

Figure 6-4

Grasslands, Average Annual Direct N<sub>2</sub>O Emissions Estimated Using the DAYCENT Model, 1990-2010  
(Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq./year)

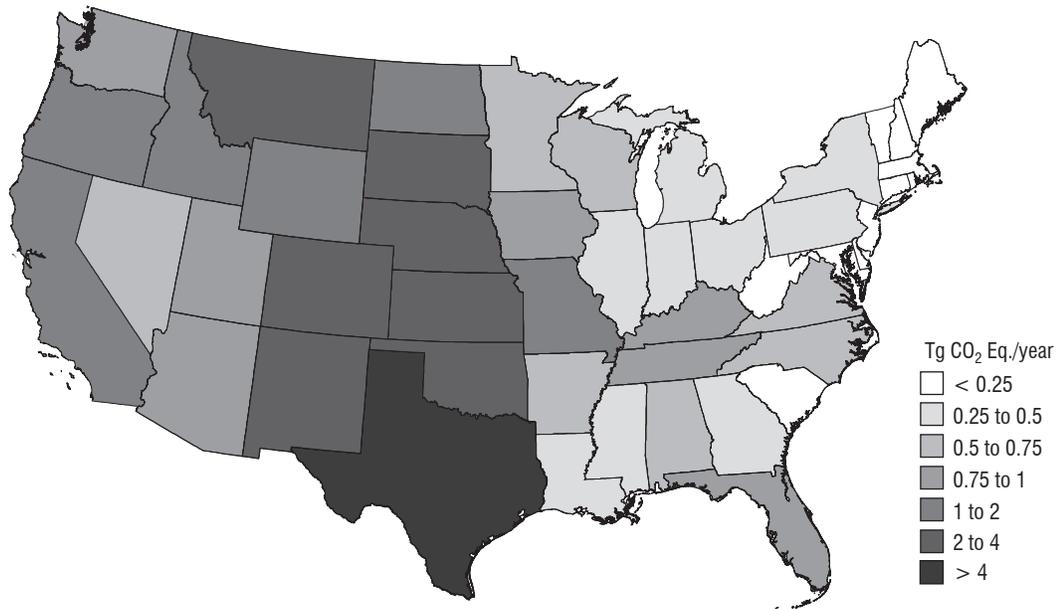




Figure 6-6

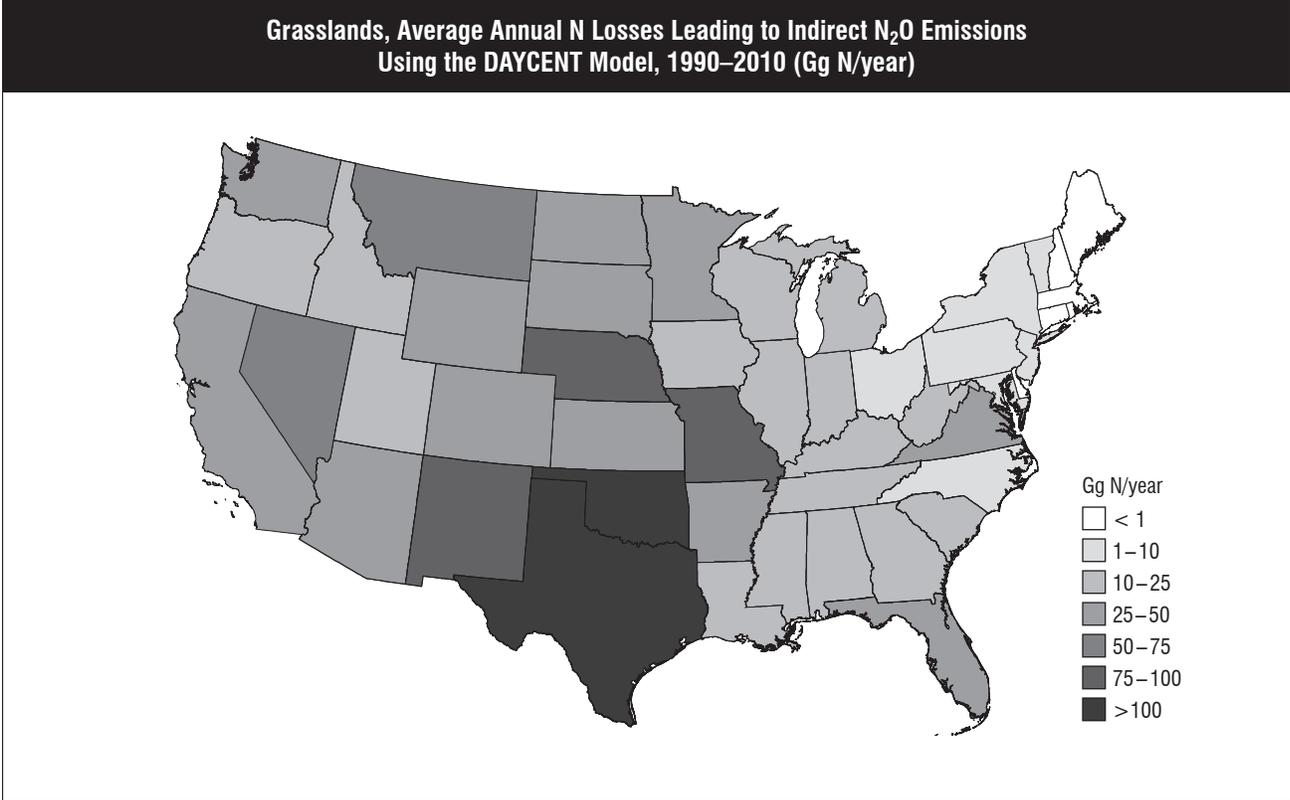
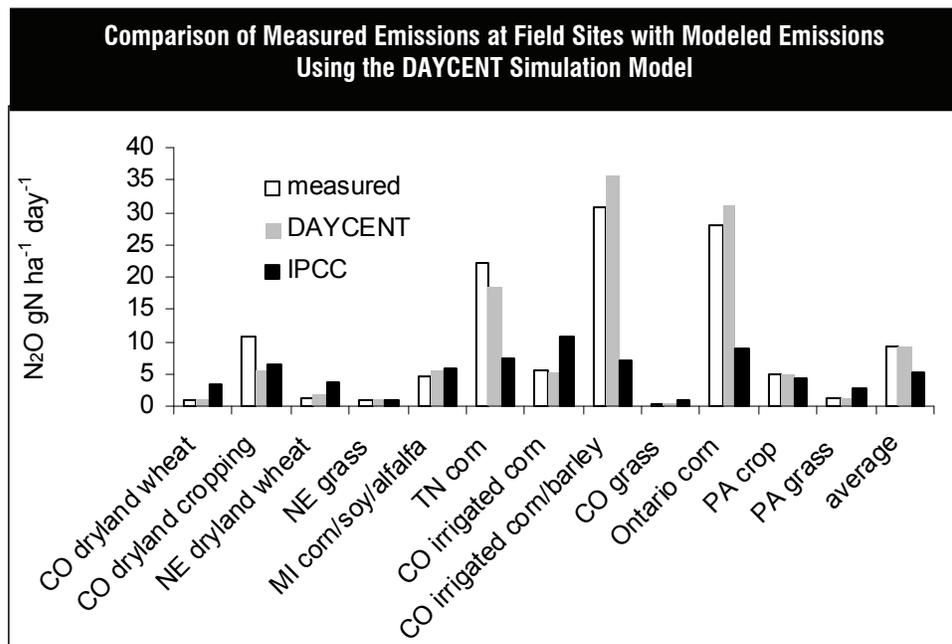


Figure 6-7



## 7. Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry

This chapter provides an assessment of the net greenhouse gas flux<sup>187</sup> resulting from the uses and changes in land types and forests in the United States. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change *2006 Guidelines for National Greenhouse Gas Inventories* (IPCC 2006) recommends reporting fluxes according to changes within and conversions between certain land-use types termed forest land, cropland, grassland, and settlements (as well as wetlands). The greenhouse gas flux from *Forest Land Remaining Forest Land* is reported using estimates of changes in forest carbon (C) stocks, non-carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from forest fires, and the application of synthetic fertilizers to forest soils. The greenhouse gas flux reported in this chapter from agricultural lands (i.e., cropland and grassland) includes changes in organic C stocks in mineral and organic soils due to land use and management, and emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> due to the application of crushed limestone and dolomite to managed land (i.e., soil liming) and urea fertilization. Fluxes are reported for four agricultural land use/land-use change categories: *Cropland Remaining Cropland*, *Land Converted to Cropland*, *Grassland Remaining Grassland*, and *Land Converted to Grassland*. Fluxes resulting from *Settlements Remaining Settlements* include those from urban trees and soil fertilization. Landfilled yard trimmings and food scraps are accounted for separately under *Other*.

The estimates in this chapter, with the exception of CO<sub>2</sub> fluxes from wood products and urban trees, and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from liming and urea fertilization, are based on activity data collected at multiple-year intervals, which are in the form of forest, land-use, and municipal solid waste surveys. Carbon dioxide fluxes from forest C stocks (except the wood product components) and from agricultural soils (except the liming component) are calculated on an average annual basis from data collected in intervals ranging from 1 to 10 years. The resulting annual averages are applied to years between surveys. Calculations of non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from forest fires are based on forest CO<sub>2</sub> flux data. For the landfilled yard trimmings and food scraps source, periodic solid waste survey data were interpolated so that annual storage estimates could be derived. This flux has been applied to the entire time series, and periodic U.S. census data on changes in urban area have been used to develop annual estimates of CO<sub>2</sub> flux.

Land use, land-use change, and forestry activities in 2010 resulted in a net C sequestration of 1074.4 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (293.1 Tg C) (Table 7-1 and Table 7-2). This represents an offset of approximately 15.4 percent of total U.S. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Total land use, land-use change, and forestry net C sequestration<sup>188</sup> increased by approximately 21.6 percent between 1990 and 2010. This increase was primarily due to an increase in the rate of net C accumulation in forest C stocks. Net C accumulation in *Forest Land Remaining Forest Land*, *Land Converted to Grassland*, and *Settlements Remaining Settlements* increased, while net C accumulation in *Cropland Remaining Cropland*, *Grassland Remaining Grassland*, and landfilled yard trimmings and food scraps slowed over this period. Emissions from *Land Converted to Cropland* increased between 1990 and 2010.

Table 7-1: Net CO<sub>2</sub> Flux from Carbon Stock Changes in Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.)

Sink Category	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Forest Land Remaining Forest Land <sup>1</sup>	(701.4)	(940.9)	(963.5)	(959.2)	(938.3)	(910.6)	(921.8)
Cropland Remaining Cropland	(29.4)	(18.3)	(19.1)	(19.7)	(18.1)	(17.4)	(15.6)
Land Converted to Cropland	2.2	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9
Grassland Remaining Grassland	(52.2)	(8.9)	(8.8)	(8.6)	(8.5)	(8.3)	(8.3)
Land Converted to Grassland	(19.8)	(24.4)	(24.2)	(24.0)	(23.8)	(23.6)	(23.6)
Settlements Remaining Settlements <sup>2</sup>	(57.1)	(87.8)	(89.8)	(91.9)	(93.9)	(95.9)	(98.0)
Other (Landfilled Yard Trimmings and Food Scraps)	(24.2)	(11.6)	(11.0)	(10.9)	(10.9)	(12.7)	(13.3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(881.8)</b>	<b>(1,085.9)</b>	<b>(1,110.4)</b>	<b>(1,108.2)</b>	<b>(1,087.5)</b>	<b>(1,062.6)</b>	<b>(1,074.7)</b>

Note: Parentheses indicate net sequestration. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

<sup>1</sup> Estimates include C stock changes on both *Forest Land Remaining Forest Land* and *Land Converted to Forest Land*.

<sup>187</sup> The term “flux” is used here to encompass both emissions of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, and removal of C from the atmosphere. Removal of C from the atmosphere is also referred to as “carbon sequestration.”

<sup>188</sup> Carbon sequestration estimates are net figures. The C stock in a given pool fluctuates due to both gains and losses. When losses exceed gains, the C stock decreases, and the pool acts as a source. When gains exceed losses, the C stock increases, and the pool acts as a sink. This is also referred to as net C sequestration.

<sup>2</sup> Estimates include C stock changes on both *Settlements Remaining Settlements* and *Land Converted to Settlements*.

