



USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference

[Water Quality Issues in the Heartland](#)

The goal of the Heartland Regional Water Coordination Initiative is to build institutional partnerships and increase the capacity of citizens, landowners, agencies, and community leaders to better address water quality concerns. An important part of capacity building is knowledge of citizen awareness, attitudes and willingness to act on water issues. A four-state random sample survey of Mid-western residents in Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska reveals a shared concern for clean drinking water (82%) and clean groundwater (57%). However, rural non-farm (37%) and farm (40%) residents have greater confidence in the quality of their ground water than those who live in mid western cities and towns (19%). Agriculture-livestock and/or poultry operations (48%) are viewed as most responsible for existing pollution problems in rivers and lakes and over 41% think agriculture-crop production is responsible. One third of respondents believe that local government should be most responsible for protecting local water quality; another third believe it is state government's responsibility. Residents in this 4-state area indicate they are most likely to get water quality information from their newspapers (72%), television (61%), and radio (42%). Almost one-third listed their Extension service as an important source of information. Respondents would most like to learn more about drinking water and human health relationships (53%) , followed by home and garden landscaping (31%), water conservation (26%), and environmental restoration (22%). They find this information most useful when it is available as a printed fact sheet/bulletin (57%), a media article/TV series (55%), or a website (34%). Almost 50 % of those aged 50 years or younger would visit a web site.

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