rates on cropland...need for more efficient irrigation systems and less water intensive crops..need to utilize moisture probes for irrigation water management.
- Need for more small watershed structures, impoundments, level terraces, and playa's help in aquifer recharge...concerns over not knowing the engineering design requirements and costs for playa restoration could be a factor in producer's decisions not to enter SAFE program...also need to make info on partner FA availability more readily available.
- Concern with declining ground water levels. Have to drill wells deeper to hit water for livestock water.
- Concern with unplugged abandoned wells and cisterns
- concern with increasing irrigation efficiencies, economic challenges associated with transitioning from irrigated to dryland cropland, and working under LEMA's
- concern that State water right rules provide no incentive for conservation of water outside of GMD's...if you don't use it, you lose the water right...no incentives for conserving water
- Concern that wells and streams go dry during heavy irrigation periods. Several end guns are still being used. May be a policy issue.
- concern that industry and municipalities are not held to the same ground water use standards as irrigators

Public/Private Water Supply Quality Resource Concerns:

- Concern with surface water supply sedimentation impairment
- Concern with groundwater water supply nitrate impairment
- Concern with surface water supply phosphate impairment
- Concern with surface water supply blue green algae impairment
- Concern with surface water supply atrazine impairment
- Concern with groundwater water supply bacteria (E. Coli) impairment
- Concern with uranium levels...high cost to test...FA is need for testing...this is a broader concern than just public water supply...need to monitor above ground biomass for uranium

Animal Resource Concerns:

Wildlife:

- Concern with upland bird habitat degradation and/or loss of brood rearing habitat, habitat connectivity, native grassland (including CRP) , riparian areas, as well as loss of habitat "edge"...lack of diversity across the landscape
- Concern with the declining populations of ground nesting game birds and non-game birds. (quail, pheasant)
- Concern with brush/tree/invasive species...cedar, hedge, locust, honeysuckle, phragmites, teasal, winter creeper, sericea lespedeza, etc...and the detrimental effect on wildlife habitat
- Concern with pest mgmt....clean field effect on upland game birds

- concern with the management of land owned/controlled by “out of area” landowners, or local landowners that are leasing land to “out of area” lessees for hunting

- concern with the habitat fragmentation in and surrounding large urban areas/counties

- concern with lack of cover crops...perception that cover crops have been beneficial to upland game bird populations

- concern with the declining numbers of mule deer and pronghorn

- concern there is a need to educate landowners whose main objective is hunting that a grass biome-based habitat is better than a woody (cedar) based habitat

- concern with chemical drift on native forbs and the effect on insect populations...perceived more chemical use under a no-till system

- concern with brome encroachment in native grass/CRP

- concern with the expanding range and populations of armadillos and the damage they cause to agricultural lands

- concern with resident geese populations...groups of a couple birds are nesting wherever they can find a place in urban areas

- concern with tick loads from unmanaged wildlife areas adjacent to grazing lands.

- concern with the impact of wind turbines on bird and insect populations

- concern with high populations of whitetail deer

Domestic:

- concern with water availability for grazing systems and distribution

- concern with dust from feedlots...is there a conflict with feedlots using water to control dust and declining ground water levels

- concern with growing interest in large scale on farm composting of old biomass (hay bales) as well as dead animal

- concern that livestock structures (portable and permanent) are needed for extreme weather events both in the summer and winter months on cropland and grazing land

Forestry Resource Concerns:

- concern with loss of windbreaks/shelterbelts, or windbreaks/shelterbelts not being properly managed/maintained

- concern with lack of proper management and maintenance of forestland...plant vigor, density thinning, removal of undesirable trees, control of invasive species

- concern for loss of native hardwoods in forested area...desireable native species being replaced with less desirable species

- concern with the lack of prescribed burns being applied in forestland

Urban/Small Farm Resource Concerns:

- concern that conservation partnership is not properly prepared to assist urban/small farms...more use of non-traditional outreach medias focused on this group...YouTube, Facebook, twitter, etc...not aware of or coming to conservation partnership for technical assistance.

- concern with increased fracturing of rural lands...being sold into smaller parcels (20-40 acres)...utilized for houses/small ranchettes

- concern with people moving into rural areas and having unrealistic expectations dealing with traditional agriculture interactions...dust, odors, smoke, noise, etc.

• Perceived urban population lack of understanding of "traditional agriculture"...additional education is needed to address lack of knowledge...lingo, practices, etc.
• Concern with urban/housing developments in rural areas...specifically in grassland areas...fire hazard awareness, dangerous fuel loads close to homes
• More "urban communities" (20-30 house additions) being built in "rural" areas...urban sprawl
• Concern with over utilizing small acreages...primarily overgrazing...looking for ways they can better utilize their small acreages
• concern educational needs exist for urban/small farms and conservation partners...need to have a better understanding of urban/small farm perspectives and needs
• concern with number private wells within city limits being used for lawn watering...water conservation concern
• concern with increased runoff flows associated with non-permeable urban surfaces...roofs, roads, parking lots...and the issues it's causing on "traditional" ag lands
• Concern with the frequency and magnitude of ownership changes in a fragmented ownership landscape
• concern with the amount of streambank erosion that is occurring in the urban setting
• concern with surface water quality concern associated with animal (pet) waste and over fertilization of lawns
• Concern with specialty animal growers (turkeys, chickens, horses, etc....)
• Concern with water quality in ponds in housing development areas...high nutrient and pest contamination from lawns...grass species used (fescue and Kentucky Bluegrass require fertilization)...adoption of water conserving lawn species that reduce supplemental groundwater use
• concern with degrading soil biology as it exists in the urban setting (housing areas, business areas, green areas, etc.)
• Concern that traditional agriculture is losing its "voice" in areas with "urban" presence
• Concern that any time farming equipment is brought in a more urban setting, neighbors complain
• Concern with dust from construction sites
• Concern with chemical drift on specialty crops (vineyards, orchards, vegetables).
• Concern with "food deserts" in western Kansas, several miles to the nearest grocery store...small/specialty farms could help fill the void
Climate Resource Concerns:
• Concern that climate smart ag/carbon sequestration education is needed
• Concern with increased intensity/frequency of heavy rainfall events and subsequent effects (maintaining conservation practices, controlling erosion, infrastructure, etc.)
• Concern with adapting to changing growing conditions...drought, heat, rainfall intensities, etc.
• Concern (general) with drought from a water availability standpoint across all landuses...drought mitigation
• need for expansion of programs paying producers for carbon credits associated with benefits derived from adopting soil health practices
• Concern that ag producers are generally looking at the "current" year condition...all about this year (economic survival)...and not preparing for the probabilities of continuing intensive climate events

•concern that more drought tolerant cropping system research is needed looking at alternatives to row crops (primarily corn)

•Using nitrogen credits from the nitrates in the ground water to help producers reduce nitrogen inputs

Training/Education Concerns:

•Perceived need for additional trainings on soil health (staff & producers)...what are the long term benefits of soil health practices. (cover crops, no-till, etc.)

•Perceived need for additional trainings on prescribed burning and burning workshops. Use of spot/patch burning, firebreaks, and offseason burns. (staff and producer)

•Perceived need for additional training/education/resources needed to promote grazing lands health and CRP management...drought management on native grazinglands, info/ed on trigger dates for destocking

•Perception that landowners are not recognizing invasive plants (plant ID) on the landscape, lack of awareness of what normal should look like...need to recognize and treat earlier...need for training on treatment options

•Concern with challenges associated with partnership staff being the “experts” on all available programs...the programs are constantly changing...tough to keep up on all of them

•Concern that new employees (NRCS and Partners) need timely training, appropriate training, field training...working with mentors

•concern there is need for education/training on basic structural conservation maintenance of structural conservation practices using producer owned equipment

•need to provide additional training and educational materials on the control of old world bluestem

•Concern that NRCS field staff need to have good basic knowledge of multiple disciplines but are not "specialists".

•concern there is a need for soil sampling education/training/interpretation/implementation (nutrient management) on cropland

•concern that more “local” information/support is needed on alternative crops and associated markets

•Concern with training/education addressing conversion from irrigated cropland to dryland cropland production and how is this economically feasible...including conversion of dryland cropland to grass

•Perceived need for economic benefit analysis be incorporated into NRCS practice standard and specifications.

•Perceived need for additional trainings on water quality concerns...cause and effect

•Perceived need for additional trainings on wildlife habitat development/management

•Perceived need for additional trainings on the use of native grass species in lawns to reduce fertilization and water needs

Outreach Concerns:

•Concern with training, outreach, and interactions with “urban/small producers” and the urban population in general...how to identify a resource concern they may have...many have fulltime jobs and have a hard time making educational events...what are USDA's efforts to serve urban ag producers...what constitutes urban land

•Concern with education/outreach needs for urban/small farms...small farms (10-80 acres)... a focused outreach to these landowners/producers is needed (have been traditionally over-looked)...need improved/emphasized outreach to them...are they aware of NRCS services/offices...potential untapped customer base...more promotion needed...need to have a better understanding of their perspectives and needs
•Concern there is a relatively uncoordinated effort between local/state/federal entities to promote, advertise, and implement resource protection programs...landowners/producers may find it challenging to understand and locate all local sources of information, technical assistance, and FA...suggestion...agencies collaboratively create a media product (i.e. brochure) that outlines what each does and resources that are available...this would be to the benefit of all entities/landowners/producers
•Concern reaching and providing additional outreach/education absentee landowners
•Concern with lack of overall producer participation in available trainings/meetings/field days
•concern with gaining input from ordinary citizens/producers/board members on LWG's...need to pursue different/innovative methods of outreach...how do we get people to hear and adopt the message...hope decision makers (federal and state) listen to producer concerns
•NRCS needs a more user friendly website...a lot of it is too wordy...has too many links...and requires too many clicks to get desired information
•Perceived need for education of landowners (generally from out of the area) of tracts purchased/managed for "deer hunting"
•concern with absentee landowners and their understanding of conservation practices and willingness to apply conservation practices
•concern with the lack of knowledgeable producer/professional "mentors" that are available to assist producers adopting new conservation practices
•concern we're not properly engaging and educating new landowners on resource management and conservation needs/practices
•perception that additional partnering is needed with cities/municipalities to address identified resource concerns
•concern there is a lack of outreach to local schools, school organizations, and local civic groups
•concern financial professionals (bankers) have a great influence over producers in the consideration of adopting/applying conservation practices
•Concern that there is a lack of funding for outreach at the local level (cost of speakers, field days, workshops, etc.)
Program Concerns:
NRCS Programs:
•Concern available FA funds are insufficient
•Concern additional FA is needed for rebuilding/replacing structural conservation practices that have outlived their lifespan (i.e. terraces, waterways, ponds)
•Concern with the amount of "paperwork and administration" that exists with implementing federal FA
•Inadequate livestock water "water availability" should be a stand alone resource concern...not always tied to plant resource concern...old watering sources are failing (ponds/wells) or have lost their capacity/integrity and not eligible for FA...considered maintenance
•Concern that FA programs reward procrastinators and not innovators/adopters

• Concern that progressive levels of treatment should be allowed to be implemented rather than always having to meet RMS levels of treatment for FA programs...concern that grazing plans for EQIP applications/contracts are too restrictive and are not economically feasible to producers...this also limits adoption of other practices to address other resource concerns...perhaps increase in 528 payments rate would help in adoption of prescribed grazing plans.