Table 7-2: Net CO<sub>2</sub> Flux from Carbon Stock Changes in Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry (Tg C)

Sink Category	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Forest Land Remaining Forest Land <sup>1</sup>	(191.3)	(256.6)	(262.8)	(261.6)	(255.9)	(248.3)	(251.4)
Cropland Remaining Cropland	(8.0)	(5.0)	(5.2)	(5.4)	(4.9)	(4.7)	(4.3)
Land Converted to Cropland	0.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6
Grassland Remaining Grassland	(14.2)	(2.4)	(2.4)	(2.3)	(2.3)	(2.3)	(2.3)
Land Converted to Grassland	(5.4)	(6.7)	(6.6)	(6.5)	(6.5)	(6.4)	(6.4)
Settlements Remaining Settlements <sup>2</sup>	(15.6)	(23.9)	(24.5)	(25.1)	(25.6)	(26.2)	(26.7)
Other (Landfilled Yard Trimmings and Food Scraps)	(6.6)	(3.2)	(3.0)	(3.0)	(3.0)	(3.5)	(3.6)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(240.5)</b>	<b>(296.2)</b>	<b>(302.8)</b>	<b>(302.2)</b>	<b>(296.6)</b>	<b>(289.8)</b>	<b>(293.1)</b>

Note: 1 Tg C = 1 teragram C = 1 million metric tons C. Parentheses indicate net sequestration. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

<sup>1</sup> Estimates include C stock changes on both *Forest Land Remaining Forest Land* and *Land Converted to Forest Land*.

<sup>2</sup> Estimates include C stock changes on both *Settlements Remaining Settlements* and *Land Converted to Settlements*.

Emissions from Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry are shown in Table 7-3 and Table 7-4. Liming of agricultural soils and urea fertilization in 2010 resulted in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 3.9 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (3,906 Gg) and 3.5 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (3,480 Gg), respectively. Lands undergoing peat extraction (i.e., *Peatlands Remaining Peatlands*) resulted in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions of 1.0 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (983 Gg), and nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) emissions of less than 0.05 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. The application of synthetic fertilizers to forest soils in 2010 resulted in direct N<sub>2</sub>O emissions of 0.4 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (1 Gg). Direct N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from fertilizer application to forest soils have increased by 455 percent since 1990, but still account for a relatively small portion of overall emissions. Additionally, direct N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from fertilizer application to settlement soils in 2010 accounted for 1.4 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (5 Gg). This represents an increase of 43 percent since 1990. Forest fires in 2010 resulted in methane (CH<sub>4</sub>) emissions of 4.8Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (231 Gg), and in N<sub>2</sub>O emissions of 4.0 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (13 Gg).

Table 7-3: Emissions from Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.)

Source Category	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>CO<sub>2</sub></b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>9.0</b>
Cropland Remaining Cropland:							
Liming of Agricultural Soils	4.7	4.3	4.2	4.5	5.0	3.7	3.9
Urea Fertilization	2.4	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.6	4.1
Wetlands Remaining Wetlands:							
Peatlands Remaining Peatlands	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0
<b>CH<sub>4</sub></b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>4.8</b>
Forest Land Remaining Forest							
Land: Forest Fires	2.5	8.1	17.9	14.6	8.8	5.8	4.8
<b>N<sub>2</sub>O</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>5.7</b>
Forest Land Remaining Forest							
Land: Forest Fires	2.1	6.6	14.6	11.9	7.2	4.7	4.0
Forest Land Remaining Forest							
Land: Forest Soils <sup>1</sup>	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Settlements Remaining							
Settlements: Settlement Soils <sup>2</sup>	1.0	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.4
Wetlands Remaining Wetlands:							
Peatlands Remaining Peatlands	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.8</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>43.2</b>	<b>37.6</b>	<b>27.4</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>18.9</b>

+ Less than 0.05 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.

Note: These estimates include direct emissions only. Indirect N<sub>2</sub>O emissions are reported in the Agriculture chapter. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

<sup>1</sup> Estimates include emissions from N fertilizer additions on both *Forest Land Remaining Forest Land*, and *Land Converted to Forest Land*, but not from land-use conversion.

<sup>2</sup> Estimates include emissions from N fertilizer additions on both *Settlements Remaining Settlements*, and *Land Converted to Settlements*, but not from land-use conversion.

Table 7-4: Emissions from Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry (Gg)

Source Category	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>CO<sub>2</sub></b>	<b>8,117</b>	<b>8,933</b>	<b>8,754</b>	<b>9,233</b>	<b>9,630</b>	<b>8,334</b>	<b>9,033</b>
Cropland Remaining Cropland:							
Liming of Agricultural Soils	4,667	4,349	4,220	4,464	5,025	3,679	3,906
Urea Fertilization	2,417	3,504	3,656	3,757	3,613	3,567	4,143
Wetlands Remaining Wetlands:							
Peatlands Remaining Peatlands	1,033	1,079	879	1,012	992	1,089	983
<b>CH<sub>4</sub></b>	<b>120</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>693</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>231</b>
Forest Land Remaining Forest							
Land: Forest Fires	120	388	854	693	419	276	231
<b>N<sub>2</sub>O</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>18</b>
Forest Land Remaining Forest							
Land: Forest Fires	7	21	47	38	23	15	13
Forest Land Remaining Forest							
Land: Forest Soils <sup>1</sup>	+	1	1	1	1	1	1
Settlements Remaining							
Settlements: Settlement Soils <sup>2</sup>	3	5	5	5	5	4	5
Wetlands Remaining Wetlands:							
Peatlands Remaining Peatlands	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

+ Emissions are less than 0.5 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.

Note: These estimates include direct emissions only. Indirect N<sub>2</sub>O emissions are reported in the Agriculture chapter. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

<sup>1</sup> Estimates include emissions from N fertilizer additions on both *Forest Land Remaining Forest Land*, and *Land Converted to Forest Land*, but not from land-use conversion.

<sup>2</sup> Estimates include emissions from N fertilizer additions on both *Settlements Remaining Settlements*, and *Land Converted to Settlements*, but not from land-use conversion.

[BEGIN BOX]

Box 7-1: Methodological approach for estimating and reporting U.S. emissions and sinks

In following the UNFCCC requirement under Article 4.1 to develop and submit national greenhouse gas emissions inventories, the emissions and sinks presented in this report are organized by source and sink categories and calculated using internationally-accepted methods provided by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).<sup>189</sup> Additionally, the calculated emissions and sinks in a given year for the United States are presented in a common manner in line with the UNFCCC reporting guidelines for the reporting of inventories under this international agreement.<sup>190</sup> The use of consistent methods to calculate emissions and sinks by all nations providing their inventories to the UNFCCC ensures that these reports are comparable. In this regard, U.S. emissions and sinks reported in this inventory report are comparable to emissions and sinks reported by other countries. Emissions and sinks provided in this inventory do not preclude alternative examinations, but rather this inventory report presents

<sup>189</sup> See <http://www.ipcc-nggip.iges.or.jp/public/index.html>.

<sup>190</sup> See [http://unfccc.int/national\\_reports/annex\\_i\\_ghg\\_inventories/national\\_inventories\\_submissions/items/5270.php](http://unfccc.int/national_reports/annex_i_ghg_inventories/national_inventories_submissions/items/5270.php).

emissions and sinks in a common format consistent with how countries are to report inventories under the UNFCCC. The report itself follows this standardized format, and provides an explanation of the IPCC methods used to calculate emissions and sinks, and the manner in which those calculations are conducted.

[END BOX]

## 7.1. Representation of the U.S. Land Base

A national land-use categorization system that is consistent and complete both temporally and spatially is needed in order to assess land use and land-use change status and the associated greenhouse gas fluxes over the inventory time series. This system should be consistent with IPCC (2006), such that all countries reporting on national greenhouse gas fluxes to the UNFCCC should (1) describe the methods and definitions used to determine areas of managed and unmanaged lands in the country, (2) describe and apply a consistent set of definitions for land-use categories over the entire national land base and time series associated with the greenhouse gas inventory, such that increases in the land areas within particular land-use categories are balanced by decreases in the land areas of other categories, and (3) account for greenhouse gas fluxes on all managed lands. The implementation of such a system helps to ensure that estimates of greenhouse gas fluxes are as accurate as possible. This section of the Inventory has been developed in order to comply with this guidance.

Multiple databases are used to track land management in the United States, which are also used as the basis to classify U.S. land area into the six IPCC land-use categories (i.e., *Forest Land Remaining Forest Land, Cropland Remaining Cropland, Grassland Remaining Grassland, Wetlands Remaining Wetlands, Settlements Remaining Settlements* and *Other Land Remaining Other Land*) and thirty land-use change categories (e.g., *Cropland Converted to Forest Land, Grassland Converted to Forest Land, Wetlands Converted to Forest Land, Settlements Converted to Forest Land, Other Land Converted to Forest Lands*)<sup>191</sup> (IPCC 2006). The primary databases are the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Resources Inventory (NRI)<sup>192</sup> and the USDA Forest Service (USFS) Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA)<sup>193</sup> Database. The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) National Land Cover Dataset (NLCD)<sup>194</sup> is also used to identify land uses in regions that were not included in the NRI or FIA. The total land area included in the U.S. Inventory is 786 million hectares, and this entire land base is considered managed.<sup>195</sup> In 2010, the United States had a total of 278 million hectares of Forest Land (a 4 percent increase since 1990), 159 million hectares of Cropland (down 6.6 percent since 1990), 258 million hectares of Grassland (down 3.9 percent since 1990), 26 million hectares of Wetlands (down 4.9 percent since 1990), 50 million hectares of Settlements (up 31 percent since 1990), and 14 million hectares of Other Land. It is important to note that the land base formally classified for the Inventory (see Table 7-5) is considered managed. Alaska is not formally included in the current land representation, but there is a planned improvement underway to include this portion of the United States in future inventories. In addition, wetlands are not differentiated between managed and unmanaged, although some wetlands would be unmanaged according to the U.S. definition (see definition later in this section). Future improvements will include a differentiation between managed and unmanaged wetlands. In addition, carbon stock changes are not currently estimated for the entire land base, which leads to discrepancies between the area data presented here and in the subsequent sections of the NIR. Planned improvements are underway or in development phases to conduct an inventory of carbon stock changes on all managed land (e.g., federal grasslands).

Dominant land uses vary by region, largely due to climate patterns, soil types, geology, proximity to coastal regions, and historical settlement patterns, although all land-uses occur within each of the fifty states (Figure 7-1). Forest Land tends to be more common in the eastern states, mountainous regions of the western United States, and Alaska. Cropland is concentrated in the mid-continent region of the United States, and Grassland is more common in the western United States. Wetlands are fairly ubiquitous throughout the United States, though they are more common

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<sup>191</sup> Land-use category definitions are provided in the Methodology section.

<sup>192</sup> NRI data is available at <<http://www.ncgc.nrcs.usda.gov/products/nri/index.html>>.

<sup>193</sup> FIA data is available at <<http://fia.fs.fed.us/tools-data/data/>>.

<sup>194</sup> NLCD data is available at <<http://www.mrlc.gov/>>.

<sup>195</sup> The current land representation does not include areas from Alaska or U.S. territories, but there are planned improvements to include these regions in future reports.

in the upper Midwest and eastern portions of the country. Settlements are more concentrated along the coastal margins and in the eastern states.

Table 7-5: Size of Land Use and Land-Use Change Categories on Managed Land Area by Land Use and Land Use Change Categories (thousands of hectares)

<b>Land Use &amp; Land-Use Change Categories<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Total Forest Land</b>	<b>267,120</b>	<b>274,649</b>	<b>275,355</b>	<b>276,060</b>	<b>276,780</b>	<b>277,486</b>	<b>278,213</b>
FF	262,008	262,354	263,505	264,585	265,298	265,997	266,717
CF	1,118	2,651	2,513	2,444	2,444	2,444	2,445
GF	3,425	7,821	7,564	7,297	7,299	7,301	7,303
WF	66	256	260	262	263	264	265
SF	103	371	378	386	387	388	389
OF	399	1,196	1,135	1,086	1,089	1,092	1,094
<b>Total Cropland</b>	<b>170,283</b>	<b>159,917</b>	<b>159,486</b>	<b>159,070</b>	<b>159,065</b>	<b>159,062</b>	<b>159,059</b>
CC	154,815	143,040	143,229	143,849	143,844	143,841	143,839
FC	1,118	675	612	568	568	568	568
GC	13,583	15,067	14,537	13,580	13,580	13,580	13,580
WC	156	193	183	174	174	174	174
SC	431	688	693	669	669	669	669
OC	180	253	234	231	231	231	231
<b>Total Grassland</b>	<b>268,149</b>	<b>260,543</b>	<b>259,825</b>	<b>259,202</b>	<b>258,668</b>	<b>258,144</b>	<b>257,600</b>
GG	257,937	241,419	241,090	241,452	241,016	240,588	240,143
FG	1,611	2,989	2,901	2,724	2,721	2,719	2,716
CG	7,902	14,609	14,301	13,598	13,504	13,411	13,314
WG	238	408	403	329	328	328	328
SG	111	274	275	267	267	267	267
OG	349	844	855	832	831	831	831
<b>Total Wetlands</b>	<b>27,483</b>	<b>26,941</b>	<b>26,809</b>	<b>26,606</b>	<b>26,444</b>	<b>26,286</b>	<b>26,124</b>
WW	26,834	25,432	25,330	25,167	25,009	24,853	24,695
FW	141	395	391	383	381	379	377
CW	132	365	356	345	345	345	345
GW	343	696	680	661	661	661	661
SW	0	10	10	10	10	10	10
OW	33	43	43	39	38	38	38
<b>Total Settlements</b>	<b>38,534</b>	<b>49,519</b>	<b>50,028</b>	<b>50,478</b>	<b>50,475</b>	<b>50,472</b>	<b>50,469</b>
SS	33,993	35,124	35,630	36,203	36,200	36,197	36,194
FS	1,787	6,111	6,133	6,089	6,089	6,089	6,089
CS	1,343	3,625	3,576	3,518	3,518	3,518	3,518
GS	1,353	4,430	4,459	4,436	4,436	4,436	4,436
WS	3	31	30	30	30	30	30
OS	55	198	200	201	201	201	201
<b>Total Other Land</b>	<b>14,276</b>	<b>14,275</b>	<b>14,341</b>	<b>14,428</b>	<b>14,412</b>	<b>14,395</b>	<b>14,379</b>
OO	13,242	12,054	12,070	12,137	12,121	12,105	12,089
FO	182	538	563	569	569	569	569
CO	331	645	665	703	703	703	703
GO	454	896	899	895	895	894	894
WO	65	121	123	104	103	103	103
SO	2	21	21	20	20	20	20
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>785,845</b>						

<sup>a</sup>The abbreviations are "F" for Forest Land, "C" for Cropland, "G" for Grassland, "W" for Wetlands, "S" for

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Settlements, and “O” for Other Lands. Lands remaining in the same land use category are identified with the land use abbreviation given twice (e.g., “FF” is Forest Land Remaining Forest Land), and land use change categories are identified with the previous land use abbreviation followed by the new land use abbreviation (e.g., “CF” is Cropland Converted to Forest Land).

