

Local Working Group (LWG) Results for NRCS Waimea Office

This is the results from the in-person and online survey for the LWG to help USDA-NRCS Waimea office to determine what will be the priority resource concerns for FY2027 Farm Bill programs.

Question: What is your operation type or field of expertise (you may select more than one answer)?

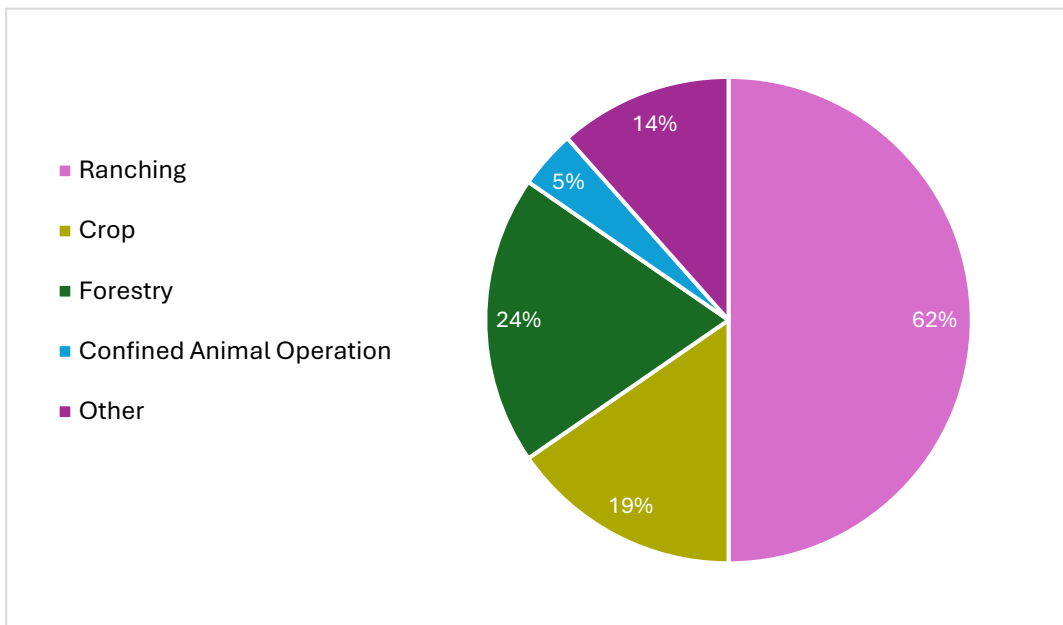


Figure 1. The percent of respondents that has an agriculture operation in ranching, crops, forestry, confined animal, or other. Some respondents have multi-operation types and were able to select more than one answer for this question.

Question: Choose your top ten (10) natural resource concerns that you feel are of the highest priority. Highest priority natural resource concerns are those that adversely impact the environment (soil, water, air, plants, and animals) from activities on managed lands that could improve from implementing USDA-NRCS conservation practices.