• Concern with the brush management threshold...by the time the minimum threshold is met, trees are fairly large...recommendation to treat trees at a more manageable (smaller) stage...look at number of trees per acre, rather than % of canopy

• additional "act now" funding opportunities are desired

• Available programs are addressing most resource concerns (except streambank erosion) but just not enough FA

• concern the EQIP application/approval process is too complicated, cumbersome, and lengthy

• Concern that payments rates are low for many practices, 30-40% on the dollar. Magnified due to current inflation rates and supply issues

• concern with grazing management requirements (stocking rates) associated with EQIP brush control contracts

• concern with lack of outreach promoting available conservation programs

• Concern with time from application to potential funding...too much time in between...producers can't wait that long to find out...basically waiting to hear and not addressing resource concern in a timely manner...hinders their decision-making. process...especially with deferred applications...additionally, program/practice requirements make it cost prohibitive

• Concern with definition of "working lands" as it pertains to wildlifeland and EQIP

• provide greater flexibility and options with program cover crop requirements...expand seeding dates...lower the carbon to nitrogen ratio...the regulations for seeding cover crops under soil health can be very restrictive

• Concern that once FA program incentives are completed, producers will revert back to pre-incentive farming practices

• Concern that "funding pools" have become too broad and should be refocused back to the MU level

• concern with targeted areas...producers outside targeted areas still have resource concerns but are not as likely to acquire FA

• suggestion that payment rates for EQIP should be established on more of a sectional basis within the state

• concern with EQIP requirement to cover entire "field" acreage at a minimum...should be able to address areas of concern within a field on an incremental (progressive) basis...FSA assigned field sizes vary greatly

• concern with the effectiveness/efficiencies of some FA programs (primarily CSP)

• Concern with lack of FA for water sources on cropland for cover crop use...grazing of cover crops financially justifies the application for cover crops for the majority of producers

• Dryland conversions (under EQIP) rank low due to low amount of water saving. Need to look at other financial alternatives to get landowners to retire water rights and permanently transition to dryland (easements, tax codes, etc.)

• Concern windbreaks and shelter belts around farmsteads have to be tied to "energy"...need funds for maintaining/cleaning up/replanting windbreaks...also landuse limitations don't allow for windbreaks to be used for livestock

• More FA emphasis needs to be placed "soil health" practices
• concern with the timeliness of program FA payments
• concern with the grazing restrictions on cover crops through EQIP (to restrictive)
• concern with disconnect between program decision makers at the State and/or USDA level and local boards with most government programs. Need greater flexibility and authority at the local level.
• need for continuation and expansion of the GPCI program
• suggest that some FA should be reserved for "innovative" practices/techniques that encourage "outside the box" thinking
• concern with lack of flexibility associated with CSP enhancements
• recommendation that cover crops applied through EQIP in western KS should require fewer species (1-5 species)
• Adjust seeding recommendations and timing during drought periods...limited success in getting a stand of grass, forbs or cover during drought conditions
• suggested change in length of veteran status...you're a veteran for life not just for 10 years
• concern with requirement that a contract payment has to be made within the first 12 months of contract approval...recommend first contract payment be made within first 18 months
• allow programs to provide FA to producers to purchase equipment (drills, broadcast seeders, combine seeders, inter-seeders, high clearance seeders) associated with making the conversion to soil health practices
• concern the stringent nutrient mgmt requirements of CSP are discouraging program participation
• need to increase program cap levels on surface drip irrigation
• Target greatest amount of water saving by restructuring payment rates and/or ranking points to reward the greatest amount of water savings (regardless of the practice being applied)
• consider providing FA on temporary or moveable water tanks providing more flexibility to implement rotational grazing
• Concern that FA for brush management is not adequate to carry out initial treatment and subsequent treatment of sprouting species...need to evaluate the standard and specs, threshold for treatment is too high for brush species
• Concern that EQIP contract participants don't always totally understand the "payment rate" method of FA...concern that the actual amount they receive is a considerably lower % of the total cost than they anticipated...this is a matter of better communications during contract obligation
• for cross fencing within certain grazing systems look at a 3 wire fence with post every 60 feet with 2 stays in between
• Monarch habitat...need to incentivize people to keep it in...it can be broken out after comes out of the program...5 years...would like to see incentive to keep it in the habitat
• Nutrient management alternatives (green-seeker technology, N-rich strips, variable rate application, etc.) are not eligible for financial assistance under EQIP because the 590 specification is already being met...however, meeting the 590 specification does not mean that nutrients are not being overapplied were extreme environmental conditions exist
• Programs need to invest in new technologies, "NRCS is 10 years behind" - need to be ahead of the game
• EQIP requires that dryland conversion on I-134 soils must be planted to permanent vegetative cover...within the management unit, there are producers who can farm these soils under dryland conditions

FSA Programs:
•Concern that there is not enough management or maintenance of CRP acres because of program limitations and/or producers willingness or ability to do management...allow grazing earlier in the season...remove rental rate reduction for grazing...concern with invasive species and woody vegetation encroachment...seedbed preparation for interseeding needs to be cost shared on
•Concern that CRP payments rates are low and hard to generate interest in participating/renewing
•Concern with CRP being broken out...need better incentives to keep in grass. (Livestock water and fence)...additionally some CRP is getting broken out because of absentee landowners that don't have access to or the ability to perform maintenance activities so rent to someone to farm
•Concern with CRP no activity during the nesting period...can inhibit proper habitat management
•Concern that continuous CRP is not being utilized as much as it could be
•concern with increased use of CRP for haying and grazing...reducing habitat during critical part of year
•Release of CRP for emergency haying and grazing needs to be done in a timely manner
•Expand the CP38B priority area
•recommendation to extend CRP spring prescribed deadline from April 15th to May 15th
•Concern with CRP program – the program is partially administered by FSA, partially by NRCS – this makes it harder for the producer to know who to talk to or where to go to get things done
Other:
•contractor availability is a concern...soil contractors, spraying and brush/tree removal, well drilling, prescribed burning, tree planting
•Concern that USDA programs discourage producers from adopting cover crops...FSA crop acreage certification process is not conducive to cover crops practices, inter-seeding, initial crop vs secondary crop, subsequent crops status or of grazing cover crops, FSA ARC/PLC program disincentivizes sound soil health practices
•Concern with crop insurance program guarantees of revenue coverage...perception this is encouraging farming of marginal soils and conversion of grasslands to cropland
•concern with increased particulate matters in the air (dust, particulates from fire)
Generalized Concerns/Questions/Comments/TA Needs:
•Concern with the lack of time NRCS is spending on the land with landowners...not enough staff to spend adequate time in the field with producers
•Concern with lack of adequate staff, number of vacant positions, training/knowledge of existing staff, and retention of staff...competent staff is needed to assist producers addressing resource concerns
•concern NRCS needs to provide a written response (report) to LWG sponsors on the "actions" that were implemented as a result of input recieved through LWG meetings...providing validity to the LWG process
•More of an emphasis needs to be placed on CTA planning vs programs...need time to follow-up with producers after practice/contract implementation

• concern with perceived need for use more outside sources of TA (non NRCS) that have a particular expertise that can be utilized to assist producers in planning
• concern with the cultural resource review process...has resulted in significant delays in practice start/implementation...road block for producers and contractors needing to start a project within a reasonable time frame
• concern with time it takes to receive TA not associated with FA
• concern with industrial dairies, wind and solar farms coming to the state and the impacts they may have on natural resources...dairies use a lot of water
• concern with the recruitment of staff...need to establish closer recruiting relationships with universities
• question...are higher incentive payment rates having the desired effect...can NRCS provide data to justify higher incentive payment rates
• Does grazing CRP during the nesting season really have that much of a negative impact on nest/eggs?
• concern with advocating with legislators to obtain more FA...also educating legislators on the environmental benefits associated with obligated FA
• concern with perceived “disconnect” between NHQ leadership and local producer/landowner needs...emphasis is on program implementation at the cost of traditional TA (getting back to working on the ground with producers/landowners)
• provisions in the last Farm Bill stated that 10% of all NRCS funds were to go to water supply and source water protection. Priority areas were established that included playas around towns and municipal wells...was this 10% requirement met in Kansas...where did the funding go (which priority areas)
• Is there a conflict with feedlots using water to control dust and declining ground water levels
• Question to NRCS...do the programs and initiatives meet the needs of the water concerns...are they working...if not why not...what could be changed to make them work better
• Utilization of NRCS Nutrient Management (590) standard and specification does not fully address the proper application of nutrients where other variables (environmental stresses common to southwest Kansas) determine potential yield...use of new technologies would prevent the over application of nutrients (determined by KSU guidelines)

Participants by MU:
Dodge City
Great Bend
Hugoton
Kingman
Marion
Pratt
Ulysses
Wichita
Total:

Area 2 (no.)	Area 2 (%)
7	88%
5	63%
3	38%
3	38%
3	38%
3	38%
1	13%
4	50%
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6	75%
4	50%
3	38%
5	63%
1	13%

1	13%
1	13%
1	13%
2	25%
1	13%
1	13%

Area	Total	Virtual
2	24	13
2	30	2
2	17	1
2	15	7
2	16	6
2	22	11
2	19	0
2	21	6
	164	46

State Resource Concerns

Cropland Resource Concerns:

- Concern that it's difficult to justify the implementation of cover crops unless they're grazed...how do we sell cover crop adoption based on "intrinsic" soil health benefits

- Active gully erosion (ephemeral) in cropland fields...worked shut every year, but reform annually

- Concern with lack of diversified crop rotations...moving more to row crops...driven by economics and crop insurance safety nets

- Concern with structural practices past life span and failing...active erosion is occurring in unmaintained structural practice systems. (terraces, waterways, ponds, etc....)