Notes: All land areas reported in this table are considered managed. A planned improvement is underway to deal with an exception for wetlands which includes both managed and unmanaged lands based on the definitions for the current U.S. Land Representation Assessment. In addition, U.S. Territories have not been classified into land uses and are not included in the U.S. Land Representation Assessment. See Planned Improvements for discussion on plans to include Alaska and territories in future Inventories.

Figure 7-1. Percent of Total Land Area in the General Land-Use Categories for 2010

## Methodology

### IPCC Approaches for Representing Land Areas

IPCC (2006) describes three approaches for representing land areas. Approach 1 provides data on the total area for each individual land-use category, but does not provide detailed information on changes of area between categories and is not spatially explicit other than at the national or regional level. With Approach 1, total net conversions between categories can be detected, but not the individual changes between the land-use categories that led to those net changes. Approach 2 introduces tracking of individual land-use changes between the categories (e.g., Forest Land to Cropland, Cropland to Forest Land, Grassland to Cropland, etc.), using surveys or other forms of data that do not provide location data on specific parcels of land. Approach 3 extends Approach 2 by providing location data on specific parcels of land, such as maps, along with the land-use history. The three approaches are not presented as hierarchical tiers and are not mutually exclusive.

According to IPCC (2006), the approach or mix of approaches selected by an inventory agency should reflect calculation needs and national circumstances. For this analysis, the NRI, FIA, and the NLCD have been combined to provide a complete representation of land use for managed lands. These data sources are described in more detail later in this section. All of these datasets have a spatially-explicit time series of land-use data, and therefore Approach 3 is used to provide a full representation of land use in the U.S. Inventory. Lands are treated as remaining in the same category (e.g., *Cropland Remaining Cropland*) if a land-use change has not occurred in the last 20 years. Otherwise, the land is classified in a land-use-change category based on the current use and most recent use before conversion to the current use (e.g., *Cropland Converted to Forest Land*).

### Definitions of Land Use in the United States

#### *Managed and Unmanaged Land*

The U.S. definitions of managed and unmanaged lands are similar to the basic IPCC (2006) definition of managed land, but with some additional elaboration to reflect national circumstances. Based on the following definitions, most lands in the United States are classified as managed:

- *Managed Land*: Land is considered managed if direct human intervention has influenced its condition. Direct intervention includes altering or maintaining the condition of the land to produce commercial or non-commercial products or services; to serve as transportation corridors or locations for buildings, landfills, or other developed areas for commercial or non-commercial purposes; to extract resources or facilitate acquisition of resources; or to provide social functions for personal, community or societal objectives. Managed land also includes legal protection of lands (e.g., wilderness, preserves, parks, etc.) for conservation purposes (i.e., meets societal objectives).<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Wetlands are an exception to this general definition, because these lands, as specified by IPCC (2006), are only considered managed if they are created through human activity, such as dam construction, or the water level is artificially altered by human

- *Unmanaged Land*: All other land is considered unmanaged. Unmanaged land is largely comprised of areas inaccessible to human intervention due to the remoteness of the locations, or lands with essentially no development interest or protection due to limited personal, commercial or social value. Though these lands may be influenced indirectly by human actions such as atmospheric deposition of chemical species produced in industry, they are not influenced by a direct human intervention.<sup>197</sup>

### *Land-Use Categories*

As with the definition of managed lands, IPCC (2006) provides general non-prescriptive definitions for the six main land-use categories: Forest Land, Cropland, Grassland, Wetlands, Settlements and Other Land. In order to reflect U.S. circumstances, country-specific definitions have been developed, based predominantly on criteria used in the land-use surveys for the United States. Specifically, the definition of Forest Land is based on the FIA definition of forest,<sup>198</sup> while definitions of Cropland, Grassland, and Settlements are based on the NRI.<sup>199</sup> The definitions for Other Land and Wetlands are based on the IPCC (2006) definitions for these categories.

- *Forest Land*: A land-use category that includes areas at least 36.6 m wide and 0.4 ha in size with at least 10 percent cover (or equivalent stocking) by live trees of any size, including land that formerly had such tree cover and that will be naturally or artificially regenerated. Forest land includes transition zones, such as areas between forest and non-forest lands that have at least 10 percent cover (or equivalent stocking) with live trees and forest areas adjacent to urban and built-up lands. Roadside, streamside, and shelterbelt strips of trees must have a crown width of at least 36.6 m and continuous length of at least 110.6 m to qualify as forest land. Unimproved roads and trails, streams, and clearings in forest areas are classified as forest if they are less than 36.6 m wide or 0.4 ha in size, otherwise they are excluded from Forest Land and classified as Settlements. Tree-covered areas in agricultural production settings, such as fruit orchards, or tree-covered areas in urban settings, such as city parks, are not considered forest land (Smith et al. 2009). NOTE: This definition applies to all U.S. lands and territories. However, at this time, data availability is limited for remote or inaccessible areas such as interior Alaska
- *Cropland*: A land-use category that includes areas used for the production of adapted crops for harvest; this category includes both cultivated and non-cultivated lands.<sup>200</sup> Cultivated crops include row crops or close-grown crops and also hay or pasture in rotation with cultivated crops. Non-cultivated cropland includes continuous hay, perennial crops (e.g., orchards) and horticultural cropland. Cropland also includes land with alley cropping and windbreaks,<sup>201</sup> as well as lands in temporary fallow or enrolled in conservation reserve programs (i.e., set-asides<sup>202</sup>). Roads through Cropland, including interstate highways, state highways, other paved roads, gravel roads, dirt roads, and railroads are excluded from Cropland area estimates and are, instead, classified as Settlements.
- *Grassland*: A land-use category on which the plant cover is composed principally of grasses, grass-like plants, forbs, or shrubs suitable for grazing and browsing, and includes both pastures and native rangelands.<sup>203</sup> This includes areas where practices such as clearing, burning, chaining, and/or chemicals

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activity. Distinguishing between managed and unmanaged wetlands is difficult, however, due to limited data availability. Wetlands are not characterized by use within the NRI. Therefore, unless wetlands are managed for cropland or grassland, it is not possible to know if they are artificially created or if the water table is managed based on the use of NRI data. See the Planned Improvements section of the Inventory for work being done to refine the Wetland area estimates.

<sup>197</sup> There will be some areas that qualify as Forest Land or Grassland according to the land use criteria, but are classified as unmanaged land due to the remoteness of their location.

<sup>198</sup> See <[http://socrates.lv-hrc.nevada.edu/fia/ab/issues/pending/glossary/Glossary\\_5\\_30\\_06.pdf](http://socrates.lv-hrc.nevada.edu/fia/ab/issues/pending/glossary/Glossary_5_30_06.pdf)>.

<sup>199</sup> See <<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/land/nri01/glossary.html>>.

<sup>200</sup> A minor portion of Cropland occurs on federal lands, and is not currently included in the C stock change inventory. A planned improvement is underway to include these areas in future C inventories.

<sup>201</sup> Currently, there is no data source to account for biomass C stock change associated with woody plant growth and losses in alley cropping systems and windbreaks in cropping systems, although these areas are included in the cropland land base.

<sup>202</sup> A set-aside is cropland that has been taken out of active cropping and converted to some type of vegetative cover, including, for example, native grasses or trees.

<sup>203</sup> Grasslands on federal lands are included in the managed land base, but C stock changes are not estimated on these lands.

are applied to maintain the grass vegetation. Savannas, some wetlands and deserts, in addition to tundra are considered Grassland.<sup>204</sup> Woody plant communities of low forbs and shrubs, such as mesquite, chaparral, mountain shrub, and pinyon-juniper, are also classified as Grassland if they do not meet the criteria for Forest Land. Grassland includes land managed with agroforestry practices such as silvipasture and windbreaks, assuming the stand or woodlot does not meet the criteria for Forest Land. Roads through Grassland, including interstate highways, state highways, other paved roads, gravel roads, dirt roads, and railroads are excluded from Grassland area estimates and are, instead, classified as Settlements.

- *Wetlands*: A land-use category that includes land covered or saturated by water for all or part of the year. Managed Wetlands are those where the water level is artificially changed, or were created by human activity. Certain areas that fall under the managed Wetlands definition are covered in other areas of the IPCC guidance and/or the inventory, including Cropland (e.g., rice cultivation), Grassland, and Forest Land (including drained or undrained forested wetlands).
- *Settlements*: A land-use category representing developed areas consisting of units of 0.25 acres (0.1 ha) or more that includes residential, industrial, commercial, and institutional land; construction sites; public administrative sites; railroad yards; cemeteries; airports; golf courses; sanitary landfills; sewage treatment plants; water control structures and spillways; parks within urban and built-up areas; and highways, railroads, and other transportation facilities. Also included are tracts of less than 10 acres (4.05 ha) that may meet the definitions for Forest Land, Cropland, Grassland, or Other Land but are completely surrounded by urban or built-up land, and so are included in the settlement category. Rural transportation corridors located within other land uses (e.g., Forest Land, Cropland) are also included in Settlements.
- *Other Land*: A land-use category that includes bare soil, rock, ice, non-settlement transportation corridors, and all land areas that do not fall into any of the other five land-use categories, which allows the total of identified land areas to match the managed national area.

## Land-Use Data Sources: Description and Application to U.S. Land Area Classification

### U.S. Land-Use Data Sources

The three main data sources for land area and use data in the United States are the NRI, FIA, and the NLCD. For the Inventory, the NRI is the official source of data on all land uses on non-federal lands (except forest land), and is also used as the resource to determine the total land base for the conterminous United States and Hawaii. The NRI is conducted by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and is designed to assess soil, water, and related environmental resources on non-federal lands. The NRI has a stratified multi-stage sampling design, where primary sample units are stratified on the basis of county and township boundaries defined by the U.S. Public Land Survey (Nusser and Goebel 1997). Within a primary sample unit (typically a 160-acre [64.75 ha] square quarter-section), three sample points are selected according to a restricted randomization procedure. Each point in the survey is assigned an area weight (expansion factor) based on other known areas and land-use information (Nusser and Goebel 1997). The NRI survey utilizes data derived from remote sensing imagery and site visits in order to provide detailed information on land use and management, particularly for croplands and grasslands, and is used as the basis to account for C stock changes in agricultural lands (except federal Grasslands). The NRI survey was conducted every 5 years between 1982 and 1997, but shifted to annualized data collection in 1998. This Inventory incorporates data through 2007 from the NRI.

The FIA program, conducted by the USFS, is the official source of data on Forest Land area and management data for the Inventory. FIA engages in a hierarchical system of sampling, with sampling categorized as Phases 1 through 3, in which sample points for phases are subsets of the previous phase. Phase 1 refers to collection of remotely-sensed data (either aerial photographs or satellite imagery) primarily to classify land into forest or non-forest and to identify landscape patterns like fragmentation and urbanization. Phase 2 is the collection of field data on a network of ground plots that enable classification and summarization of area, tree, and other attributes associated with forest land uses. Phase 3 plots are a subset of Phase 2 plots where data on indicators of forest health are measured. Data

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Federal grassland areas have been assumed to have negligible changes in C due to limited land use and management change, but planned improvements are underway to further investigate this issue and include these areas in future C inventories.

