A joint U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (FS)/Soil Conservation Service (SCS) task force has issued a report of interest to all cooperators (COOP.) in the National Cooperative Soil Survey (NCSS).

The report, *National Cooperative Soil Survey-Report-Roles of the Soil Conservation Service and Forest Service, USDA, October 1976,* describes the history and legislative authorities of the NCSS and states the goals of the FS and SCS with respect to procurement and use of soils information. The report made general recommendations for enhancing the coordination of soil survey activities of these two agencies. The report was approved and jointly signed by R. M. Davis, Administrator, SCS and John R. McGuire, Chief, FS.

In summary, the report states:

The SCS and the FS have program responsibilities requiring information about the nature and distribution of soils. The NSCC uses uniform standards and procedures to make and interpret soil surveys to meet the needs of all users. Recognizing that coordination in activities related to the collection and use of soil information can be mutually beneficial, the FS and the SCS in 1961 entered into a Memorandum of Understanding relative to making soil surveys on lands administered by the FS. For a period of years this Memorandum of Understanding guided actions related to completing and publishing many soil surveys of national forests within the framework of the NSCC.

In the years following 1961, some NCSS procedures, such as those for correlation and publication, were taking lengthy periods to complete. This caused delays or duplication of efforts in making soil survey information available in a timely manner. As a result, the FS reevaluated soil survey priorities and adjusted their operations for collecting soil information. Field procedures different than those used by the NSCC were implemented and plans for formal correlation and publication were indefinitely postponed. The availability of soil information for local use was accelerated, however, diversity in concepts and procedures between various locations resulted. This lack of uniformity has made it more difficult to exchange knowledge about the nature and response to management of soils in one area to other areas of similar soils and for compiling a uniform soil inventory.

Many soil surveys of national forests have been and are being done cooperatively with the guides of the Memorandum of Understanding including correlation and publication. Thus, the elements of the Joint Memorandum of Understanding of 1961 appear to be adequate. Recent changes in procedures to accelerate correlation and publication within the framework of the NCSS offers the opportunity to attain a greater degree of overall coordination.

The task force made five recommendations. Some actions related to the recommendations have been initiated. Guidelines for attaining interagency coordination and improving work plans for soil survey areas of mutual interest have been developed for the National Soils Handbook. Some of these