- Concern for a need to expand of soil health practices (no-till/cover crops). Keep the soil biologically active

- Concern with overall nutrient management implementation...efficient/proper use of fertilizers

- Concern with marginal cropland being brought into production from grasslands (sodbuster) and not being adequately treated

- concern that drought has had a negative impact on cropland/grassland causing less cover leading to challenges with erosion control, blowing crop stover, pest control, plant vigor, OM, etc.

- Concern that benefits from soil health practices take years to realize...perception there is a general apprehension to commit to the multi-year time frame needed to realize benefits...associated with farm economics...economics of surviving on a year-to-year basis

- concern that grassed waterway and terrace (structural practice) maintenance has declined due to farmers lacking time to perform maintenance, lack of landlord commitment, and cost

- Concern that erosion control can't adequately be treated with only management practices...takes a combination of management and structural conservation practices

- Wind erosion in cropland fields...due to lack of cover (cover crop or residue) in some cases crops don't produce enough residue to control erosion...residue blowing off...dust concern

- concern that "green practices" are possibly being over promoted as the remedy (silver bullet) for all concerns on cropland

- Concern exists with the perceived excessive use of pesticides...needs to be an overall reduction in the use of these products to maintain/improve water quality...also a concern with drift

- Concern with phosphorous transfer from cropland to surface waters and ground water

- concern that existing ephemeral erosion areas in cropland are not being adequately treated and continue to worsen to the point they're transitioning to classic gully erosion

- Concern with the timing and success of applying cover crops in a corn/bean rotation (limited cover crop species/limited growing period)

- concern that cover crop adoption is hindered by single year failures...one failure and the producers don't want to continue...can't economically absorb a failure

- concern that lack of soil health (cover crops) acceptance may be attributed to the lack of private industry/university data and research that is available to support the benefits of cover crops (mainly the economic benefits in fall seeded cover crops in the absence of grazing)

- concern that interest in cover crops has been negatively affected by the current drought conditions

•Concern there seems to be a hesitancy to move to cover crops because of a perceived fear of losing moisture
•Concern landowners are rebuilding/replacing structural practices on their own (without NRCS TA) that may not meet NRCS standards and specs and lead to additional resource concerns...under designed
•Concern cover crop rotations do not match local growing conditions...lack of long term acceptance of cover crops...covers on dryland cropland in western Kansas is difficult
•Concern with decreased organic matter and overall soil health on dryland soils. Biomass removal of harvested crop residue for dairy bedding
•concern with insurance rules/policy with planting wheat as a cover crop...want more flexibility to decide after wheat is planted as to whether the wheat crop can be used cover, for grazing , or for grain harvest
•concern with riparian and timbered areas being converted to cropland
•Concern with residue blowing off and/or being washed off fields causing concerns in waterways, streams, riparian areas and fencelines...piling up and/or blocking water flow
•Concern with excessive nitrogen application (need for better soil testing)
•Concern with the increased size of farming equipment and precision agriculture technology has contributed to overall structural practice maintenance...i.e. farming up and over terraces...contour farming is not being applied as much as it once was
•Concern with soil salinity (especially along the Arkansas River Corridor) in irrigation water from alluvium and surface water diversion
•Concern that cover crops are not utilized on fallow ground...no living cover...worked repeatedly during fallow period...a source of water/wind erosion
•Concern with cover crop termination...if not terminated completely or before going to seed can cause problems in neighboring crops (i.e. rye in wheat)...chemical and/or tillage seem to be best termination but not always compatible with goals or programs requirements
•Concern with kosha and pigweed...chemical resistance weeds in no-till is resulting in long term no-tiller's going back to tillage
•Concern with re-vegetating irrigated soils not suitable for dryland production (sandhills south of Arkansas River)...education needed on how to successfully make the conversion by non-traditional means (small area conversions, natural succession, etc.)...programs (outside of CRP) are needed to support the non-traditional methods
•concern with concentrated flow erosion forming in sprayer tracks going up and over terraces
•Concern with nutrient stratification in no-till operations due to placement and existence of nutrients in the top few inches of soil
Grazing Lands Resource Concerns:
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...cedar
•Concern with performing “prescribed burns” and overall risk involved. Prescribed burning is not implemented as it has been in the past due to changing environmental conditions, increased fuel loads (cedars), and fear of potential nondesirable outcomes (i.e. out of control fires, litigation, etc.)
•Concern with invasive species of old-world bluestem
•Concern with the growing number of absentee landowners and perceived lack of concern for, or understanding of, grassland management needs

•Concern with lack of water availability...lack of available watering points for proper grazing distribution...on both large and small grazing operations
•Concern with overgrazing and adoption of prescribed grazing practices
•concern with challenges associated with managing grazing lands that are adjacent to tracts of land that are generally managed for deer hunting...fear of prescribed burning, fear of spraying, dealing with perennial seed sources of undesirable invasive species (cedars, hedge, locust, etc.)
•Concern with the growing number of grassland acres that are being purchased for “hunting” and are not properly managed or lack of management
•Concern with invasive species of sericea lespedeza
•Concern with soil health/plant vigor on grazing lands...trailing, compaction, lack of grazing distribution
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...locust
•concern with the lack of available resources available to producers to support prescribed burning (burn associations & districts/groups, rural/municipal fire departments)
•Concern with gully erosion from old structural practices (terraces), cattle trailing, overgrazing invasive species, and intense rainfall events
•Concern with a general complacency about tree/brush control...we’ll get to it when we can...and by then the tree growth has almost become unmanageable
•Concern with grazing lands being converted to cropland...primarily economically driven (cash rent)
•Concern with smoke management and effects on “urban” population
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...hedge
•Concern with the invasive species of phragmites
•concern that late summer burns should be implemented to assist in the effective control of invasive species
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...salt cedar (riparian areas and waterways). Possible use for biochar
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...honeysuckle
•concern that grazing lands were over utilized during drought conditions out of necessity to provide forage for livestock
•concern with aging infrastructure that supports proper grassland management (i.e., ponds, fences, etc.)
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...Russian olive
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...Bradford pears
•Concern with ability to spray (chemicals) to control undesirable plant growth in proximity to urban areas or unmanaged wildlife lands
•concern that the drought conditions are drying up existing ponds reducing available grazing lands watering points
•Concern with invasive species of musk and Canadian thistle
•Concern with encroachment of western wheatgrass
•concern that in some instances prescribed burning isn’t possible due to lack of fuel load (especially with short native grasses)
•concern with grassland recovery after a prescribed burn with drought conditions
•Concern with invasive species of Johnsongrass (grazing lands, cropland, road ditches, miscellaneous areas)
•Concern with invasive species of bindweed (includes cropland)

- Concern that producers may not be able to identify weed pests in grazing lands properly and subsequently the proper treatment/management of those weeds
- restoration of native grasslands after wildfires in the sand hills and drought...effects of wind erosion on susceptible/bare soil surfaces as well
- Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...Japanese Hopps
- Concern with invasive species of teasel
- Concern with broom sedge in cool season pastures
- Concern that woody residue removal is needed following wildfires

Streambank/Riparian Area Resource Concerns:

- Concern with streambank erosion and increased occurrence of active streambank erosion...stream channel width and incision concerns that are advancing up smaller tribs and into adjacent landuses...forming advancing gully erosion...loss or riparian areas, cropland, infrastructure stability
- Concern with the amount of sedimentation that's associated with active streambank erosion
- Concern that streambank armoring is too expensive for landowners and that alternative affordable means of streambank erosion control be should be looked at
- Concern with obstructions in streams...trees jams, crop residue drifts, etc.
- Concern with lack of riparian area management...degraded riparian area conditions, livestock winter feeding areas, woody/vegetative invasive species encroachment
- Concern with producer/landowner lack of clarity/understanding of rules associated with manipulating or working in riparian areas...regulatory vs. voluntary rules/roles/authorities
- concern with the amount of streambank erosion that is occurring in the urban setting
- concern with the population of beavers and the damage they do to riparian areas, watershed dams, etc.
- Concern with maintenance on established COE levees/dikes...who is responsible for maintaining/repairing non-COE levees
- Concern with streambank erosion in association with utility crossings on streams

Surface Water Quantity (flooding) Resource Concerns:

- Perception that more soil health practices (cover crops) would help with water infiltration and subsequently help reduce excessive water runoff, both a ground and surface water concern
- Concern that flood intensity/events have increased substantially over the last number of years
- Concern that township/rural roads are a major contributor of sedimentation to surface waters...especially in those situations where inadequate road ditches exit
- need to encourage installation of wetland practices on the lower end of cropped field drainages to trap nutrients prior to the water flowing off the farm
- Concern that phragmites uses a lot of water
- Concern with maintenance of watershed dams

Surface Water Quality Resource Concerns:

- Concern with sedimentation and nutrients
- Concern with livestock and municipal waste in streams and ponds
- Concern with the perceived negative effects tile terrace systems have on water quality
- consider potential use of more "beaver dam analogs" to improve water quality and quantity

- Concern with trash (appliances, junk, general trash) by individual landowners in pits, holes, low areas
- Concern with water quality for urban gardens. Have to pay to use treated "City" water
- Concern with PFOA chemicals in water sources

Groundwater Quantity Resource Concerns:

- Concern with declining ground water levels...need adoption of drought tolerant crops and/or incentives to reduce irrigation rates...improve infiltration rates on cropland...need for more efficient irrigation systems and less water intensive crops..need to utilize moisture probes for irrigation water management.
- Need for more small watershed structures, impoundments, level terraces, and playa's help in aquifer recharge...concerns over not knowing the engineering design requirements and costs for playa restoration could be a factor in producer's decisions not to enter SAFE program...also need to make info on partner FA availability more readily available.
- Concern with declining ground water levels. Have to drill wells deeper to hit water for livestock water.
- Concern with unplugged abandoned wells and cisterns
- concern with increasing irrigation efficiencies, economic challenges associated with transitioning from irrigated to dryland cropland, and working under LEMA's
- concern that State water right rules provide no incentive for conservation of water outside of GMD's...if you don't use it, you lose the water right...no incentives for conserving water
- Concern that wells and streams go dry during heavy irrigation periods. Several end guns are still being used. May be a policy issue.
- concern that industry and municipalities are not held to the same ground water use standards as irrigators