<sup>204</sup> IPCC (2006) guidelines do not include provisions to separate desert and tundra as land categories.

from all three phases are also used to estimate C stock changes for forest land. Historically, FIA inventory surveys had been conducted periodically, with all plots in a state being measured at a frequency of every 5 to 14 years. A new national plot design and annual sampling design was introduced by FIA about ten years ago. Most states, though, have only recently been brought into this system. Annualized sampling means that a portion of plots throughout each state is sampled each year, with the goal of measuring all plots once every 5 years. See Annex 3.12 to see the specific survey data available by state. The most recent year of available data varies state by state (2002 through 2009).

Though NRI provides land-area data for both federal and non-federal lands, it only includes land-use data on non-federal lands, and FIA only records data for forest land.<sup>205</sup> Consequently, major gaps exist when the datasets are combined, such as federal grassland operated by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), USDA, and National Park Service, as well as most of Alaska.<sup>206</sup> The NLCD is used as a supplementary database to account for land use on federal lands that are not included in the NRI and FIA databases. The NLCD land-cover classification scheme, available for 1992, 2001, and 2006, has been applied over the conterminous United States (Homer et al. 2007), and also for Hawaii in 2001. For the conterminous United States, the NLCD Land Cover Change Products for 2001 and 2006 were used in order to represent both land use and land-use change for federal lands (Fry et al. 2011, Homer et al. 2007). The NLCD products are based primarily on Landsat Thematic Mapper imagery. The NLCD contains 21 categories of land-cover information, which have been aggregated into the IPCC land-use categories, and the data are available at a spatial resolution of 30 meters. The federal land portion of the NLCD was extracted from the dataset using the federal land area boundary map from the National Atlas (2005). This map represents federal land boundaries in 2005, so as part of the analysis, the federal land area was adjusted annually based on the NRI federal land area estimates (i.e., land is periodically transferred between federal and non-federal ownership). Consequently, the portion of the land base categorized with NLCD data varied from year to year, corresponding to an increase or decrease in the federal land base. The NLCD is strictly a source of land-cover information, however, and does not provide the necessary site conditions, crop types, and management information from which to estimate C stock changes on those lands.

Another step in the analysis is to address gaps as well as overlaps in the representation of the U.S. land base between the Agricultural Carbon Stock Inventory (*Cropland Remaining Cropland, Land Converted to Cropland, Grassland Remaining Grassland, Land Converted to Grassland*) and Forest Land Carbon Stock Inventory (*Forest Land Remaining Forest Land and Land Converted to Forest Land*), which are based on the NRI and FIA databases, respectively. NRI and FIA have different criteria for classifying forest land and sampling designs, leading to discrepancies in the resulting estimates of Forest Land area on non-federal land. Similarly, there are discrepancies between the NLCD and FIA data for defining and classifying Forest Land on federal lands. Moreover, dependence exists between the Forest Land area and the amount of land designated as other land uses in both the NRI and the NLCD, such as the amount of Grassland, Cropland, and Wetlands, relative to the Forest Land area. This results in inconsistencies among the three databases for estimated Forest Land area, as well as for the area estimates for other land-use categories. FIA is the main database for forest statistics, and consequently, the NRI and NLCD were adjusted to achieve consistency with FIA estimates of Forest Land. The adjustments were made at a state-scale, and it was assumed that the majority of the discrepancy in forest area was associated with an under- or over-prediction of Grassland and Wetland area in the NRI and NLCD due to differences in Forest Land definitions. Specifically, the Forest Land area for a given state according to the NRI and NLCD was adjusted to match the FIA estimates of Forest Land for non-federal and federal land, respectively. In a second step, corresponding increases or decreases were made in the area estimates of Grassland and Wetland from the NRI and NLCD, in order to balance the change in forest area, and therefore not change the overall amount of managed land within an individual state. The adjustments were based on the proportion of land within each of these land-use categories at the state-level. (i.e., a higher proportion of Grassland led to a larger adjustment in Grassland area).

As part of Quality Assurance /Quality Control (QA/QC), the land base derived from the NRI, FIA and NLCD was compared to the Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (TIGER) survey (U.S. Census Bureau 2010). The U.S. Census Bureau gathers data on the U.S. population and economy, and has a database of

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<sup>205</sup> FIA does collect some data on non-forest land use, but these are held in regional databases versus the national database. The status of these data is being investigated.

<sup>206</sup> The survey programs also do not include U.S. Territories with the exception of non-federal lands in Puerto Rico, which are included in the NRI survey. Furthermore, NLCD does not include coverage for U.S. Territories.

land areas for the country. The land area estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau differ from those provided by the land-use surveys used in the Inventory because of discrepancies in the reporting approach for the census and the methods used in the NRI, FIA, and NLCD. The area estimates of land-use categories, based on NRI, FIA, and NLCD, are derived from remote sensing data instead of the land survey approach used by the U.S. Census Survey. More importantly, the U.S. Census Survey does not provide a time series of land-use change data or land management information, which is critical for conducting emission inventories and is provided from the NRI and FIA surveys. Consequently, the U.S. Census Survey was not adopted as the official land area estimate for the Inventory. Rather, the NRI data were adopted because this database provides full coverage of land area and land use for the conterminous United States and Hawaii. Regardless, the total difference between the U.S. Census Survey and the data sources used in the Inventory is about 25 million hectares for the total land base of about 786 million hectares currently included in the Inventory, or a 3.1 percent difference. Much of this difference is associated with open waters in coastal regions and the Great Lakes. NRI does not include as much of the area of open waters in these regions as the U.S. Census Survey.

### Approach for Combining Data Sources

The managed land base in the United States has been classified into the six IPCC land-use categories using definitions<sup>207</sup> developed to meet national circumstances, while adhering to IPCC (2006). In practice, the land was initially classified into a variety of land-use categories using the NRI, FIA and NLCD, and then aggregated into the thirty-six broad land use and land-use-change categories identified in IPCC (2006). Details on the approach used to combine data sources for each land use are described below as are the gaps that will be reconciled as part of ongoing planned improvements:

- *Forest Land*: Both non-federal and federal forest lands in both the continental United States and coastal Alaska are covered by FIA. FIA is used as the basis for both Forest Land area data as well as to estimate C stocks and fluxes on Forest Land. Interior Alaska is not currently surveyed by FIA, but NLCD has a new product for Alaska that will be incorporated into the assessment as a planned improvement for future reports. Forest Lands in U.S. territories are currently excluded from the analysis, but FIA surveys are currently being conducted on U.S. territories and will become available in the future. NRI is being used in the current report to provide Forest Land areas on non-federal lands in Hawaii. Currently, federal forest land in Hawaii is evaluated with the 2001 NLCD, but FIA data will be collected in Hawaii in the future.
- *Cropland*: Cropland is classified using the NRI, which covers all non-federal lands within 49 states (excluding Alaska), including state and local government-owned land as well as tribal lands. NRI is used as the basis for both Cropland area data as well as to estimate C stocks and fluxes on Cropland. Croplands in U.S. territories are excluded from both NRI data collection and the NLCD. NLCD has a new product for Alaska that will be incorporated into the assessment as a planned improvement for future reports.
- *Grassland*: Grassland on non-federal lands is classified using the NRI within 49 states (excluding Alaska), including state and local government-owned land as well as tribal lands. NRI is used as the basis for both Grassland area data as well as to estimate C stocks and fluxes on Grassland. U.S. territories are excluded from both NRI data collection and the current release of the NLCD product. Grassland on federal Bureau of Land Management lands, Department of Defense lands, National Parks and within USFS lands are covered by the NLCD. In addition, federal and non-federal grasslands in Alaska are currently excluded from the analysis, but NLCD has a new product for Alaska that will be incorporated into the assessment for future reports.
- *Wetlands*: NRI captures wetlands on non-federal lands within 49 states (excluding Alaska), while federal wetlands are covered by the NLCD. Alaska and U.S. territories are excluded. This currently includes both managed and unmanaged wetlands as no database has yet been applied to make this distinction. See Planned Improvements for details.
- *Settlements*: The NRI captures non-federal settlement area in 49 states (excluding Alaska). If areas of Forest Land or Grassland under 10 acres (4.05 ha) are contained within settlements or urban areas, they are classified as Settlements (urban) in the NRI database. If these parcels exceed the 10 acre (4.05 ha)

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<sup>207</sup> Definitions are provided in the previous section.

threshold and are Grassland, they will be classified as such by NRI. Regardless of size, a forested area is classified as non-forest by FIA if it is located within an urban area. Settlements on federal lands are covered by NLCD. Settlements in U.S. territories are currently excluded from NRI and NLCD. NLCD has a new product for Alaska that will be incorporated into the assessment as a planned improvement for future reports.

- *Other Land*: Any land not falling into the other five land categories and, therefore, categorized as Other Land is classified using the NRI for non-federal areas in the 49 states (excluding Alaska) and NLCD for the federal lands. Other land in U.S. territories is excluded from the NLCD. NLCD has a new product for Alaska that will be incorporated into the assessment as a planned improvement for future reports.

Some lands can be classified into one or more categories due to multiple uses that meet the criteria of more than one definition. However, a ranking has been developed for assignment priority in these cases. The ranking process is initiated by distinguishing between managed and unmanaged lands. The managed lands are then assigned, from highest to lowest priority, in the following manner:

*Settlements > Cropland > Forest Land > Grassland > Wetlands > Other Land*

Settlements are given the highest assignment priority because they are extremely heterogeneous with a mosaic of patches that include buildings, infrastructure and travel corridors, but also open grass areas, forest patches, riparian areas, and gardens. The latter examples could be classified as Grassland, Forest Land, Wetlands, and Cropland, respectively, but when located in close proximity to settlement areas they tend to be managed in a unique manner compared to non-settlement areas. Consequently, these areas are assigned to the Settlements land-use category. Cropland is given the second assignment priority, because cropping practices tend to dominate management activities on areas used to produce food, forage or fiber. The consequence of this ranking is that crops in rotation with grass will be classified as Cropland, and land with woody plant cover that is used to produce crops (e.g., orchards) is classified as Cropland, even though these areas may meet the definitions of Grassland or Forest Land, respectively. Similarly, Wetlands are considered Croplands if they are used for crop production, such as rice or cranberries. Forest Land occurs next in the priority assignment because traditional forestry practices tend to be the focus of the management activity in areas with woody plant cover that are not croplands (e.g., orchards) or settlements (e.g., housing subdivisions with significant tree cover). Grassland occurs next in the ranking, while Wetlands and Other Land complete the list.

The assignment priority does not reflect the level of importance for reporting greenhouse gas emissions and removals on managed land, but is intended to classify all areas into a single land use. Currently, the IPCC does not make provisions in the guidelines for assigning land to multiple uses. For example, a Wetland is classified as Forest Land if the area has sufficient tree cover to meet the stocking and stand size requirements. Similarly, Wetlands are classified as Cropland if they are used for crop production, such as rice or cranberries. In either case, emissions from Wetlands are included in the Inventory if human interventions are influencing emissions from Wetlands, in accordance with the guidance provided in IPCC (2006).

## Recalculations Discussion

No major revisions were made to the time series for the current Inventory. However, new data were incorporated from FIA on forestland areas, which was used to make minor adjustments to the time series. FIA conducts a survey of plots annually so that each plot is visited every 5 years (Note: some states have not initiated the annual sampling regime, as discussed previously). Consequently, the time series is updated each year as new data are collected over the 5 year cycles.

## Planned Improvements

Area data by land-use category are not estimated for major portions of Alaska or any of the U.S. territories. A key planned improvement is to incorporate land-use data from these areas into the Inventory. For Alaska, a new NLCD 2001 data product will be used to cover those land areas presently omitted. Fortunately, most of the managed land in the United States is included in the current land-use statistics, but a complete accounting is a key goal for the near future. Data sources will also be evaluated for representing land use on federal and non-federal lands in U.S. territories.

Additional work will be conducted to reconcile differences in Forest Land estimates between the NRI and FIA,

evaluating the assumption that the majority of discrepancies in Forest Land areas are associated with an over- or under-estimation of Grassland and Wetland area. In some regions of the United States, a discrepancy in Forest Land areas between NRI and FIA may be associated with an over- or under-prediction of other land uses, and an analysis is planned to develop region-specific adjustments.

There are also other databases that may need to be reconciled with the NRI and NLCD datasets, particularly for Settlements and Wetlands. Urban area estimates, used to produce C stock and flux estimates from urban trees, are currently based on population data (1990 and 2000 U.S. Census data). Using the population statistics, “urban clusters” are defined as areas with more than 500 people per square mile. The USFS is currently moving ahead with an urban forest inventory program so that urban forest area estimates will be consistent with FIA forest area estimates outside of urban areas, which would be expected to reduce omissions and overlap of forest area estimates along urban boundary areas.