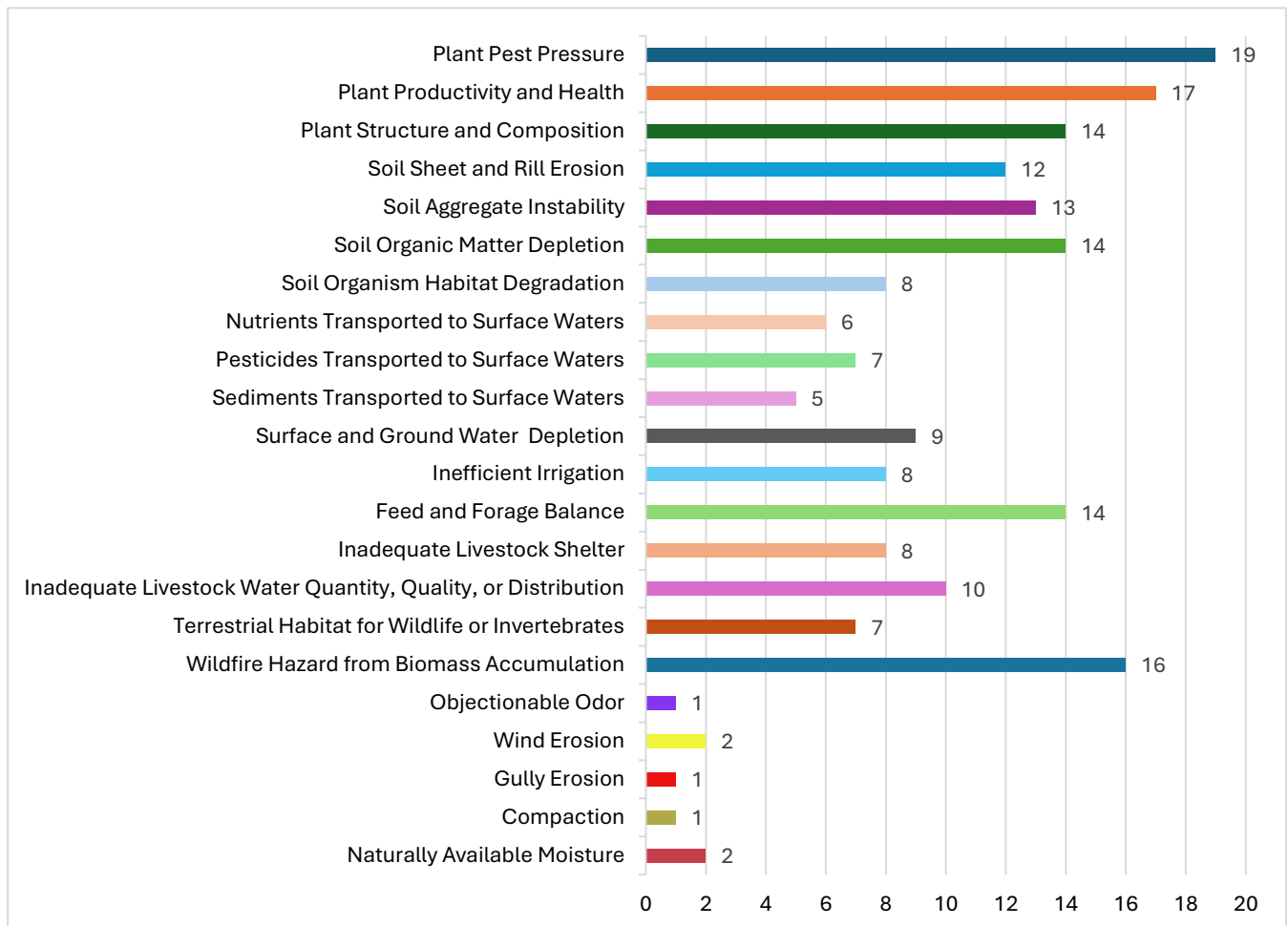


Figure 2. USDA-NRCS resource concerns commonly found in the Waimea Service Area. The number of votes the resource concern received that respondents thought were of high priority to their operational needs.

Top 10 Resource Concerns for the Waimea Office (in order from the highest rank)

1. Plant Pest Pressure
2. Plant Productivity and Health
3. Wildfire Hazard
4. Plant Structure and Composition
5. Soil Organic Matter Depletion
6. Feed and Forage Balance
7. Soil Aggregate Instability
8. Sheet and Rill Erosion
9. Inadequate Livestock Water Quality, Quantity, and Distribution
10. Surface and Ground Water Depletion

Question: For the resource concerns you selected, what do you think are the solutions or recommendations to address the issues?

Cost of materials is increasing-
increase financial assistance for
practices

Increase technical
assistance

Agriculture water
infrastructure through
Department of Water Supply
needs to be repaired,
upgraded, and expanded so
agriculture lots can access
dependable and affordable
water

Gathering materials and
shipment of materials are
slow- extra time to
implement practices

NRCS needs to help cost share
on efficient irrigation systems
under local conditions, this
includes drip irrigation.