Public/Private Water Supply Quality Resource Concerns:

- Concern with surface water supply sedimentation impairment
- Concern with groundwater water supply nitrate impairment
- Concern with surface water supply phosphate impairment
- Concern with surface water supply blue green algae impairment
- Concern with surface water supply atrazine impairment
- Concern with groundwater water supply bacteria (E. Coli) impairment
- Concern with uranium levels...high cost to test...FA is need for testing...this is a broader concern than just public water supply...need to monitor above ground biomass for uranium

Animal Resource Concerns:

Wildlife:

- Concern with upland bird habitat degradation and/or loss of brood rearing habitat, habitat connectivity, native grassland (including CRP) , riparian areas, as well as loss of habitat "edge"...lack of diversity across the landscape
- Concern with the declining populations of ground nesting game birds and non-game birds. (quail, pheasant)
- Concern with brush/tree/invasive species...cedar, hedge, locust, honeysuckle, phragmites, teasal, winter creeper, sericea lespedeza, etc...and the detrimental effect on wildlife habitat
- Concern with pest mgmt....clean field effect on upland game birds

- concern with the management of land owned/controlled by “out of area” landowners, or local landowners that are leasing land to “out of area” lessees for hunting

- concern with the habitat fragmentation in and surrounding large urban areas/counties

- concern with lack of cover crops...perception that cover crops have been beneficial to upland game bird populations

- concern with the declining numbers of mule deer and pronghorn

- concern there is a need to educate landowners whose main objective is hunting that a grass biome-based habitat is better than a woody (cedar) based habitat

- concern with chemical drift on native forbs and the effect on insect populations...perceived more chemical use under a no-till system

- concern with brome encroachment in native grass/CRP

- concern with the expanding range and populations of armadillos and the damage they cause to agricultural lands

- concern with resident geese populations...groups of a couple birds are nesting wherever they can find a place in urban areas

- concern with tick loads from unmanaged wildlife areas adjacent to grazing lands.

- concern with the impact of wind turbines on bird and insect populations

- concern with high populations of whitetail deer

Domestic:

- concern with water availability for grazing systems and distribution

- concern with dust from feedlots...is there a conflict with feedlots using water to control dust and declining ground water levels

- concern with growing interest in large scale on farm composting of old biomass (hay bales) as well as dead animal

- concern that livestock structures (portable and permanent) are needed for extreme weather events both in the summer and winter months on cropland and grazing land

Forestry Resource Concerns:

- concern with loss of windbreaks/shelterbelts, or windbreaks/shelterbelts not being properly managed/maintained

- concern with lack of proper management and maintenance of forestland...plant vigor, density thinning, removal of undesirable trees, control of invasive species

- concern for loss of native hardwoods in forested area...desireable native species being replaced with less desirable species

- concern with the lack of prescribed burns being applied in forestland

Urban/Small Farm Resource Concerns:

- concern that conservation partnership is not properly prepared to assist urban/small farms...more use of non-traditional outreach medias focused on this group...YouTube, Facebook, twitter, etc...not aware of or coming to conservation partnership for technical assistance.

- concern with increased fracturing of rural lands...being sold into smaller parcels (20-40 acres)...utilized for houses/small ranchettes

- concern with people moving into rural areas and having unrealistic expectations dealing with traditional agriculture interactions...dust, odors, smoke, noise, etc.

• Perceived urban population lack of understanding of "traditional agriculture"...additional education is needed to address lack of knowledge...lingo, practices, etc.
• Concern with urban/housing developments in rural areas...specifically in grassland areas...fire hazard awareness, dangerous fuel loads close to homes
• More "urban communities" (20-30 house additions) being built in "rural" areas...urban sprawl
• Concern with over utilizing small acreages...primarily overgrazing...looking for ways they can better utilize their small acreages
• concern educational needs exist for urban/small farms and conservation partners...need to have a better understanding of urban/small farm perspectives and needs
• concern with number private wells within city limits being used for lawn watering...water conservation concern
• concern with increased runoff flows associated with non-permeable urban surfaces...roofs, roads, parking lots...and the issues it's causing on "traditional" ag lands
• Concern with the frequency and magnitude of ownership changes in a fragmented ownership landscape
• concern with the amount of streambank erosion that is occurring in the urban setting
• concern with surface water quality concern associated with animal (pet) waste and over fertilization of lawns
• Concern with specialty animal growers (turkeys, chickens, horses, etc....)
• Concern with water quality in ponds in housing development areas...high nutrient and pest contamination from lawns...grass species used (fescue and Kentucky Bluegrass require fertilization)...adoption of water conserving lawn species that reduce supplemental groundwater use
• concern with degrading soil biology as it exists in the urban setting (housing areas, business areas, green areas, etc.)
• Concern that traditional agriculture is losing its "voice" in areas with "urban" presence
• Concern that any time farming equipment is brought in a more urban setting, neighbors complain
• Concern with dust from construction sites
• Concern with chemical drift on specialty crops (vineyards, orchards, vegetables).
• Concern with "food deserts" in western Kansas, several miles to the nearest grocery store...small/specialty farms could help fill the void
Climate Resource Concerns:
• Concern that climate smart ag/carbon sequestration education is needed
• Concern with increased intensity/frequency of heavy rainfall events and subsequent effects (maintaining conservation practices, controlling erosion, infrastructure, etc.)
• Concern with adapting to changing growing conditions...drought, heat, rainfall intensities, etc.
• Concern (general) with drought from a water availability standpoint across all landuses...drought mitigation
• need for expansion of programs paying producers for carbon credits associated with benefits derived from adopting soil health practices
• Concern that ag producers are generally looking at the "current" year condition...all about this year (economic survival)...and not preparing for the probabilities of continuing intensive climate events

•concern that more drought tolerant cropping system research is needed looking at alternatives to row crops (primarily corn)

•Using nitrogen credits from the nitrates in the ground water to help producers reduce nitrogen inputs

Training/Education Concerns:

•Perceived need for additional trainings on soil health (staff & producers)...what are the long term benefits of soil health practices. (cover crops, no-till, etc.)

•Perceived need for additional trainings on prescribed burning and burning workshops. Use of spot/patch burning, firebreaks, and offseason burns. (staff and producer)

•Perceived need for additional training/education/resources needed to promote grazing lands health and CRP management...drought management on native grazinglands, info/ed on trigger dates for destocking

•Perception that landowners are not recognizing invasive plants (plant ID) on the landscape, lack of awareness of what normal should look like...need to recognize and treat earlier...need for training on treatment options

•Concern with challenges associated with partnership staff being the “experts” on all available programs...the programs are constantly changing...tough to keep up on all of them

•Concern that new employees (NRCS and Partners) need timely training, appropriate training, field training...working with mentors

•concern there is need for education/training on basic structural conservation maintenance of structural conservation practices using producer owned equipment

•need to provide additional training and educational materials on the control of old world bluestem

•Concern that NRCS field staff need to have good basic knowledge of multiple disciplines but are not "specialists".

•concern there is a need for soil sampling education/training/interpretation/implementation (nutrient management) on cropland

•concern that more “local” information/support is needed on alternative crops and associated markets

•Concern with training/education addressing conversion from irrigated cropland to dryland cropland production and how is this economically feasible...including conversion of dryland cropland to grass

•Perceived need for economic benefit analysis be incorporated into NRCS practice standard and specifications.

•Perceived need for additional trainings on water quality concerns...cause and effect

•Perceived need for additional trainings on wildlife habitat development/management

•Perceived need for additional trainings on the use of native grass species in lawns to reduce fertilization and water needs

Outreach Concerns:

•Concern with training, outreach, and interactions with “urban/small producers” and the urban population in general...how to identify a resource concern they may have...many have fulltime jobs and have a hard time making educational events...what are USDA's efforts to serve urban ag producers...what constitutes urban land

•Concern with education/outreach needs for urban/small farms...small farms (10-80 acres)... a focused outreach to these landowners/producers is needed (have been traditionally over-looked)...need improved/emphasized outreach to them...are they aware of NRCS services/offices...potential untapped customer base...more promotion needed...need to have a better understanding of their perspectives and needs
•Concern there is a relatively uncoordinated effort between local/state/federal entities to promote, advertise, and implement resource protection programs...landowners/producers may find it challenging to understand and locate all local sources of information, technical assistance, and FA...suggestion...agencies collaboratively create a media product (i.e. brochure) that outlines what each does and resources that are available...this would be to the benefit of all entities/landowners/producers
•Concern reaching and providing additional outreach/education absentee landowners
•Concern with lack of overall producer participation in available trainings/meetings/field days
•concern with gaining input from ordinary citizens/producers/board members on LWG's...need to pursue different/innovative methods of outreach...how do we get people to hear and adopt the message...hope decision makers (federal and state) listen to producer concerns
•NRCS needs a more user friendly website...a lot of it is too wordy...has too many links...and requires too many clicks to get desired information
•Perceived need for education of landowners (generally from out of the area) of tracts purchased/managed for "deer hunting"
•concern with absentee landowners and their understanding of conservation practices and willingness to apply conservation practices
•concern with the lack of knowledgeable producer/professional "mentors" that are available to assist producers adopting new conservation practices
•concern we're not properly engaging and educating new landowners on resource management and conservation needs/practices
•perception that additional partnering is needed with cities/municipalities to address identified resource concerns
•concern there is a lack of outreach to local schools, school organizations, and local civic groups
•concern financial professionals (bankers) have a great influence over producers in the consideration of adopting/applying conservation practices
•Concern that there is a lack of funding for outreach at the local level (cost of speakers, field days, workshops, etc.)
Program Concerns:
NRCS Programs:
•Concern available FA funds are insufficient
•Concern additional FA is needed for rebuilding/replacing structural conservation practices that have outlived their lifespan (i.e. terraces, waterways, ponds)
•Concern with the amount of "paperwork and administration" that exists with implementing federal FA
•Inadequate livestock water "water availability" should be a stand alone resource concern...not always tied to plant resource concern...old watering sources are failing (ponds/wells) or have lost their capacity/integrity and not eligible for FA...considered maintenance
•Concern that FA programs reward procrastinators and not innovators/adopters

•Concern that progressive levels of treatment should be allowed to be implemented rather than always having to meet RMS levels of treatment for FA programs...concern that grazing plans for EQIP applications/contracts are too restrictive and are not economically feasible to producers...this also limits adoption of other practices to address other resource concerns...perhaps increase in 528 payments rate would help in adoption of prescribed grazing plans.