## **7.2. Forest Land Remaining Forest Land**

### **Changes in Forest Carbon Stocks (IPCC Source Category 5A1)**

For estimating C stocks or stock change (flux), C in forest ecosystems can be divided into the following five storage pools (IPCC 2003):

- Aboveground biomass, which includes all living biomass above the soil including stem, stump, branches, bark, seeds, and foliage. This category includes live understory.
- Belowground biomass, which includes all living biomass of coarse living roots greater than 2 mm diameter.
- Dead wood, which includes all non-living woody biomass either standing, lying on the ground (but not including litter), or in the soil.
- Litter, which includes the litter, fomic, and humic layers, and all non-living biomass with a diameter less than 7.5 cm at transect intersection, lying on the ground.
- Soil organic C (SOC), including all organic material in soil to a depth of 1 meter but excluding the coarse roots of the aboveground pools.

In addition, there are two harvested wood pools necessary for estimating C flux:

- Harvested wood products (HWP) in use.
- HWP in solid waste disposal sites (SWDS).

C is continuously cycled among these storage pools and between forest ecosystems and the atmosphere as a result of biological processes in forests (e.g., photosynthesis, respiration, growth, mortality, decomposition, and disturbances such as fires or pest outbreaks) and anthropogenic activities (e.g., harvesting, thinning, clearing, and replanting). As trees photosynthesize and grow, C is removed from the atmosphere and stored in living tree biomass. As trees die and otherwise deposit litter and debris on the forest floor, C is released to the atmosphere or transferred to the soil by organisms that facilitate decomposition.

The net change in forest C is not equivalent to the net flux between forests and the atmosphere because timber harvests do not cause an immediate flux of C of all vegetation C to the atmosphere. Instead, harvesting transfers a portion of the C stored in wood to a “product pool.” Once in a product pool, the C is emitted over time as CO<sub>2</sub> when the wood product combusts or decays. The rate of emission varies considerably among different product pools. For example, if timber is harvested to produce energy, combustion releases C immediately. Conversely, if timber is harvested and used as lumber in a house, it may be many decades or even centuries before the lumber decays and C is released to the atmosphere. If wood products are disposed of in SWDS, the C contained in the wood may be released many years or decades later, or may be stored almost permanently in the SWDS.

This section quantifies the net changes in C stocks in the five forest C pools and two harvested wood pools. The net change in stocks for each pool is estimated, and then the changes in stocks are summed over all pools to estimate total net flux. The focus on C implies that all C-based greenhouse gases are included, and the focus on stock change suggests that specific ecosystem fluxes do not need to be separately itemized in this report. Changes in C stocks from disturbances, such as forest fires, are implicitly included in the net changes. For instance, an inventory

conducted after fire counts only the trees that are left. The change between inventories thus accounts for the C changes due to fires; however, it may not be possible to attribute the changes to the disturbance specifically. Similarly, changes in C stocks from natural disturbances, such as wildfires, pest outbreaks, and storms, are implicitly accounted for in the forest inventory approach; however, they are highly variable from year to year. Wildfire events are typically the most severe but other natural disturbance events can result in large C stock losses that are time- and location- specific. The IPCC (2003) recommends reporting C stocks according to several land-use types and conversions, specifically *Forest Land Remaining Forest Land* and *Land Converted to Forest Land*. Currently, consistent datasets are just becoming available for the conterminous United States to allow forest land conversions and forest land remaining forest land to be identified, and research is ongoing to properly use that information based on research results. Thus, net changes in all forest-related land, including non-forest land converted to forest and forests converted to non-forest, are reported here.

Forest C storage pools, and the flows between them via emissions, sequestration, and transfers, are shown in Figure 7-2. In the figure, boxes represent forest C storage pools and arrows represent flows between storage pools or between storage pools and the atmosphere. Note that the boxes are not identical to the storage pools identified in this chapter. The storage pools identified in this chapter have been refined in this graphic to better illustrate the processes that result in transfers of C from one pool to another, and emissions to as well as uptake from the atmosphere.

Figure 7-2: Forest Sector Carbon Pools and Flows

Approximately 33 percent (304 million hectares) of the U.S. land area is forested (Smith et al. 2009). The current forest carbon inventory includes 275 million hectares in the conterminous 48 states (USDA Forest Service 2011a, 2011b) that are considered managed and are included in this inventory. An additional 6 million hectares of southeast and south central Alaskan forest are inventoried and are included here. Some differences exist in forest land defined in Smith et al. (2009) and the forest land included in this report, which is based on USDA Forest Service (2011b). Survey data are not yet available from Hawaii and a large portion of interior Alaska, but estimates of these areas are included in Smith et al. (2009). Alternately, updated survey data for central and western forest land in both Oklahoma and Texas have only recently become available, and these forests contribute to overall carbon stock reported below. While Hawaii and U.S. territories have relatively small areas of forest land and will thus probably not influence the overall C budget substantially, these regions will be added to the C budget as sufficient data become available. Agroforestry systems are also not currently accounted for in the inventory, since they are not explicitly inventoried by either the Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service or the National Resources Inventory (NRI) of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (Perry et al. 2005).

Sixty-eight percent of U.S. forests (208 million hectares) are classified as timberland, meaning they meet minimum levels of productivity. Nine percent of Alaskan forests overall and 81 percent of forests in the conterminous United States are classified as timberlands. Of the remaining nontimberland forests, 30 million hectares are reserved forest lands (withdrawn by law from management for production of wood products) and 66 million hectares are lower productivity forest lands (Smith et al. 2009). Historically, the timberlands in the conterminous 48 states have been more frequently or intensively surveyed than other forest lands.

Forest land area declined by approximately 10 million hectares over the period from the early 1960s to the late 1980s. Since then, forest area has increased by about 12 million hectares (Smith et al. 2009). Current trends in forest area represent average annual change of 0.2 percent. In addition to the increase in forest area, the major influences on the current net C flux from forest land are management activities and the ongoing impacts of previous land-use changes. These activities affect the net flux of C by altering the amount of C stored in forest ecosystems. For example, intensified management of forests that leads to an increased rate of growth increases the eventual biomass density of the forest, thereby increasing the uptake of C.<sup>208</sup> Though harvesting forests removes much of the aboveground C, on average the volume of annual net growth nationwide is about 72 percent higher than the volume

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<sup>208</sup> The term “biomass density” refers to the mass of live vegetation per unit area. It is usually measured on a dry-weight basis. Dry biomass is 50 percent C by weight.

of annual removals on timberlands (Smith et al. 2009). The reversion of cropland to forest land increases C storage in biomass, forest floor, and soils. The net effects of forest management and the effects of land-use change involving forest land are captured in the estimates of C stocks and fluxes presented in this chapter.

In the United States, improved forest management practices, the regeneration of previously cleared forest areas, and timber harvesting and use have resulted in net uptake (i.e., net sequestration) of C each year from 1990 through 2009. The rate of forest clearing begun in the 17<sup>th</sup> century following European settlement had slowed by the late 19th century. Through the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century many areas of previously forested land in the United States were allowed to revert to forests or were actively reforested. The impacts of these land-use changes still influence C fluxes from these forest lands. More recently, the 1970s and 1980s saw a resurgence of federally-sponsored forest management programs (e.g., the Forestry Incentive Program) and soil conservation programs (e.g., the Conservation Reserve Program), which have focused on tree planting, improving timber management activities, combating soil erosion, and converting marginal cropland to forests. In addition to forest regeneration and management, forest harvests have also affected net C fluxes. Because most of the timber harvested from U.S. forests is used in wood products, and many discarded wood products are disposed of in SWDS rather than by incineration, significant quantities of C in harvested wood are transferred to long-term storage pools rather than being released rapidly to the atmosphere (Skog and Nicholson 1998, Skog 2008). The size of these long-term C storage pools has increased during the last century.

Changes in C stocks in U.S. forests and harvested wood were estimated to account for net sequestration of 922 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (251 Tg C) in 2010 (Table 7-6, Table 7-7, and Table 7-8). In addition to the net accumulation of C in harvested wood pools, sequestration is a reflection of net forest growth and increasing forest area over this period. Overall, average C in forest ecosystem biomass (aboveground and belowground) increased from 55 to 62 Mg C/ha between 1990 and 2011 (see Annex 3-12 for average C densities by specific regions and forest types). Continuous, regular annual surveys are not available over the period for each state; therefore, estimates for non-survey years were derived by interpolation between known data points. Survey years vary from state to state, and national estimates are a composite of individual state surveys. Therefore, changes in sequestration over the interval 1990 to 2010 are the result of the sequences of new inventories for each state. C in forest ecosystem biomass had the greatest effect on total change through increases in C density and total forest land. Management practices that increase C stocks on forest land, as well as afforestation and reforestation efforts, influence the trends of increased C densities in forests and increased forest land in the United States.

Annual net additions to HWP carbon stock were estimated to increase between 2009 and 2010 as inputs to products in use for both solid wood and paper products increased with limited recovery from the recession. Gross inputs to products in use in 2010 were just above the discard rate. The primary reason for overall net additions in recent years is a near stable rate of net additions to products in landfills.

Table 7-6: Net Annual Changes in C Stocks (Tg CO<sub>2</sub>/yr) in Forest and Harvested Wood Pools

<b>Carbon Pool</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>
<b>Forest</b>	<b>(569.6)</b>	<b>(835.5)</b>	<b>(854.9)</b>	<b>(856.2)</b>	<b>(856.2)</b>	<b>(856.2)</b>	<b>(856.2)</b>
Aboveground							
Biomass	(345.9)	(445.1)	(451.7)	(452.2)	(452.2)	(452.2)	(452.2)
Belowground							
Biomass	(67.8)	(87.8)	(89.0)	(89.1)	(89.1)	(89.1)	(89.1)
Dead Wood	(58.2)	(71.4)	(73.3)	(73.5)	(73.5)	(73.5)	(73.5)
Litter	(21.8)	(46.4)	(51.6)	(52.0)	(52.0)	(52.0)	(52.0)
Soil Organic Carbon	(75.8)	(184.8)	(189.4)	(189.4)	(189.4)	(189.4)	(189.4)
<b>Harvested Wood</b>	<b>(131.8)</b>	<b>(105.4)</b>	<b>(108.6)</b>	<b>(103.0)</b>	<b>(82.1)</b>	<b>(54.4)</b>	<b>(65.6)</b>
Products in Use	(64.8)	(45.4)	(45.1)	(39.1)	(19.1)	6.7	(4.4)
SWDS	(67.0)	(59.9)	(63.4)	(63.8)	(63.0)	(61.1)	(61.1)
<b>Total Net Flux</b>	<b>(701.4)</b>	<b>(940.9)</b>	<b>(963.5)</b>	<b>(959.2)</b>	<b>(938.3)</b>	<b>(910.6)</b>	<b>(921.8)</b>

Note: Forest C stocks do not include forest stocks in U.S. territories, Hawaii, a portion of managed forests in Alaska, or trees on non-forest land (e.g., urban trees, agroforestry systems). Parentheses indicate net C sequestration (i.e., a net removal of C from the atmosphere). Total net flux is an estimate of the actual net flux between the total forest C pool and the atmosphere. Forest area estimates are based on interpolation and extrapolation of inventory data as described in the text and in Annex 3.12. Harvested wood estimates are based on results from annual surveys and models. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

Table 7-7: Net Annual Changes in C Stocks (Tg C/yr) in Forest and Harvested Wood Pools

Carbon Pool	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Forest</b>	<b>(155.3)</b>	<b>(227.9)</b>	<b>(233.2)</b>	<b>(233.5)</b>	<b>(233.5)</b>	<b>(233.5)</b>	<b>(233.5)</b>
Aboveground							
Biomass	(94.3)	(121.4)	(123.2)	(123.3)	(123.3)	(123.3)	(123.3)
Belowground							
Biomass	(18.5)	(23.9)	(24.3)	(24.3)	(24.3)	(24.3)	(24.3)
Dead Wood	(15.9)	(19.5)	(20.0)	(20.1)	(20.1)	(20.1)	(20.1)
Litter	(6.0)	(12.7)	(14.1)	(14.2)	(14.2)	(14.2)	(14.2)
Soil Organic C	(20.7)	(50.4)	(51.6)	(51.6)	(51.6)	(51.6)	(51.6)
<b>Harvested Wood</b>	<b>(35.9)</b>	<b>(28.7)</b>	<b>(29.6)</b>	<b>(28.1)</b>	<b>(22.4)</b>	<b>(14.8)</b>	<b>(17.9)</b>
Products in Use	(17.7)	(12.4)	(12.3)	(10.7)	(5.2)	1.8	(1.2)
SWDS	(18.3)	(16.3)	(17.3)	(17.4)	(17.2)	(16.7)	(16.7)
<b>Total Net Flux</b>	<b>(191.3)</b>	<b>(256.6)</b>	<b>(262.8)</b>	<b>(261.6)</b>	<b>(255.9)</b>	<b>(248.3)</b>	<b>(251.4)</b>

Note: Forest C stocks do not include forest stocks in U.S. territories, Hawaii, a portion of managed lands in Alaska, or trees on non-forest land (e.g., urban trees, agroforestry systems). Parentheses indicate net C sequestration (i.e., a net removal of C from the atmosphere). Total net flux is an estimate of the actual net flux between the total forest C pool and the atmosphere. Harvested wood estimates are based on results from annual surveys and models. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

Stock estimates for forest and harvested wood C storage pools are presented in Table Table 7-8. Together, the aboveground live and forest soil pools account for a large proportion of total forest C stocks. C stocks summed for non-soil pools increased over time Figure 7-3. Therefore, C sequestration was greater than C emissions from forests, as discussed above. Figure 7-4 shows county-average C densities for live trees on forest land, including both above- and belowground biomass.