Increase water
storage tank
capacity

Education for landowners on importance
of planting natives to bring precipitation to
dry areas

Cooperation with the County
Department of Water Supply
for water development and
distribution

Education on new
methods, ideas, etc.

Increase financial cap
per farm bill. Remove
cap for conservation
lands

Allow producers to see unique
or demonstration of project
possibilities on the landscape

NRCS to be
proactive

Having good cover and roots in ground
prevent erosion issues ex: gravel base
under trough

Feral ungulates contribute to soil erosion, need to control for feral ungulates

Invasive plants are an issue- need to have proper management and herbicide is a short-term solution. Need to have a balance when resting grazing area because long rest period can bring back invasive plants but too short of rest period not effective in managing invasive plants

When people have short leases, they don't want to invest in needed infrastructure for prescribed grazing

Fuel load for fire- needs to have proper grazing that will reduce fuel load, and it is seasonal issue. Livestock to manage fuel load and time prescribed grazing with season. Example: guinea grass growth during wet season until October and stops growing in the winter, need to manage prescribed grazing in the winter where you reduce the intensity of grazing.

Cost and access to water- county water is expensive, access to ditch or surface water is not reliable- group of neighbors manage water and more water storage tanks to help with cost and access to water

Multi use reservoir/storage tanks- dip tanks to help with fire but also provide drinking water to livestock and more sufficient water storage tanks

Question: Are you familiar with USDA-NRCS programs (Farm Bill Programs)? Ex: Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Agriculture Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), Regional Conservation Program (RCPP), Agriculture Management Assistance (AMA).

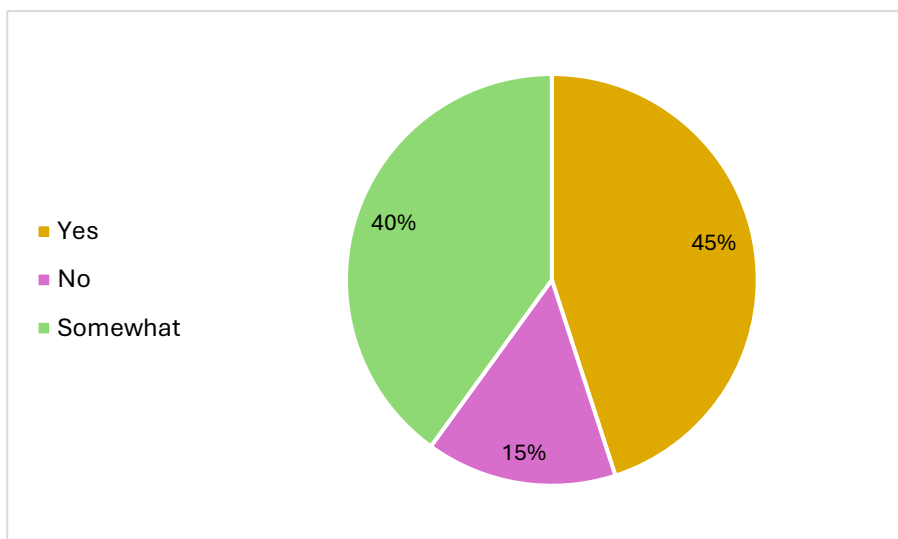


Figure 3. The percent of respondents that are familiar, not familiar or somewhat familiar with USDA-NRCS Farm Bill Programs.

Question: Have you or know someone who participated in any USDA-NRCS programs?