•Concern with the brush management threshold...by the time the minimum threshold is met, trees are fairly large...recommendation to treat trees at a more manageable (smaller) stage...look at number of trees per acre, rather than % of canopy

•additional "act now" funding opportunities are desired

•Available programs are addressing most resource concerns (except streambank erosion) but just not enough FA

•concern the EQIP application/approval process is too complicated, cumbersome, and lengthy

•Concern that payments rates are low for many practices, 30-40% on the dollar. Magnified due to current inflation rates and supply issues

•concern with grazing management requirements (stocking rates) associated with EQIP brush control contracts

•concern with lack of outreach promoting available conservation programs

•Concern with time from application to potential funding...too much time in between...producers can't wait that long to find out...basically waiting to hear and not addressing resource concern in a timely manner...hinders their decision-making. process...especially with deferred applications...additionally, program/practice requirements make it cost prohibitive

•Concern with definition of "working lands" as it pertains to wildlifeland and EQIP

•provide greater flexibility and options with program cover crop requirements...expand seeding dates...lower the carbon to nitrogen ratio...the regulations for seeding cover crops under soil health can be very restrictive

•Concern that once FA program incentives are completed, producers will revert back to pre-incentive farming practices

•Concern that "funding pools" have become too broad and should be refocused back to the MU level

•concern with targeted areas...producers outside targeted areas still have resource concerns but are not as likely to acquire FA

•suggestion that payment rates for EQIP should be established on more of a sectional basis within the state

•concern with EQIP requirement to cover entire "field" acreage at a minimum...should be able to address areas of concern within a field on an incremental (progressive) basis...FSA assigned field sizes vary greatly

•concern with the effectiveness/efficiencies of some FA programs (primarily CSP)

•Concern with lack of FA for water sources on cropland for cover crop use...grazing of cover crops financially justifies the application for cover crops for the majority of producers

•Dryland conversions (under EQIP) rank low due to low amount of water saving. Need to look at other financial alternatives to get landowners to retire water rights and permanently transition to dryland (easements, tax codes, etc.)

•Concern windbreaks and shelter belts around farmsteads have to be tied to "energy"...need funds for maintaining/cleaning up/replanting windbreaks...also landuse limitations don't allow for windbreaks to be used for livestock

• More FA emphasis needs to be placed "soil health" practices
• concern with the timeliness of program FA payments
• concern with the grazing restrictions on cover crops through EQIP (to restrictive)
• concern with disconnect between program decision makers at the State and/or USDA level and local boards with most government programs. Need greater flexibility and authority at the local level.
• need for continuation and expansion of the GPCI program
• suggest that some FA should be reserved for "innovative" practices/techniques that encourage "outside the box" thinking
• concern with lack of flexibility associated with CSP enhancements
• recommendation that cover crops applied through EQIP in western KS should require fewer species (1-5 species)
• Adjust seeding recommendations and timing during drought periods...limited success in getting a stand of grass, forbs or cover during drought conditions
• suggested change in length of veteran status...you're a veteran for life not just for 10 years
• concern with requirement that a contract payment has to be made within the first 12 months of contract approval...recommend first contract payment be made within first 18 months
• allow programs to provide FA to producers to purchase equipment (drills, broadcast seeders, combine seeders, inter-seeders, high clearance seeders) associated with making the conversion to soil health practices
• concern the stringent nutrient mgmt requirements of CSP are discouraging program participation
• need to increase program cap levels on surface drip irrigation
• Target greatest amount of water saving by restructuring payment rates and/or ranking points to reward the greatest amount of water savings (regardless of the practice being applied)
• consider providing FA on temporary or moveable water tanks providing more flexibility to implement rotational grazing
• Concern that FA for brush management is not adequate to carry out initial treatment and subsequent treatment of sprouting species...need to evaluate the standard and specs, threshold for treatment is too high for brush species
• Concern that EQIP contract participants don't always totally understand the "payment rate" method of FA...concern that the actual amount they receive is a considerably lower % of the total cost than they anticipated...this is a matter of better communications during contract obligation
• for cross fencing within certain grazing systems look at a 3 wire fence with post every 60 feet with 2 stays in between
• Monarch habitat...need to incentivize people to keep it in...it can be broken out after comes out of the program...5 years...would like to see incentive to keep it in the habitat
• Nutrient management alternatives (green-seeker technology, N-rich strips, variable rate application, etc.) are not eligible for financial assistance under EQIP because the 590 specification is already being met...however, meeting the 590 specification does not mean that nutrients are not being overapplied were extreme environmental conditions exist
• Programs need to invest in new technologies, "NRCS is 10 years behind" - need to be ahead of the game
• EQIP requires that dryland conversion on I-134 soils must be planted to permanent vegetative cover...within the management unit, there are producers who can farm these soils under dryland conditions

FSA Programs:
•Concern that there is not enough management or maintenance of CRP acres because of program limitations and/or producers willingness or ability to do management...allow grazing earlier in the season...remove rental rate reduction for grazing...concern with invasive species and woody vegetation encroachment...seedbed preparation for interseeding needs to be cost shared on
•Concern that CRP payments rates are low and hard to generate interest in participating/renewing
•Concern with CRP being broken out...need better incentives to keep in grass. (Livestock water and fence)...additionally some CRP is getting broken out because of absentee landowners that don't have access to or the ability to perform maintenance activities so rent to someone to farm
•Concern with CRP no activity during the nesting period...can inhibit proper habitat management
•Concern that continuous CRP is not being utilized as much as it could be
•concern with increased use of CRP for haying and grazing...reducing habitat during critical part of year
•Release of CRP for emergency haying and grazing needs to be done in a timely manner
•Expand the CP38B priority area
•recommendation to extend CRP spring prescribed deadline from April 15th to May 15th
•Concern with CRP program – the program is partially administered by FSA, partially by NRCS – this makes it harder for the producer to know who to talk to or where to go to get things done
Other:
•contractor availability is a concern...soil contractors, spraying and brush/tree removal, well drilling, prescribed burning, tree planting
•Concern that USDA programs discourage producers from adopting cover crops...FSA crop acreage certification process is not conducive to cover crops practices, inter-seeding, initial crop vs secondary crop, subsequent crops status or of grazing cover crops, FSA ARC/PLC program disincentivizes sound soil health practices
•Concern with crop insurance program guarantees of revenue coverage...perception this is encouraging farming of marginal soils and conversion of grasslands to cropland
•concern with increased particulate matters in the air (dust, particulates from fire)
Generalized Concerns/Questions/Comments/TA Needs:
•Concern with the lack of time NRCS is spending on the land with landowners...not enough staff to spend adequate time in the field with producers
•Concern with lack of adequate staff, number of vacant positions, training/knowledge of existing staff, and retention of staff...competent staff is needed to assist producers addressing resource concerns
•concern NRCS needs to provide a written response (report) to LWG sponsors on the "actions" that were implemented as a result of input recieved through LWG meetings...providing validity to the LWG process
•More of an emphasis needs to be placed on CTA planning vs programs...need time to follow-up with producers after practice/contract implementation

•concern with perceived need for use more outside sources of TA (non NRCS) that have a particular expertise that can be utilized to assist producers in planning
•concern with the cultural resource review process...has resulted in significant delays in practice start/implementation...road block for producers and contractors needing to start a project within a reasonable time frame
•concern with time it takes to receive TA not associated with FA
•concern with industrial dairies, wind and solar farms coming to the state and the impacts they may have on natural resources...dairies use a lot of water
•concern with the recruitment of staff...need to establish closer recruiting relationships with universities
•question...are higher incentive payment rates having the desired effect...can NRCS provide data to justify higher incentive payment rates
•Does grazing CRP during the nesting season really have that much of a negative impact on nest/eggs?
•concern with advocating with legislators to obtain more FA...also educating legislators on the environmental benefits associated with obligated FA
•concern with perceived “disconnect” between NHQ leadership and local producer/landowner needs...emphasis is on program implementation at the cost of traditional TA (getting back to working on the ground with producers/landowners)
•provisions in the last Farm Bill stated that 10% of all NRCS funds were to go to water supply and source water protection. Priority areas were established that included playas around towns and municipal wells...was this 10% requirement met in Kansas...where did the funding go (which priority areas)
•Is there a conflict with feedlots using water to control dust and declining ground water levels
•Question to NRCS...do the programs and initiatives meet the needs of the water concerns...are they working...if not why not...what could be changed to make them work better
•Utilization of NRCS Nutrient Management (590) standard and specification does not fully address the proper application of nutrients where other variables (environmental stresses common to southwest Kansas) determine potential yield...use of new technologies would prevent the over application of nutrients (determined by KSU guidelines)

Participants by MU:
Columbus
El Dorado
Emporia
Eureka
Iola
Lawrence
Total:

Area 3 (no.)	Area 3 (%)
5	83%
6	100%
5	83%
5	83%
5	83%
4	67%
4	67%
2	33%
3	50%
3	50%
4	67%
1	17%
3	50%
5	83%
3	50%
3	50%
4	67%
2	33%
3	50%
1	17%

2	33%
1	17%
2	33%
1	17%
1	17%
6	100%
5	83%
4	67%
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5	83%
5	83%
4	67%
2	33%
3	50%
2	33%
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4	67%
4	67%
2	33%
1	17%
3	50%
3	50%
4	67%
1	17%

1	17%
5	83%
6	100%
5	83%
3	50%
3	50%
1	17%
2	33%
1	17%
2	33%
1	17%
4	67%
5	83%
3	50%
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1	17%
4	67%
1	17%

5	83%
1	17%
5	83%
4	67%
1	17%
6	100%
5	83%
5	83%
3	50%

2	33%
5	83%
3	50%
1	17%
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1	17%
2	33%
1	17%
1	17%
1	17%
1	17%

7	117%
5	83%
1	17%
2	33%
2	33%
1	17%
3	50%
5	83%
5	83%
4	67%
5	83%

5	83%
1	17%
1	17%
2	33%
1	17%
1	17%

Area	Total	Virtual
3	21	5
3	26	1
3	24	0
3	16	0
3	19	2
3	22	3
	128	11

State Resource Concerns (2023)

Cropland Resource Concerns:

- Concern that it's difficult to justify the implementation of cover crops unless they're grazed...how do we sell cover crop adoption based on "intrinsic" soil health benefits

- Active gully erosion (ephemeral) in cropland fields...worked shut every year, but reform annually

- Concern with lack of diversified crop rotations...moving more to row crops...driven by economics and crop insurance safety nets

- Concern with structural practices past life span and failing...active erosion is occurring in unmaintained structural practice systems. (terraces, waterways, ponds, etc....)