Table 7-8: Forest area (1000 ha) and C Stocks (Tg C) in Forest and Harvested Wood Pools

	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
<b>Forest Area (1000 ha)</b>	<b>271,866</b>	<b>279,954</b>	<b>280,697</b>	<b>281,451</b>	<b>282,205</b>	<b>282,959</b>	<b>283,713</b>	<b>284,467</b>
<b>Carbon Pools (Tg C)</b>								
<b>Forest</b>	<b>39,108</b>	<b>41,395</b>	<b>41,623</b>	<b>41,857</b>	<b>42,090</b>	<b>42,324</b>	<b>42,557</b>	<b>42,791</b>
Aboveground								
Biomass	12,426	13,927	14,048	14,171	14,295	14,418	14,541	14,665
Belowground								
Biomass	2,458	2,755	2,778	2,803	2,827	2,851	2,876	2,900
Dead Wood	2,307	2,527	2,547	2,567	2,587	2,607	2,627	2,647
Litter	4,817	4,872	4,885	4,899	4,913	4,927	4,941	4,955
Soil Organic C	17,100	17,315	17,365	17,417	17,469	17,520	17,572	17,624
<b>Harvested Wood</b>	<b>1,859</b>	<b>2,354</b>	<b>2,383</b>	<b>2,412</b>	<b>2,434</b>	<b>2,449</b>	<b>2,466</b>	<b>2,487</b>
Products in Use	1,231	1,448	1,460	1,471	1,476	1,474	1,475	1,479
SWDS	628	906	923	941	958	974	991	1,008
<b>Total C Stock</b>	<b>40,967</b>	<b>43,749</b>	<b>44,007</b>	<b>44,268</b>	<b>44,524</b>	<b>44,772</b>	<b>45,023</b>	<b>45,278</b>

Note: Forest area estimates include portions of managed forests in Alaska for which survey data are available. Forest C stocks do not include forest stocks in U.S. territories, Hawaii, a large portion of Alaska, or trees on non-forest land (e.g., urban trees, agroforestry systems). Wood product stocks include exports, even if the logs are processed in other countries, and exclude imports. Forest area estimates are based on interpolation and extrapolation of inventory data as described in Smith et al. (2010) and in Annex 3.12. Harvested wood estimates are based on results from annual surveys and models. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding. Inventories are assumed to represent stocks as of January 1 of the inventory year. Flux is the net annual change in stock. Thus, an estimate of flux for 2006 requires estimates of C stocks for 2006 and 2007.

Figure 7-3: Estimates of Net Annual Changes in C Stocks for Major C Pools

Figure 7-4: Average C Density in the Forest Tree Pool in the Conterminous United States, 2010

[BEGIN BOX]

#### Box 7-2: CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Forest Fires

TAs stated previously, the forest inventory approach implicitly accounts for emissions due to disturbances such as forest fires, because only C remaining in the forest is estimated. Net C stock change is estimated by subtracting consecutive C stock estimates. A disturbance removes C from the forest. The inventory data on which net C stock estimates are based already reflect this C loss. Therefore, estimates of net annual changes in C stocks for U.S. forestland already account for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from forest fires occurring in the lower 48 states as well as in the proportion of Alaska's managed forest land captured in this inventory. Because it is of interest to quantify the magnitude of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fire disturbance, these estimates are being highlighted here, using the full extent of available data. Non-CO<sub>2</sub> greenhouse gas emissions from forest fires are also quantified in a separate section below.

The TIPCC (2003) methodology and IPCC (2006) default combustion factor for wildfire were employed to estimate CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from forest fires. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for wildfires and prescribed fires in the lower 48 states and wildfires in Alaska in 2010 were estimated to be 77.0 Tg CO<sub>2</sub>/yr. This amount is masked in the estimate of net annual forest carbon stock change for 2010, however, because this net estimate accounts for the amount sequestered minus any emissions.

Table 7-9: Estimates of CO<sub>2</sub> (Tg/yr) emissions for the lower 48 states and Alaska<sup>1</sup>

Year	CO <sub>2</sub> emitted from Wildfires in Lower 48 States (Tg/yr)	CO <sub>2</sub> emitted from Prescribed Fires in Lower 48 States (Tg/yr)	CO <sub>2</sub> emitted from Wildfires in Alaska (Tg/yr)	Total CO <sub>2</sub> emitted (Tg/yr)
1990	33.1	7.3	+	40.1
2005	108.8	21.4	+	130.3
2006	261.7	25.3	+	287.0
2007	207.3	25.7	+	233.0
2008	123.9	15.7	+	139.6
2009	71.5	20.7	+	92.2
2010	56.7	20.3	+	77.0

+ Does not exceed 0.05 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.

<sup>1</sup> Note that these emissions have already been accounted for in the estimates of net annual changes in C stocks, which account for the amount sequestered minus any emissions.

[END BOX]

### Methodology and Data Sources

The methodology described herein is consistent with IPCC (2003, 2006) and IPCC/UNEP/OECD/IEA (1997). Forest ecosystem C stocks and net annual C stock change were determined according to stock-difference methods, which involved applying C estimation factors to forest inventory data and interpolating between successive inventory-based estimates of C stocks. Harvested wood C estimates were based on factors such as the allocation of wood to various primary and end-use products as well as half-life (the time at which half of the amount placed in use will have been discarded from use) and expected disposition (e.g., product pool, SWDS, combustion). An overview of the different methodologies and data sources used to estimate the C in forest ecosystems or harvested wood products is provided here. See Annex 3.12 for details and additional information related to the methods and data.

#### *Forest Ecosystem Carbon from Forest Inventory*

Forest ecosystem stock and flux estimates are based on the stock-difference method and calculations for all

estimates are in units of C. Separate estimates were made for the five IPCC C storage pools described above. All estimates were based on data collected from the extensive array of permanent forest inventory plots in the United States as well as models employed to fill gaps in field data (USDA Forest Service 2011b, 2011c). Carbon conversion factors were applied at the disaggregated level of each inventory plot and then appropriately expanded to population estimates. A combination of tiers as outlined by IPCC (2006) was used. The Tier 3 biomass C values were calculated from forest inventory tree-level data. The Tier 2 dead organic and soil C pools were based on empirical or process models from the inventory data. All C conversion factors are specific to regions or individual states within the United States, which were further classified according to characteristic forest types within each region.

The first step in developing forest ecosystem estimates is to identify useful inventory data and resolve any inconsistencies among datasets. Forest inventory data were obtained from the USDA Forest Service FIA program (Frayer and Furnival 1999, USDA Forest Service 2011b). Inventories include data collected on permanent inventory plots on forest lands<sup>209</sup> and were organized as a number of separate datasets, each representing a complete inventory, or survey, of an individual state at a specified time. Many of the more recent annual inventories reported for states were represented as “moving window” averages, which means that a portion—but not all—of the previous year’s inventory is updated each year (USDA Forest Service 2011d). Forest C calculations were organized according to these state surveys, and the frequency of surveys varies by state. All available data sets were identified for each state starting with pre-1990 data, and all unique surveys were identified for stock and change calculations. Since C stock change is based on differences between successive surveys within each state, accurate estimates of net C flux thus depend on consistent representation of forest land between these successive inventories. In order to achieve this consistency from 1990 to the present, states were sometimes subdivided into sub-state areas where the sum of sub-state inventories produces the best whole-state representation of C change as discussed in Smith et al. (2010).

The principal FIA datasets employed are freely available for download at USDA Forest Service (2010b) as the Forest Inventory and Analysis Database (FIADB) Version 4.0 (Woudenberg et al. 2010). However, to achieve consistent representation (spatial and temporal), three other general sources of past FIA data were included as necessary. First, older FIA plot- and tree-level data—not in the current FIADB format—were used if available. Second, Resources Planning Act Assessment (RPA) databases, which are periodic, plot-level only, summaries of state inventories, were used to provide the data at or before 1990. Finally, an additional forest inventory data source used was the Integrated Database (IDB), which is a compilation of periodic forest inventory data from the 1990s for California, Oregon, and Washington (Waddell and Hiserote 2005). These IDB data were identified by Heath et al. (2011) as the most appropriate non-FIADB sources for these states and were included in this inventory. See USDA Forest Service (2011a) for information on current and older data as well as additional FIA Program features. A detailed list of the specific forest inventory data used in this inventory is in Annex 3.12.

Forest C stocks were estimated from inventory data by a collection of conversion factors and models (Birdsey and Heath 1995, Birdsey and Heath 2001, Heath et al. 2003, Smith et al. 2004, Smith et al. 2006), which have been formalized in an FIADB-to-carbon calculator (Smith et al. 2010). The conversion factors and model coefficients were categorized by region and forest type, and forest C stock estimates were calculated from application of these factors at the scale of FIA inventory plots. The results were estimates of C density (Mg C per hectare) for six forest ecosystem pools: live trees, standing dead trees, understory vegetation, down dead wood, forest floor, and soil organic matter. The six carbon pools used in the FIADB-to-carbon calculator were aggregated to the 5 C pools defined by IPCC (2006): aboveground biomass, belowground biomass, dead wood, litter, and soil organic matter. The live-tree and understory C were pooled as biomass, and standing dead trees and down dead wood were pooled as dead wood, in accordance with IPCC (2006).

Once plot-level C stocks were calculated as C densities on *Forest Land Remaining Forest Land* for the five IPCC (2006) reporting pools, the stocks were expanded to population estimates according to methods appropriate to the respective inventory data (for example, see Bechtold and Patterson (2005)). These expanded C stock estimates were summed to state or sub-state total C stocks. Annualized estimates of C stocks were developed by using available FIA inventory data and interpolating or extrapolating to assign a C stock to each year in the 1990 through 2011 time series. Flux, or net annual stock change, was estimated by calculating the difference in stocks between two

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<sup>209</sup> Forest land in the United States includes land that is at least 10 percent stocked with trees of any size. Timberland is the most productive type of forest land, which is on unreserved land and is producing or capable of producing crops of industrial wood.

successive years and applying the appropriate sign convention; net increases in ecosystem C were identified as negative flux. By convention, inventories were assigned to represent stocks as of January 1 of the inventory year; an estimate of flux for 1996 required estimates of C stocks for 1996 and 1997, for example. Additional discussion of the use of FIA inventory data and the C conversion process is in Annex 3.12.

### *Carbon in Biomass*

Live tree C pools include aboveground and belowground (coarse root) biomass of live trees with diameter at diameter breast height (d.b.h.) of at least 2.54 cm at 1.37 m above the forest floor. Separate estimates were made for above- and below-ground biomass components. If inventory plots included data on individual trees, tree C was based on Woodall et al. (2011a), which is also known as the component ratio method (CRM), and is a function of volume, species, and diameter. An additional component of foliage, which was not explicitly included in Woodall et al. (2011a), was added to each tree following the same CRM method. Some of the older forest inventory data in use for these estimates did not provide measurements of individual trees. Examples of these data included plots with incomplete or missing tree data or the RPA plot-level summaries. The C estimates for these plots were based on average densities (metric tons C per hectare) obtained from plots of more recent surveys with similar stand characteristics and location. This applies to 5 percent of the forest land inventory-plot-to-carbon conversions within the 177 state-level surveys utilized here.

Understory vegetation is a minor component of biomass, which is defined as all biomass of undergrowth plants in a forest, including woody shrubs and trees less than 2.54 cm d.b.h. In the current inventory, it was assumed that 10 percent of total understory C mass is belowground. Estimates of C density were based on information in Birdsey (1996) and biomass estimates from Jenkins et al. (2003). Understory frequently represented over 1 percent of C in biomass, but its contribution rarely exceeded 2 percent of the total.

### *Carbon in Dead Organic Matter*

Dead organic matter was initially calculated as three separate pools—standing dead trees, down dead wood, and litter—with C stocks estimated from sample data or modeled. The standing dead tree C pools include aboveground and belowground (coarse root) mass and include trees of at least 12.7 cm d.b.h. Calculations followed the basic method applied to live trees (Woodall et al. 2011a) with additional modifications to account for decay and structural loss (Domke et al. 2011, Harmon et al. 2011). Similar to the situation with live tree data, some of the older forest inventory data did not provide sufficient data on standing dead trees to make accurate population-level estimates. The C estimates for these plots were based on average densities (metric tons C per hectare) obtained from plots of more recent surveys with similar stand characteristics and location. This applied to 26 percent of the forest land inventory-plot-to-carbon conversions within the 177 state-level surveys utilized here. Modeled estimates of down dead wood and litter are specific to regions and forest types within each region. Down dead wood is defined as pieces of dead wood greater than 7.5 cm diameter, at transect intersection, that are not attached to live or standing dead trees. Down dead wood includes stumps and roots of harvested trees. Ratios of down dead wood to live tree biomass (Jenkins et al. 2003) were used to estimate this quantity. Litter C is the pool of organic C (also known as duff, humus, and fine woody debris) above the mineral soil and includes woody fragments with diameters of up to 7.5 cm. Estimates are based on equations of Smith and Heath (2002).