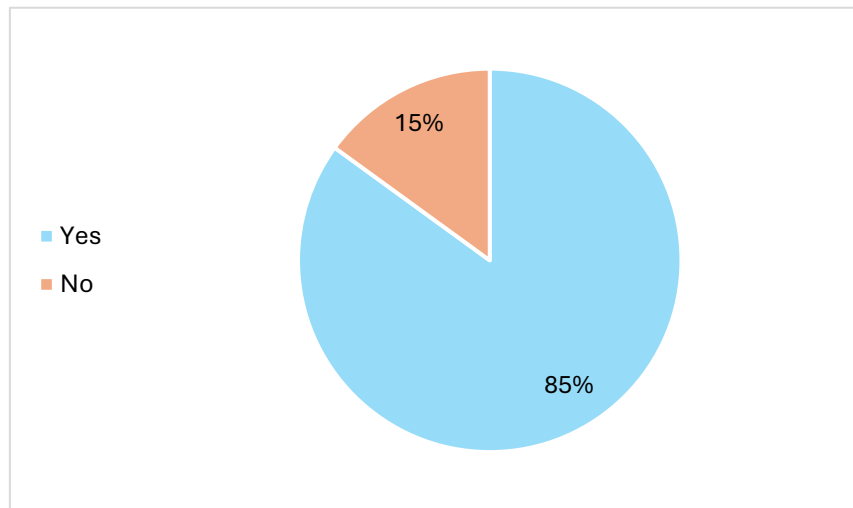
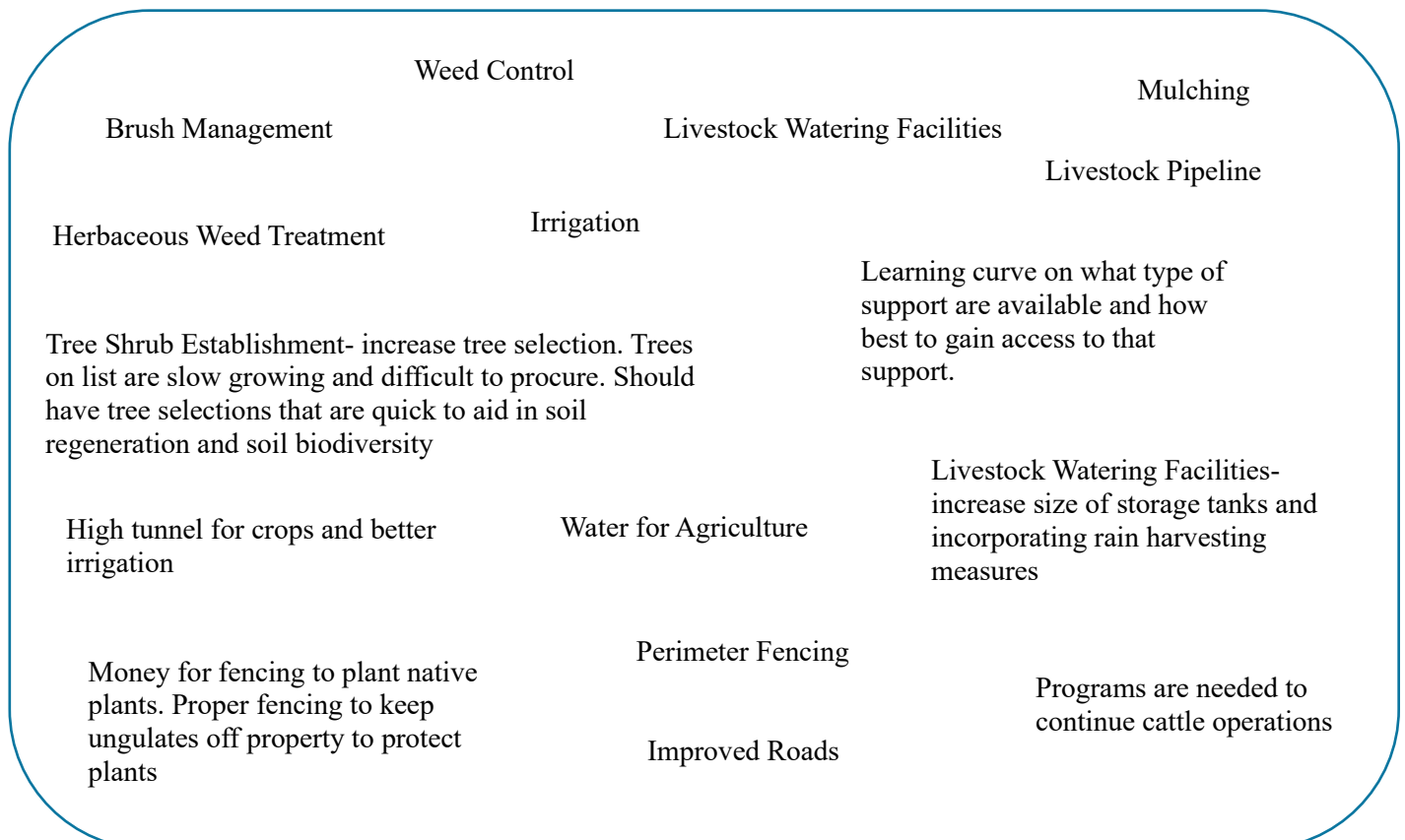