- Concern for a need to expand of soil health practices (no-till/cover crops). Keep the soil biologically active

- Concern with overall nutrient management implementation...efficient/proper use of fertilizers

- Concern with marginal cropland being brought into production from grasslands (sodbuster) and not being adequately treated

- concern that drought has had a negative impact on cropland/grassland causing less cover leading to challenges with erosion control, blowing crop stover, pest control, plant vigor, OM, etc.

- Concern that benefits from soil health practices take years to realize...perception there is a general apprehension to commit to the multi-year time frame needed to realize benefits...associated with farm economics...economics of surviving on a year-to-year basis

- concern that grassed waterway and terrace (structural practice) maintenance has declined due to farmers lacking time to perform maintenance, lack of landlord commitment, and cost

- Concern that erosion control can't adequately be treated with only management practices...takes a combination of management and structural conservation practices

- Wind erosion in cropland fields...due to lack of cover (cover crop or residue) in some cases crops don't produce enough residue to control erosion...residue blowing off...dust concern

- concern that "green practices" are possibly being over promoted as the remedy (silver bullet) for all concerns on cropland

- Concern exists with the perceived excessive use of pesticides...needs to be an overall reduction in the use of these products to maintain/improve water quality...also a concern with drift

- Concern with phosphorous transfer from cropland to surface waters and ground water

- concern that existing ephemeral erosion areas in cropland are not being adequately treated and continue to worsen to the point they're transitioning to classic gully erosion

- Concern with the timing and success of applying cover crops in a corn/bean rotation (limited cover crop species/limited growing period)

- concern that cover crop adoption is hindered by single year failures...one failure and the producers don't want to continue...can't economically absorb a failure

- concern that lack of soil health (cover crops) acceptance may be attributed to the lack of private industry/university data and research that is available to support the benefits of cover crops (mainly the economic benefits in fall seeded cover crops in the absence of grazing)

- concern that interest in cover crops has been negatively affected by the current drought conditions

•Concern there seems to be a hesitancy to move to cover crops because of a perceived fear of losing moisture
•Concern landowners are rebuilding/replacing structural practices on their own (without NRCS TA) that may not meet NRCS standards and specs and lead to additional resource concerns...under designed
•Concern cover crop rotations do not match local growing conditions...lack of long term acceptance of cover crops...covers on dryland cropland in western Kansas is difficult
•Concern with decreased organic matter and overall soil health on dryland soils. Biomass removal of harvested crop residue for dairy bedding
•concern with insurance rules/policy with planting wheat as a cover crop...want more flexibility to decide after wheat is planted as to whether the wheat crop can be used cover, for grazing , or for grain harvest
•concern with riparian and timbered areas being converted to cropland
•Concern with residue blowing off and/or being washed off fields causing concerns in waterways, streams, riparian areas and fencelines...piling up and/or blocking water flow
•Concern with excessive nitrogen application (need for better soil testing)
•Concern with the increased size of farming equipment and precision agriculture technology has contributed to overall structural practice maintenance...i.e. farming up and over terraces...contour farming is not being applied as much as it once was
•Concern with soil salinity (especially along the Arkansas River Corridor) in irrigation water from alluvium and surface water diversion
•Concern that cover crops are not utilized on fallow ground...no living cover...worked repeatedly during fallow period...a source of water/wind erosion
•Concern with cover crop termination...if not terminated completely or before going to seed can cause problems in neighboring crops (i.e. rye in wheat)...chemical and/or tillage seem to be best termination but not always compatible with goals or programs requirements
•Concern with kosha and pigweed...chemical resistance weeds in no-till is resulting in long term no-tiller's going back to tillage
•Concern with re-vegetating irrigated soils not suitable for dryland production (sandhills south of Arkansas River)...education needed on how to successfully make the conversion by non-traditional means (small area conversions, natural succession, etc.)...programs (outside of CRP) are needed to support the non-traditional methods
•concern with concentrated flow erosion forming in sprayer tracks going up and over terraces
•Concern with nutrient stratification in no-till operations due to placement and existence of nutrients in the top few inches of soil
Grazing Lands Resource Concerns:
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...cedar
•Concern with performing “prescribed burns” and overall risk involved. Prescribed burning is not implemented as it has been in the past due to changing environmental conditions, increased fuel loads (cedars), and fear of potential nondesirable outcomes (i.e. out of control fires, litigation, etc.)
•Concern with invasive species of old-world bluestem
•Concern with the growing number of absentee landowners and perceived lack of concern for, or understanding of, grassland management needs

•Concern with lack of water availability...lack of available watering points for proper grazing distribution...on both large and small grazing operations
•Concern with overgrazing and adoption of prescribed grazing practices
•concern with challenges associated with managing grazing lands that are adjacent to tracts of land that are generally managed for deer hunting...fear of prescribed burning, fear of spraying, dealing with perennial seed sources of undesirable invasive species (cedars, hedge, locust, etc.)
•Concern with the growing number of grassland acres that are being purchased for “hunting” and are not properly managed or lack of management
•Concern with invasive species of sericea lespedeza
•Concern with soil health/plant vigor on grazing lands...trailing, compaction, lack of grazing distribution
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...locust
•concern with the lack of available resources available to producers to support prescribed burning (burn associations & districts/groups, rural/municipal fire departments)
•Concern with gully erosion from old structural practices (terraces), cattle trailing, overgrazing invasive species, and intense rainfall events
•Concern with a general complacency about tree/brush control...we’ll get to it when we can...and by then the tree growth has almost become unmanageable
•Concern with grazing lands being converted to cropland...primarily economically driven (cash rent)
•Concern with smoke management and effects on “urban” population
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...hedge
•Concern with the invasive species of phragmites
•concern that late summer burns should be implemented to assist in the effective control of invasive species
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...salt cedar (riparian areas and waterways). Possible use for biochar
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...honeysuckle
•concern that grazing lands were over utilized during drought conditions out of necessity to provide forage for livestock
•concern with aging infrastructure that supports proper grassland management (i.e., ponds, fences, etc.)
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...Russian olive
•Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...Bradford pears
•Concern with ability to spray (chemicals) to control undesirable plant growth in proximity to urban areas or unmanaged wildlife lands
•concern that the drought conditions are drying up existing ponds reducing available grazing lands watering points
•Concern with invasive species of musk and Canadian thistle
•Concern with encroachment of western wheatgrass
•concern that in some instances prescribed burning isn’t possible due to lack of fuel load (especially with short native grasses)
•concern with grassland recovery after a prescribed burn with drought conditions
•Concern with invasive species of Johnsongrass (grazing lands, cropland, road ditches, miscellaneous areas)
•Concern with invasive species of bindweed (includes cropland)

- Concern that producers may not be able to identify weed pests in grazing lands properly and subsequently the proper treatment/management of those weeds
- restoration of native grasslands after wildfires in the sand hills and drought...effects of wind erosion on susceptible/bare soil surfaces as well
- Concern with invasion of trees/brush control...Japanese Hopps
- Concern with invasive species of teasel
- Concern with broom sedge in cool season pastures
- Concern that woody residue removal is needed following wildfires

Streambank/Riparian Area Resource Concerns:

- Concern with streambank erosion and increased occurrence of active streambank erosion...stream channel width and incision concerns that are advancing up smaller tribs and into adjacent landuses...forming advancing gully erosion...loss or riparian areas, cropland, infrastructure stability
- Concern with the amount of sedimentation that's associated with active streambank erosion
- Concern that streambank armoring is too expensive for landowners and that alternative affordable means of streambank erosion control be should be looked at
- Concern with obstructions in streams...trees jams, crop residue drifts, etc.
- Concern with lack of riparian area management...degraded riparian area conditions, livestock winter feeding areas, woody/vegetative invasive species encroachment
- Concern with producer/landowner lack of clarity/understanding of rules associated with manipulating or working in riparian areas...regulatory vs. voluntary rules/roles/authorities
- concern with the amount of streambank erosion that is occurring in the urban setting
- concern with the population of beavers and the damage they do to riparian areas, watershed dams, etc.
- Concern with maintenance on established COE levees/dikes...who is responsible for maintaining/repairing non-COE levees
- Concern with streambank erosion in association with utility crossings on streams

Surface Water Quantity (flooding) Resource Concerns:

- Perception that more soil health practices (cover crops) would help with water infiltration and subsequently help reduce excessive water runoff, both a ground and surface water concern
- Concern that flood intensity/events have increased substantially over the last number of years
- Concern that township/rural roads are a major contributor of sedimentation to surface waters...especially in those situations where inadequate road ditches exit
- need to encourage installation of wetland practices on the lower end of cropped field drainages to trap nutrients prior to the water flowing off the farm
- Concern that phragmites uses a lot of water
- Concern with maintenance of watershed dams

Surface Water Quality Resource Concerns:

- Concern with sedimentation and nutrients
- Concern with livestock and municipal waste in streams and ponds
- Concern with the perceived negative effects tile terrace systems have on water quality
- consider potential use of more "beaver dam analogs" to improve water quality and quantity