### *Carbon in Forest Soil*

Soil organic C (SOC) includes all organic material in soil to a depth of 1 meter but excludes the coarse roots of the biomass or dead wood pools. Estimates of SOC were based on the national STATSGO spatial database (USDA 1991), which includes region and soil type information. SOC determination was based on the general approach described by Amichev and Galbraith (2004). Links to FIA inventory data were developed with the assistance of the USDA Forest Service FIA Geospatial Service Center by overlaying FIA forest inventory plots on the soil C map. This method produced mean SOC densities stratified by region and forest type group. It did not provide separate estimates for mineral or organic soils but instead weighted their contribution to the overall average based on the relative amount of each within forest land. Thus, forest SOC is a function of species and location, and net change also depends on these two factors as total forest area changes. In this respect, SOC provides a country-specific reference stock for 1990-present, but it does not reflect effects of past land use.

### *Harvested Wood Carbon*

Estimates of the HWP contribution to forest C sinks and emissions (hereafter called “HWP Contribution”) were based on methods described in Skog (2008) using the WOODCARB II model. These methods are based on IPCC (2006) guidance for estimating HWP C. IPCC (2006) provides methods that allow Parties to report HWP Contribution using one of several different accounting approaches: production, stock change and atmospheric flow, as well as a default method that assumes there is no change in HWP C stocks (see Annex 3.12 for more details about each approach). The United States used the production accounting approach to report HWP Contribution. Under the production approach, C in exported wood was estimated as if it remains in the United States, and C in imported wood was not included in inventory estimates. Though reported U.S. HWP estimates are based on the production approach, estimates resulting from use of the two alternative approaches, the stock change and atmospheric flow approaches, are also presented for comparison (see Annex 3.12). Annual estimates of change were calculated by tracking the additions to and removals from the pool of products held in end uses (i.e., products in use such as housing or publications) and the pool of products held in solid waste disposal sites (SWDS).

Solidwood products added to pools include lumber and panels. End-use categories for solidwood include single and multifamily housing, alteration and repair of housing, and other end-uses. There is one product category and one end-use category for paper. Additions to and removals from pools were tracked beginning in 1900, with the exception that additions of softwood lumber to housing began in 1800. Solidwood and paper product production and trade data were taken from USDA Forest Service and other sources (Hair and Ulrich 1963; Hair 1958; USDC Bureau of Census; 1976; Ulrich, 1985, 1989; Steer 1948; AF&PA 2006a 2006b; Howard 2003, 2007). Estimates for disposal of products reflected the change over time in the fraction of products discarded to SWDS (as opposed to burning or recycling) and the fraction of SWDS that were in sanitary landfills versus dumps.

There are five annual HWP variables that were used in varying combinations to estimate HWP Contribution using any one of the three main approaches listed above. These are:

- (1A) annual change of C in wood and paper products in use in the United States,
- (1B) annual change of C in wood and paper products in SWDS in the United States,
- (2A) annual change of C in wood and paper products in use in the United States and other countries where the wood came from trees harvested in the United States,
- (2B) annual change of C in wood and paper products in SWDS in the United States and other countries where the wood came from trees harvested in the United States,
- (3) C in imports of wood, pulp, and paper to the United States,
- (4) C in exports of wood, pulp and paper from the United States, and
- (5) C in annual harvest of wood from forests in the United States.

The sum of variables 2A and 2B yielded the estimate for HWP Contribution under the production accounting approach. A key assumption for estimating these variables was that products exported from the United States and held in pools in other countries have the same half lives for products in use, the same percentage of discarded products going to SWDS, and the same decay rates in SWDS as they would in the United States.

### **Uncertainty and Time Series Consistency**

A quantitative uncertainty analysis placed bounds on current flux for forest ecosystems as well as C in harvested wood products through Monte Carlo Stochastic Simulation of the Methods described above and probabilistic sampling of C conversion factors and inventory data. See Annex 3.12 for additional information. The 2010 flux estimate for forest C stocks was estimated to be between -1,035 and -808 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. at a 95 percent confidence level. This includes a range of -969 to -745 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. in forest ecosystems and -83 to -50 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. for HWP.

Table 7-10: Tier 2 Quantitative Uncertainty Estimates for Net CO<sub>2</sub> Flux from Forest Land Remaining Forest Land: Changes in Forest C Stocks (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. and Percent)

Source	Gas	2010 Flux Estimate (Tg CO <sub>2</sub> Eq.)	Uncertainty Range Relative to Flux Estimate <sup>a</sup>			
			(Tg CO <sub>2</sub> Eq.)		(%)	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Forest Ecosystem	CO <sub>2</sub>	(856.2)	(969.0)	(745.0)	(13.2)	13.0
Harvested Wood Products	CO <sub>2</sub>	(65.6)	(83.2)	(49.9)	(26.9)	24.0
<b>Total Forest</b>	<b>CO<sub>2</sub></b>	<b>(921.8)</b>	<b>(1,034.8)</b>	<b>(808.4)</b>	<b>(12.3)</b>	<b>12.3</b>

Note: Parentheses indicate negative values or net sequestration.

<sup>a</sup> Range of flux estimates predicted by Monte Carlo stochastic simulation for a 95 percent confidence interval.

Methodological recalculations were applied to the entire time-series to ensure time-series consistency from 1990 through 2010. Details on the emission trends through time are described in more detail in the Methodology section, above.

### QA/QC and Verification

As discussed above, the FIA program has conducted consistent forest surveys based on extensive statistically-based sampling of most of the forest land in the conterminous United States, dating back to 1952. The FIA program includes numerous quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) procedures, including calibration among field crews, duplicate surveys of some plots, and systematic checking of recorded data. Because of the statistically-based sampling, the large number of survey plots, and the quality of the data, the survey databases developed by the FIA program form a strong foundation for C stock estimates. Field sampling protocols, summary data, and detailed inventory databases are archived and are publicly available on the Internet (USDA Forest Service 2011d).

Many key calculations for estimating current forest C stocks based on FIA data were developed to fill data gaps in assessing forest carbon and have been in use for many years to produce national assessments of forest C stocks and stock changes (see additional discussion and citations in the Methodology section above and in Annex 3.12). General quality control procedures were used in performing calculations to estimate C stocks based on survey data. For example, the derived C datasets, which include inventory variables such as areas and volumes, were compared to standard inventory summaries such as the forest resource statistics of Smith et al. (2009) or selected population estimates generated from FIADB 4.0, which are available at an FIA internet site (USDA Forest Service 2011b). Agreement between the C datasets and the original inventories is important to verify accuracy of the data used. Finally, C stock estimates were compared with previous inventory report estimates to ensure that any differences could be explained by either new data or revised calculation methods (see the “Recalculations” discussion, below).

Estimates of the HWP variables and the HWP contribution under the production accounting approach use data from U.S. Census and USDA Forest Service surveys of production and trade. Factors to convert wood and paper to units C are based on estimates by industry and Forest Service published sources. The WOODCARB II model uses estimation methods suggested by IPCC (2006). Estimates of annual C change in solid wood and paper products in use were calibrated to meet two independent criteria. The first criterion is that the WOODCARB II model estimate of C in houses standing in 2001 needs to match an independent estimate of C in housing based on U.S. Census and USDA Forest Service survey data. Meeting the first criterion resulted in an estimated half life of about 80 years for single family housing built in the 1920s, which is confirmed by other U.S. Census data on housing. The second criterion is that the WOODCARB II model estimate of wood and paper being discarded to SWDS needs to match EPA estimates of discards each year over the period 1990 to 2000 (EPA 2006). These criteria help reduce uncertainty in estimates of annual change in C in products in use in the United States and, to a lesser degree, reduce uncertainty in estimates of annual change in C in products made from wood harvested in the United States. In addition, WOODCARB II landfill decay rates have been validated by ensuring that estimates of CH<sub>4</sub> emissions from landfills based on EPA (2006) data are reasonable in comparison with CH<sub>4</sub> estimates based on WOODCARB II landfill decay rates.

## Recalculations Discussion

In addition to annual updates to most-recent inventories for many states, five additional and notable changes in the current Inventory affected the national stock and change estimates for forest ecosystems. The basic models used to estimate HWP C stocks and change are unchanged from the previous Inventory. Adopting the method of Woodall et al. (2011a) for both live and standing dead trees affected these two pools in somewhat different ways. First, live tree C stocks are lower because the new method estimates lower biomass for most trees. However, the relative effect on net annual stock change was minimal and varied from state to state. Second, the change from modeled estimates of standing dead to the tree-based estimates (Woodall et al. 2011a, Domke et al. 2011, Woodall et al. In Press) also resulted in lower estimates of stocks, yet the newer stock-change estimates included greater sequestration throughout the 21-year interval. The remaining three changes to the Inventory originate as modifications in the forest inventory data, specifically the FIADB. A number of Southern states revised some previously-existing inventories from the late 1990s and early 2000s. From this, stock and stock-change estimates varied slightly for seven states over the mid-part of the 1990 through 2010 interval. In some cases, C stocks increased while in others they decreased. The net effect is a slight increase in sequestration as estimated for the late 1990s and early 2000s. The fourth change is the addition of the periodic data for Alaska timberlands so that a stock-change estimate is now included for a large part of coastal Alaska. The net effect on the national totals is a slight increase in sequestration applied throughout the interval. Finally, forest area, and thus C stock, estimates were revised upward for central and western portions of Oklahoma and Texas since the previous Inventory report. These changes only affect stocks and not change because those forest lands are based on single current surveys only.

The changes in estimation procedures for live and standing dead trees affected estimates of uncertainty. The CRM method, which is largely a function of tree volume, appears to reduce levels of individual-tree error for both live and standing dead trees. In addition, empirical (i.e., field-based measurements of individual trees) estimates of standing dead trees have replaced a stand-level model, which should further reduce error. Additional information regarding error associated with the volume and CRM models remains limited and is an active area of ongoing research (e.g., FIA National Volume/Biomass Study).

## Planned Improvements

The ongoing annual surveys by the FIA Program will improve the precision of forest C estimates as new state surveys become available (USDA Forest Service 2011b), particularly in western states. The annual surveys will eventually include all states. To date, three states are not yet reporting any data from the annualized sampling design of FIA: Hawaii, New Mexico and Wyoming. Estimates for these states are currently based on older, periodic data. Hawaii and U.S. territories will also be included when appropriate forest C data are available. In addition, the more intensive sampling of down dead wood, litter, and soil organic C on some of the permanent FIA plots continues and will substantially improve resolution of C pools at the plot level for all U.S. forest land as this information becomes available (Woodall et al. 2011b). Improved resolution, incorporating more of Alaska's forests, and using annualized sampling data as it becomes available for those states currently not reporting are planned for future reporting.

As more information becomes available about historical land use, the ongoing effects of changes in land use and forest management will be better accounted for in estimates of soil C (Birdsey and Lewis 2003, Woodbury et al. 2006, Woodbury et al. 2007). Currently, soil C estimates are based on the assumption that soil C density depends only on broad forest type group, not on land-use history, but long-term residual effects on soil and forest floor C stocks are likely after land-use change. Estimates of such effects depend on identifying past land use changes associated with forest lands.

Similarly, agroforestry practices, such as windbreaks or riparian forest buffers along waterways, are not currently accounted for in the inventory. In order to properly account for the C stocks and fluxes associated with agroforestry, research will be needed that provides the basis and tools for including these plantings in a nation-wide inventory, as well as the means for entity-level reporting.

## Non-CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Forest Fires

Emissions of non-CO<sub>2</sub> gases from forest fires were estimated using the default IPCC (2003) methodology incorporating default IPCC (2006) emissions factors and combustion factor for wildfires. Emissions from this source in 2010 were estimated to be 4.8 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. of CH<sub>4</sub> and 4.0 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. of N<sub>2</sub>O, as shown in Table

7-11 and Table 7-12. The estimates of non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from forest fires account for wildfires in the lower 48 states and Alaska as well as prescribed fires in the lower 48 states.

Table 7-11: Estimated Non-CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Forest Fires (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.) for U.S. Forests<sup>1</sup>

Gas	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
CH <sub>4</sub>	2.5	8.2	18.1	14.7	8.8	5.8	4.8
N <sub>2</sub> O	2.1	6.7	14.7	12.0	7.2	4.7	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>26.6</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>8.8</b>

<sup>1</sup> Calculated based on C emission estimates in *Changes in Forest Carbon Stocks* and default factors in IPCC (2003, 2006).