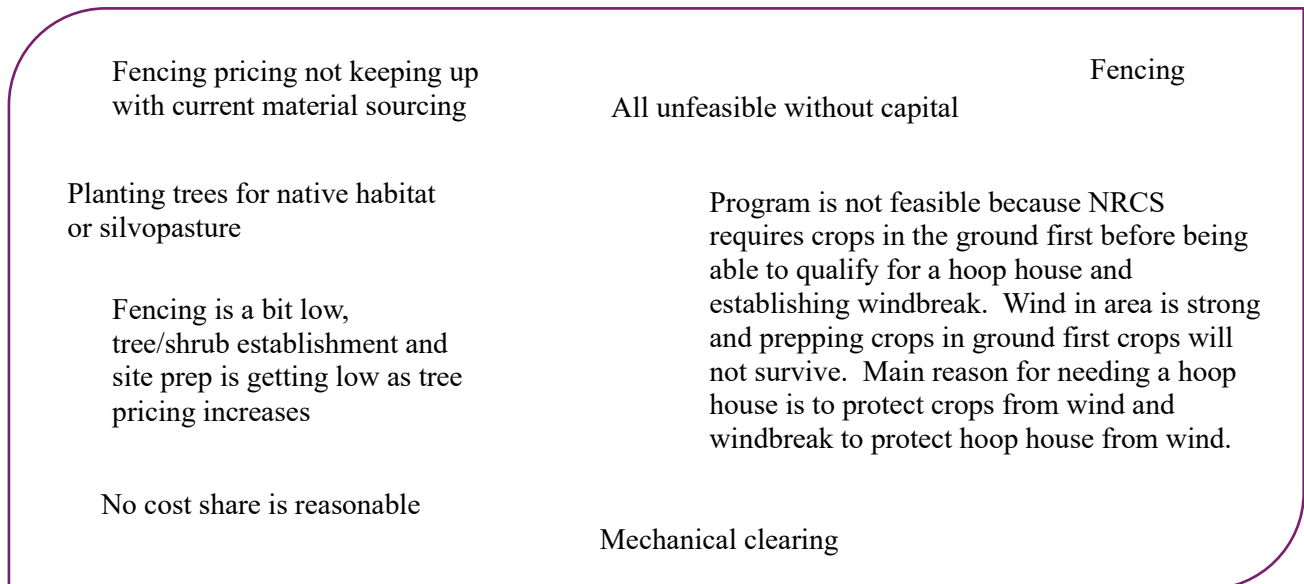