•Concern with trash (appliances, junk, general trash) by individual landowners in pits, holes, low areas
•Concern with water quality for urban gardens. Have to pay to use treated "City" water
•Concern with PFOA chemicals in water sources
Groundwater Quantity Resource Concerns:
•Concern with declining ground water levels...need adoption of drought tolerant crops and/or incentives to reduce irrigation rates...improve infiltration rates on cropland...need for more efficient irrigation systems and less water intensive crops..need to utilize moisture probes for irrigation water management.
•Need for more small watershed structures, impoundments, level terraces, and playa's help in aquifer recharge...concerns over not knowing the engineering design requirements and costs for playa restoration could be a factor in producer's decisions not to enter SAFE program...also need to make info on partner FA availability more readily available.
•Concern with declining ground water levels. Have to drill wells deeper to hit water for livestock water.
•Concern with unplugged abandoned wells and cisterns
•concern with increasing irrigation efficiencies, economic challenges associated with transitioning from irrigated to dryland cropland, and working under LEMA's
•concern that State water right rules provide no incentive for conservation of water outside of GMD's...if you don't use it, you lose the water right...no incentives for conserving water
•Concern that wells and streams go dry during heavy irrigation periods. Several end guns are still being used. May be a policy issue.
•concern that industry and municipalities are not held to the same ground water use standards as irrigators
Public/Private Water Supply Quality Resource Concerns:
•Concern with surface water supply sedimentation impairment
•Concern with groundwater water supply nitrate impairment
•Concern with surface water supply phosphate impairment
•Concern with surface water supply blue green algae impairment
•Concern with surface water supply atrazine impairment
•Concern with groundwater water supply bacteria (E. Coli) impairment
•Concern with uranium levels...high cost to test...FA is need for testing...this is a broader concern than just public water supply...need to monitor above ground biomass for uranium

Animal Resource Concerns:
Wildlife:
•Concern with upland bird habitat degradation and/or loss of brood rearing habitat, habitat connectivity, native grassland (including CRP) , riparian areas, as well as loss of habitat "edge"...lack of diversity across the landscape
•Concern with the declining populations of ground nesting game birds and non-game birds. (quail, pheasant)
•Concern with brush/tree/invasive species...cedar, hedge, locust, honeysuckle, phragmites, teasal, winter creeper, sericea lespedeza, etc...and the detrimental effect on wildlife habitat
•Concern with pest mgmt....clean field effect on upland game birds

- concern with the management of land owned/controlled by “out of area” landowners, or local landowners that are leasing land to “out of area” lessees for hunting

- Concern with the habitat fragmentation in and surrounding large urban areas/counties

- Concern with lack of cover crops...perception that cover crops have been beneficial to upland game bird populations

- Concern with the declining numbers of mule deer and pronghorn

- concern there is a need to educate landowners whose main objective is hunting that a grass biome-based habitat is better than a woody (cedar) based habitat

- Concern with chemical drift on native forbs and the effect on insect populations...perceived more chemical use under a no-till system

- Concern with brome encroachment in native grass/CRP

- concern with the expanding range and populations of armadillos and the damage they cause to agricultural lands

- Concern with resident geese populations...groups of a couple birds are nesting wherever they can find a place in urban areas

- Concern with tick loads from unmanaged wildlife areas adjacent to grazing lands.

- Concern with the impact of wind turbines on bird and insect populations

- Concern with high populations of whitetail deer

Domestic:

- Concern with water availability for grazing systems and distribution

- Concern with dust from feedlots...is there a conflict with feedlots using water to control dust and declining ground water levels

- Concern with growing interest in large scale on farm composting of old biomass (hay bales) as well as dead animal

- Concern that livestock structures (portable and permanent) are needed for extreme weather events both in the summer and winter months on cropland and grazing land

Forestry Resource Concerns:

- Concern with loss of windbreaks/shelterbelts, or windbreaks/shelterbelts not being properly managed/maintained

- Concern with lack of proper management and maintenance of forestland...plant vigor, density thinning, removal of undesirable trees, control of invasive species

- concern for loss of native hardwoods in forested area...desireable native species being replaced with less desirable species

- concern with the lack of prescribed burns being applied in forestland

Urban/Small Farm Resource Concerns:

- Concern that conservation partnership is not properly prepared to assist urban/small farms...more use of non-traditional outreach medias focused on this group...YouTube, Facebook, twitter, etc...not aware of or coming to conservation partnership for technical assistance.

- Concern with increased fracturing of rural lands...being sold into smaller parcels (20-40 acres)...utilized for houses/small ranchettes

- Concern with people moving into rural areas and having unrealistic expectations dealing with traditional agriculture interactions...dust, odors, smoke, noise, etc.

• Perceived urban population lack of understanding of "traditional agriculture"...additional education is needed to address lack of knowledge...lingo, practices, etc.
• Concern with urban/housing developments in rural areas...specifically in grassland areas...fire hazard awareness, dangerous fuel loads close to homes
• More "urban communities" (20-30 house additions) being built in "rural" areas...urban sprawl
• Concern with over utilizing small acreages...primarily overgrazing...looking for ways they can better utilize their small acreages
• concern educational needs exist for urban/small farms and conservation partners...need to have a better understanding of urban/small farm perspectives and needs
• concern with number private wells within city limits being used for lawn watering...water conservation concern
• concern with increased runoff flows associated with non-permeable urban surfaces...roofs, roads, parking lots...and the issues it's causing on "traditional" ag lands
• Concern with the frequency and magnitude of ownership changes in a fragmented ownership landscape
• concern with the amount of streambank erosion that is occurring in the urban setting
• concern with surface water quality concern associated with animal (pet) waste and over fertilization of lawns
• Concern with specialty animal growers (turkeys, chickens, horses, etc....)
• Concern with water quality in ponds in housing development areas...high nutrient and pest contamination from lawns...grass species used (fescue and Kentucky Bluegrass require fertilization)...adoption of water conserving lawn species that reduce supplemental groundwater use
• concern with degrading soil biology as it exists in the urban setting (housing areas, business areas, green areas, etc.)
• Concern that traditional agriculture is losing its "voice" in areas with "urban" presence
• Concern that any time farming equipment is brought in a more urban setting, neighbors complain
• Concern with dust from construction sites
• Concern with chemical drift on specialty crops (vineyards, orchards, vegetables).
• Concern with "food deserts" in western Kansas, several miles to the nearest grocery store...small/specialty farms could help fill the void
Climate Resource Concerns:
• Concern that climate smart ag/carbon sequestration education is needed
• Concern with increased intensity/frequency of heavy rainfall events and subsequent effects (maintaining conservation practices, controlling erosion, infrastructure, etc.)
• Concern with adapting to changing growing conditions...drought, heat, rainfall intensities, etc.
• Concern (general) with drought from a water availability standpoint across all landuses...drought mitigation
• need for expansion of programs paying producers for carbon credits associated with benefits derived from adopting soil health practices
• Concern that ag producers are generally looking at the "current" year condition...all about this year (economic survival)...and not preparing for the probabilities of continuing intensive climate events

•concern that more drought tolerant cropping system research is needed looking at alternatives to row crops (primarily corn)

•Using nitrogen credits from the nitrates in the ground water to help producers reduce nitrogen inputs

Training/Education Concerns:

•Perceived need for additional trainings on soil health (staff & producers)...what are the long term benefits of soil health practices. (cover crops, no-till, etc.)

•Perceived need for additional trainings on prescribed burning and burning workshops. Use of spot/patch burning, firebreaks, and offseason burns. (staff and producer)

•Perceived need for additional training/education/resources needed to promote grazing lands health and CRP management...drought management on native grazinglands, info/ed on trigger dates for destocking

•Perception that landowners are not recognizing invasive plants (plant ID) on the landscape, lack of awareness of what normal should look like...need to recognize and treat earlier...need for training on treatment options

•Concern with challenges associated with partnership staff being the “experts” on all available programs...the programs are constantly changing...tough to keep up on all of them

•Concern that new employees (NRCS and Partners) need timely training, appropriate training, field training...working with mentors

•concern there is need for education/training on basic structural conservation maintenance of structural conservation practices using producer owned equipment

•need to provide additional training and educational materials on the control of old world bluestem

•Concern that NRCS field staff need to have good basic knowledge of multiple disciplines but are not "specialists".

•concern there is a need for soil sampling education/training/interpretation/implementation (nutrient management) on cropland

•concern that more “local” information/support is needed on alternative crops and associated markets

•Concern with training/education addressing conversion from irrigated cropland to dryland cropland production and how is this economically feasible...including conversion of dryland cropland to grass

•Perceived need for economic benefit analysis be incorporated into NRCS practice standard and specifications.

•Perceived need for additional trainings on water quality concerns...cause and effect

•Perceived need for additional trainings on wildlife habitat development/management

•Perceived need for additional trainings on the use of native grass species in lawns to reduce fertilization and water needs

Outreach Concerns:

•Concern with training, outreach, and interactions with “urban/small producers” and the urban population in general...how to identify a resource concern they may have...many have fulltime jobs and have a hard time making educational events...what are USDA's efforts to serve urban ag producers...what constitutes urban land

•Concern with education/outreach needs for urban/small farms...small farms (10-80 acres)... a focused outreach to these landowners/producers is needed (have been traditionally over-looked)...need improved/emphasized outreach to them...are they aware of NRCS services/offices...potential untapped customer base...more promotion needed...need to have a better understanding of their perspectives and needs
•Concern there is a relatively uncoordinated effort between local/state/federal entities to promote, advertise, and implement resource protection programs...landowners/producers may find it challenging to understand and locate all local sources of information, technical assistance, and FA...suggestion...agencies collaboratively create a media product (i.e. brochure) that outlines what each does and resources that are available...this would be to the benefit of all entities/landowners/producers
•Concern reaching and providing additional outreach/education absentee landowners
•Concern with lack of overall producer participation in available trainings/meetings/field days
•concern with gaining input from ordinary citizens/producers/board members on LWG's...need to pursue different/innovative methods of outreach...how do we get people to hear and adopt the message...hope decision makers (federal and state) listen to producer concerns
•NRCS needs a more user friendly website...a lot of it is too wordy...has too many links...and requires too many clicks to get desired information
•Perceived need for education of landowners (generally from out of the area) of tracts purchased/managed for "deer hunting"
•concern with absentee landowners and their understanding of conservation practices and willingness to apply conservation practices
•concern with the lack of knowledgeable producer/professional "mentors" that are available to assist producers adopting new conservation practices
•concern we're not properly engaging and educating new landowners on resource management and conservation needs/practices
•perception that additional partnering is needed with cities/municipalities to address identified resource concerns
•concern there is a lack of outreach to local schools, school organizations, and local civic groups
•concern financial professionals (bankers) have a great influence over producers in the consideration of adopting/applying conservation practices
•Concern that there is a lack of funding for outreach at the local level (cost of speakers, field days, workshops, etc.)
Program Concerns:
NRCS Programs:
•Concern available FA funds are insufficient
•Concern additional FA is needed for rebuilding/replacing structural conservation practices that have outlived their lifespan (i.e. terraces, waterways, ponds)
•Concern with the amount of "paperwork and administration" that exists with implementing federal FA
•Inadequate livestock water "water availability" should be a stand alone resource concern...not always tied to plant resource concern...old watering sources are failing (ponds/wells) or have lost their capacity/integrity and not eligible for FA...considered maintenance
•Concern that FA programs reward procrastinators and not innovators/adopters

• Concern that progressive levels of treatment should be allowed to be implemented rather than always having to meet RMS levels of treatment for FA programs...concern that grazing plans for EQIP applications/contracts are too restrictive and are not economically feasible to producers...this also limits adoption of other practices to address other resource concerns...perhaps increase in 528 payments rate would help in adoption of prescribed grazing plans.

• Concern with the brush management threshold...by the time the minimum threshold is met, trees are fairly large...recommendation to treat trees at a more manageable (smaller) stage...look at number of trees per acre, rather than % of canopy

• additional "act now" funding opportunities are desired

• Available programs are addressing most resource concerns (except streambank erosion) but just not enough FA

• concern the EQIP application/approval process is too complicated, cumbersome, and lengthy

• Concern that payments rates are low for many practices, 30-40% on the dollar. Magnified due to current inflation rates and supply issues

• concern with grazing management requirements (stocking rates) associated with EQIP brush control contracts

• concern with lack of outreach promoting available conservation programs

• Concern with time from application to potential funding...too much time in between...producers can't wait that long to find out...basically waiting to hear and not addressing resource concern in a timely manner...hinders their decision-making. process...especially with deferred applications...additionally, program/practice requirements make it cost prohibitive

• Concern with definition of "working lands" as it pertains to wildlifeland and EQIP

• provide greater flexibility and options with program cover crop requirements...expand seeding dates...lower the carbon to nitrogen ratio...the regulations for seeding cover crops under soil health can be very restrictive

• Concern that once FA program incentives are completed, producers will revert back to pre-incentive farming practices

• Concern that "funding pools" have become too broad and should be refocused back to the MU level

• concern with targeted areas...producers outside targeted areas still have resource concerns but are not as likely to acquire FA

• suggestion that payment rates for EQIP should be established on more of a sectional basis within the state

• concern with EQIP requirement to cover entire "field" acreage at a minimum...should be able to address areas of concern within a field on an incremental (progressive) basis...FSA assigned field sizes vary greatly

• concern with the effectiveness/efficiencies of some FA programs (primarily CSP)

• Concern with lack of FA for water sources on cropland for cover crop use...grazing of cover crops financially justifies the application for cover crops for the majority of producers

• Dryland conversions (under EQIP) rank low due to low amount of water saving. Need to look at other financial alternatives to get landowners to retire water rights and permanently transition to dryland (easements, tax codes, etc.)

• Concern windbreaks and shelter belts around farmsteads have to be tied to "energy"...need funds for maintaining/cleaning up/replanting windbreaks...also landuse limitations don't allow for windbreaks to be used for livestock

• More FA emphasis needs to be placed "soil health" practices
• concern with the timeliness of program FA payments
• concern with the grazing restrictions on cover crops through EQIP (to restrictive)
• concern with disconnect between program decision makers at the State and/or USDA level and local boards with most government programs. Need greater flexibility and authority at the local level.
• need for continuation and expansion of the GPCI program
• suggest that some FA should be reserved for "innovative" practices/techniques that encourage "outside the box" thinking
• concern with lack of flexibility associated with CSP enhancements
• recommendation that cover crops applied through EQIP in western KS should require fewer species (1-5 species)
• Adjust seeding recommendations and timing during drought periods...limited success in getting a stand of grass, forbs or cover during drought conditions
• suggested change in length of veteran status...you're a veteran for life not just for 10 years
• concern with requirement that a contract payment has to be made within the first 12 months of contract approval...recommend first contract payment be made within first 18 months
• allow programs to provide FA to producers to purchase equipment (drills, broadcast seeders, combine seeders, inter-seeders, high clearance seeders) associated with making the conversion to soil health practices
• concern the stringent nutrient mgmt requirements of CSP are discouraging program participation
• need to increase program cap levels on surface drip irrigation
• Target greatest amount of water saving by restructuring payment rates and/or ranking points to reward the greatest amount of water savings (regardless of the practice being applied)
• consider providing FA on temporary or moveable water tanks providing more flexibility to implement rotational grazing
• Concern that FA for brush management is not adequate to carry out initial treatment and subsequent treatment of sprouting species...need to evaluate the standard and specs, threshold for treatment is too high for brush species
• Concern that EQIP contract participants don't always totally understand the "payment rate" method of FA...concern that the actual amount they receive is a considerably lower % of the total cost than they anticipated...this is a matter of better communications during contract obligation
• for cross fencing within certain grazing systems look at a 3 wire fence with post every 60 feet with 2 stays in between
• Monarch habitat...need to incentivize people to keep it in...it can be broken out after comes out of the program...5 years...would like to see incentive to keep it in the habitat
• Nutrient management alternatives (green-seeker technology, N-rich strips, variable rate application, etc.) are not eligible for financial assistance under EQIP because the 590 specification is already being met...however, meeting the 590 specification does not mean that nutrients are not being overapplied were extreme environmental conditions exist
• Programs need to invest in new technologies, "NRCS is 10 years behind" - need to be ahead of the game
• EQIP requires that dryland conversion on I-134 soils must be planted to permanent vegetative cover...within the management unit, there are producers who can farm these soils under dryland conditions

FSA Programs:
•Concern that there is not enough management or maintenance of CRP acres because of program limitations and/or producers willingness or ability to do management...allow grazing earlier in the season...remove rental rate reduction for grazing...concern with invasive species and woody vegetation encroachment...seedbed preparation for interseeding needs to be cost shared on
•Concern that CRP payments rates are low and hard to generate interest in participating/renewing
•Concern with CRP being broken out...need better incentives to keep in grass. (Livestock water and fence)...additionally some CRP is getting broken out because of absentee landowners that don't have access to or the ability to perform maintenance activities so rent to someone to farm
•Concern with CRP no activity during the nesting period...can inhibit proper habitat management
•Concern that continuous CRP is not being utilized as much as it could be
•concern with increased use of CRP for haying and grazing...reducing habitat during critical part of year
•Release of CRP for emergency haying and grazing needs to be done in a timely manner
•Expand the CP38B priority area
•recommendation to extend CRP spring prescribed deadline from April 15th to May 15th
•Concern with CRP program – the program is partially administered by FSA, partially by NRCS – this makes it harder for the producer to know who to talk to or where to go to get things done
Other:
•contractor availability is a concern...soil contractors, spraying and brush/tree removal, well drilling, prescribed burning, tree planting
•Concern that USDA programs discourage producers from adopting cover crops...FSA crop acreage certification process is not conducive to cover crops practices, inter-seeding, initial crop vs secondary crop, subsequent crops status or of grazing cover crops, FSA ARC/PLC program disincentivizes sound soil health practices
•Concern with crop insurance program guarantees of revenue coverage...perception this is encouraging farming of marginal soils and conversion of grasslands to cropland
•concern with increased particulate matters in the air (dust, particulates from fire)
Generalized Concerns/Questions/Comments/TA Needs:
•Concern with the lack of time NRCS is spending on the land with landowners...not enough staff to spend adequate time in the field with producers
•Concern with lack of adequate staff, number of vacant positions, training/knowledge of existing staff, and retention of staff...competent staff is needed to assist producers addressing resource concerns
•concern NRCS needs to provide a written response (report) to LWG sponsors on the "actions" that were implemented as a result of input recieved through LWG meetings...providing validity to the LWG process
•More of an emphasis needs to be placed on CTA planning vs programs...need time to follow-up with producers after practice/contract implementation

•Concern with perceived need for use more outside sources of TA (non NRCS) that have a particular expertise that can be utilized to assist producers in planning
•concern with the cultural resource review process...has resulted in significant delays in practice start/implementation...road block for producers and contractors needing to start a project within a reasonable time frame
•Concern with time it takes to receive TA not associated with FA
•Concern with industrial dairies, wind and solar farms coming to the state and the impacts they may have on natural resources...dairies use a lot of water
•concern with the recruitment of staff...need to establish closer recruiting relationships with universities
•question...are higher incentive payment rates having the desired effect...can NRCS provide data to justify higher incentive payment rates
•Does grazing CRP during the nesting season really have that much of a negative impact on nest/eggs?
•Concern with advocating with legislators to obtain more FA...also educating legislators on the environmental benefits associated with obligated FA
•Concern with perceived “disconnect” between NHQ leadership and local producer/landowner needs...emphasis is on program implementation at the cost of traditional TA (getting back to working on the ground with producers/landowners)
•provisions in the last Farm Bill stated that 10% of all NRCS funds were to go to water supply and source water protection. Priority areas were established that included playas around towns and municipal wells...was this 10% requirement met in Kansas...where did the funding go (which priority areas)
•Is there a conflict with feedlots using water to control dust and declining ground water levels
•Question to NRCS...do the programs and initiatives meet the needs of the water concerns...are they working...if not why not...what could be changed to make them work better
•Utilization of NRCS Nutrient Management (590) standard and specification does not fully address the proper application of nutrients where other variables (environmental stresses common to southwest Kansas) determine potential yield...use of new technologies would prevent the over application of nutrients (determined by KSU guidelines)

Participants by MU:
Abilene
Concordia
Effingham
Hiawatha
Lincoln
Marysville
Manhattan
Total:

Area 4 (no.)	Area 4 (%)
6	86%
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6	86%
6	86%
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7	100%
5	71%
1	14%
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Area	Total	Virtual
4	22	1
4	23	0
4	20	0
4	21	1
4	20	2
4	20	2
4	32	2
	158	8