Figure 4. The percent respondents that had participated with USDA-NRCS Farm Bill Programs or knows someone that had participated in Farm Bill Programs.

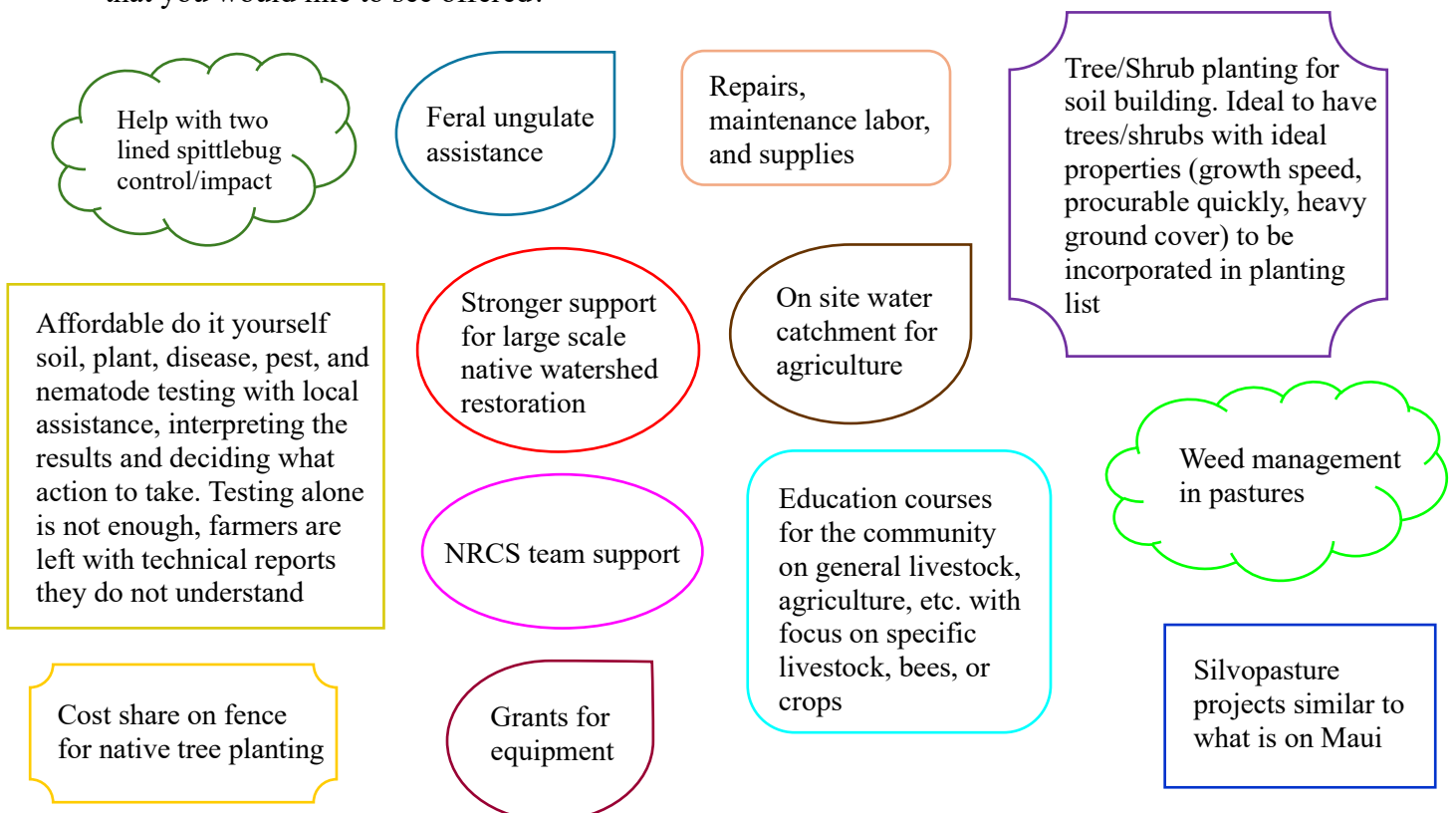
Question: Are there any USDA-NRCS conservation practices that can be improved to meet your needs?



Question: Are there any USDA-NRCS conservation practices that are not feasible to implement because of the cost share rate, how the conservation practices need to be implemented, or any other reasons?



Question: Are there any conservation practices that USDA-NRCS does not offer for assistance that you would like to see offered?



Question: Any feedback?

- Meet with farmers on their farm and talk about ideas
- Programs are confusing and burdensome for small acreage landowners. Seem geared towards large and experienced operations
- Team member support
- Keep moving forward and keeping up with the increasing production costs