Table 7-12: Estimated Non-CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Forest Fires (Gg Gas) for U.S. Forests<sup>1</sup>

Gas	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
CH <sub>4</sub>	121	390	860	698	418	276	231
N <sub>2</sub> O	7	22	48	39	23	15	13

<sup>1</sup> Calculated based on C emission estimates in *Changes in Forest Carbon Stocks* and default factors in IPCC (2003, 2006).

## Methodology

The IPCC (2003) Tier 2 default methodology was used to calculate non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from forest fires. However, more up-to-date **default emission factors from IPCC (2006) were converted into gas-specific emission ratios and incorporated into the methodology.** Estimates of CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions were calculated by multiplying the total estimated CO<sub>2</sub> emitted from forest burned by the gas-specific emissions ratios. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were estimated by multiplying total C emitted (Table 7-13-8) by the C to CO<sub>2</sub> conversion factor of 44/12 and by 92.8 percent, which is the estimated proportion of C emitted as CO<sub>2</sub> (Smith 2008a). **The equations used were:**

$$\text{CH}_4 \text{ Emissions} = (\text{C released}) \times 92.8\% \times (44/12) \times (\text{CH}_4 \text{ to CO}_2 \text{ emission ratio})$$

$$\text{N}_2\text{O Emissions} = (\text{C released}) \times 92.8\% \times (44/12) \times (\text{N}_2\text{O to CO}_2 \text{ emission ratio})$$

Estimates for C emitted from forest fires are the same estimates used to generate estimates of CO<sub>2</sub> presented earlier in Box 7-1. Estimates for C emitted include emissions from wildfires in both Alaska and the lower 48 states as well as emissions from prescribed fires in the lower 48 states only (based on expert judgment that prescribed fires only occur in the lower 48 states) (Smith 2008a). The IPCC (2006) default combustion factor of 0.45 for “all ‘other’ temperate forests” was applied in estimating C emitted from both wildfires and prescribed fires. See the explanation in Annex 3.12 for more details on the methodology used to estimate C emitted from forest fires.

Table 7-13: Estimated Carbon Released from Forest Fires for U.S. Forests

Year	C Emitted (Tg/yr)
1990	11.9
2005	38.3
2006	84.4
2007	68.5
2008	41.0
2009	27.1
2010	22.6

## Uncertainty and Time-Series Consistency

Non-CO<sub>2</sub> gases emitted from forest fires depend on several variables, including: forest area for Alaska and the lower 48 states; average C densities for wildfires in Alaska, wildfires in the lower 48 states, and prescribed fires in the lower 48 states; emission ratios; and combustion factor values (proportion of biomass consumed by fire). To quantify the uncertainties for emissions from forest fires, a Monte Carlo (Tier 2) uncertainty analysis was performed

using information about the uncertainty surrounding each of these variables. The results of the Tier 2 quantitative uncertainty analysis are summarized in Table 7-14.

Table 7-14: Tier 2 Quantitative Uncertainty Estimates of Non-CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Forest Fires in Forest Land Remaining Forest Land (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. and Percent)

Source	Gas	2010 Emission Estimate (Tg CO <sub>2</sub> Eq.)	Uncertainty Range Relative to Emission Estimate			
			(Tg CO <sub>2</sub> Eq.)		(%)	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Non-CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions from Forest Fires	CH <sub>4</sub>	4.8	1.0	12.0	-79%	+148%
Non-CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions from Forest Fires	N <sub>2</sub> O	4.0	0.8	9.8	-79%	+147%

Methodological recalculations were applied to the entire time-series to ensure time-series consistency from 1990 through 2010. Details on the emission trends through time are described in more detail in the Methodology section, above.

### QA/QC and Verification

Tier 1 and Tier 2 QA/QC activities were conducted consistent with the U.S. QA/QC plan. Source-specific quality control measures for forest fires included checking input data, documentation, and calculations to ensure data were properly handled through the inventory process. Errors that were found during this process were corrected as necessary.

### Recalculations Discussion

For the current Inventory, non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions were calculated using the 2006 IPCC default emission factors for CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O instead of the 2003 IPCC default emission factors. These default emission factors were converted to CH<sub>4</sub> to CO<sub>2</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O to CO<sub>2</sub> emission ratios and then multiplied by CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to estimate CH<sub>4</sub> and N<sub>2</sub>O emissions. The previous 2003 IPCC methodology provides emission ratios that are multiplied by total C emitted.

The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) releases data on land under wildland protection every several years. In 2011, NASF released these data for the year 2008, which affected the ratio of forest land to land under wildland protection for the years 2007 through 2009. For each of these three years, the updated ratio decreased the forest area burned estimates for the lower forty-eight states by around 15 percent. See the explanation in Annex 3.12 for more details on how the forestland to land under wildland protection ratio is used to calculate forest fire emissions.

In previous Inventory reports, the methodology has assumed that the C density of forest areas burned in wild and prescribed fires does not vary between years. This assumption has been in contrast to the forest C stock estimates, which are updated annually for all years based on data from the USDA Forest Service. The methodology adopted for the current Inventory improves the C density factors by incorporating dynamic C density values based on the annual C pool data provided by the USDA Forest Service for the years 1990 to 2010. As a result of this update, estimates of CO<sub>2</sub> and non-CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from wild and prescribed fires decreased by between 20 and 30 percent as compared to the estimates included in the previous Inventory. This decrease occurred because the dynamic C density values calculated were 20 to 30 percent lower (depending on the year) than the C density values previously used for the methodology. For more information on how C density contributes to estimates of emissions from forest fires, see Annex 3.12.

### Planned Improvements

The default combustion factor of 0.45 from IPCC (2006) was applied in estimating C emitted from both wildfires and prescribed fires. Additional research into the availability of a combustion factor specific to prescribed fires is being conducted.

## Direct N<sub>2</sub>O Fluxes from Forest Soils (IPCC Source Category 5A1)

Of the synthetic N fertilizers applied to soils in the United States, no more than one percent is applied to forest soils. Application rates are similar to those occurring on cropped soils, but in any given year, only a small proportion of total forested land receives N fertilizer. This is because forests are typically fertilized only twice during their approximately 40-year growth cycle (once at planting and once approximately 20 years later). Thus, while the rate of N fertilizer application for the area of forests that receives N fertilizer in any given year is relatively high, the average annual application is quite low as inferred by dividing all forest land that may undergo N fertilization at some point during its growing cycle by the amount of N fertilizer added to these forests in a given year. Direct N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from forest soils in 2010 were 0.4 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (1 Gg). Emissions have increased by 455 percent from 1990 to 2010 as a result of an increase in the area of N fertilized pine plantations in the southeastern United States and Douglas-fir timberland in western Washington and Oregon. Total forest soil N<sub>2</sub>O emissions are summarized in Table 7-15.

Table 7-15: Direct N<sub>2</sub>O Fluxes from Soils in *Forest Land Remaining Forest Land* (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. and Gg N<sub>2</sub>O)

Year	Tg CO <sub>2</sub> Eq.	Gg
1990	0.1	0.2
2005	0.4	1.2
2006	0.4	1.2
2007	0.4	1.2
2008	0.4	1.2
2009	0.4	1.2
2010	0.4	1.2

Note: These estimates include direct N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from N fertilizer additions only. Indirect N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from fertilizer additions are reported in the Agriculture chapter. These estimates include emissions from both *Forest Land Remaining Forest Land* and from *Land Converted to Forest Land*.

## Methodology

The IPCC Tier 1 approach was used to estimate N<sub>2</sub>O from soils within *Forest Land Remaining Forest Land*. According to U.S. Forest Service statistics for 1996 (USDA Forest Service 2001), approximately 75 percent of trees planted were for timber, and about 60 percent of national total harvested forest area is in the southeastern United States. Although southeastern pine plantations represent the majority of fertilized forests in the United States, this Inventory also accounted for N fertilizer application to commercial Douglas-fir stands in western Oregon and Washington. For the Southeast, estimates of direct N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from fertilizer applications to forests were based on the area of pine plantations receiving fertilizer in the southeastern United States and estimated application rates (Albaugh et al. 2007; Fox et al. 2007). Not accounting for fertilizer applied to non-pine plantations is justified because fertilization is routine for pine forests but rare for hardwoods (Binkley et al. 1995). For each year, the area of pine receiving N fertilizer was multiplied by the weighted average of the reported range of N fertilization rates (121 lbs. N per acre). Area data for pine plantations receiving fertilizer in the Southeast were not available for 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008, so data from 2004 were used for these years. For commercial forests in Oregon and Washington, only fertilizer applied to Douglas-fir was accounted for, because the vast majority (~95 percent) of the total fertilizer applied to forests in this region is applied to Douglas-fir (Briggs 2007). Estimates of total Douglas-fir area and the portion of fertilized area were multiplied to obtain annual area estimates of fertilized Douglas-fir stands. The annual area estimates were multiplied by the typical rate used in this region (200 lbs. N per acre) to estimate total N applied (Briggs 2007), and the total N applied to forests was multiplied by the IPCC (2006) default emission factor of 1 percent to estimate direct N<sub>2</sub>O emissions. The volatilization and leaching/runoff N fractions for forest land, calculated according to the IPCC default factors of 10 percent and 30 percent, respectively, were included with the indirect emissions in the Agricultural Soil Management source category (consistent with reporting guidance that all indirect emissions are included in the Agricultural Soil Management source category).

## Uncertainty and Time-Series Consistency

The amount of N<sub>2</sub>O emitted from forests depends not only on N inputs and fertilized area, but also on a large number of variables, including organic C availability, oxygen gas partial pressure, soil moisture content, pH, temperature, and tree planting/harvesting cycles. The effect of the combined interaction of these variables on N<sub>2</sub>O flux is complex and highly uncertain. IPCC (2006) does not incorporate any of these variables into the default methodology, except variation in estimated fertilizer application rates and estimated areas of forested land receiving N fertilizer. All forest soils are treated equivalently under this methodology. Furthermore, only synthetic N fertilizers are captured, so applications of organic N fertilizers are not estimated. However, the total quantity of organic N inputs to soils is included in the Agricultural Soil Management and *Settlements Remaining Settlements* sections.

Uncertainties exist in the fertilization rates, annual area of forest lands receiving fertilizer, and the emission factors. Fertilization rates were assigned a default level<sup>210</sup> of uncertainty at ±50 percent, and area receiving fertilizer was assigned a ±20 percent according to expert knowledge (Binkley 2004). IPCC (2006) provided estimates for the uncertainty associated with direct N<sub>2</sub>O emission factor for synthetic N fertilizer application to soils. Quantitative uncertainty of this source category was estimated through the IPCC-recommended Tier 2 uncertainty estimation methodology. The uncertainty ranges around the 2005 activity data and emission factor input variables were directly applied to the 2010 emissions estimates. The results of the quantitative uncertainty analysis are summarized in Table 7-16. N<sub>2</sub>O fluxes from soils were estimated to be between 0.1 and 1.1 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. at a 95 percent confidence level. This indicates a range of 59 percent below and 211 percent above the 2010 emission estimate of 0.4 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.

Table 7-16: Quantitative Uncertainty Estimates of N<sub>2</sub>O Fluxes from Soils in *Forest Land Remaining Forest Land* (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. and Percent)

Source	Gas	2010 Emission Estimate (Tg CO <sub>2</sub> Eq.)	Uncertainty Range Relative to Emission Estimate (%)			
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Forest Land Remaining Forest Land: N <sub>2</sub> O Fluxes from Soils	N <sub>2</sub> O	0.4	0.1	1.1	-59%	+211%

Note: This estimate includes direct N<sub>2</sub>O emissions from N fertilizer additions to both *Forest Land Remaining Forest Land* and *Land Converted to Forest Land*.

## Planned Improvements

State-level area data will be acquired for southeastern pine plantations and northwestern Douglas-fir forests receiving fertilizer to estimate soil N<sub>2</sub>O emission by state and provide information about regional variation in emission patterns.

### 7.3. Land Converted to Forest Land (IPCC Source Category 5A2)

Land-use change is constantly occurring, and areas under a number of differing land-use types are converted to forest each year, just as forest land is converted to other uses. However, the magnitude of these changes is not currently known. Given the paucity of available land-use information relevant to this particular IPCC source category, it is not possible to separate CO<sub>2</sub> or N<sub>2</sub>O fluxes on *Land Converted to Forest Land* from fluxes on *Forest Land Remaining Forest Land* at this time.

### 7.4. Cropland Remaining Cropland (IPCC Source Category 5B1)

## Mineral and Organic Soil Carbon Stock Changes

Soils contain both organic and inorganic forms of C, but soil organic C (SOC) stocks are the main source and sink

<sup>210</sup> Uncertainty is unknown for the fertilization rates so a conservative value of ±50% was used in the analysis.

for atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> in most soils. Changes in inorganic C stocks are typically minor. In addition, soil organic C is the dominant organic C pool in cropland ecosystems, because biomass and dead organic matter have considerably less C and those pools are relatively ephemeral. IPCC (2006) recommends reporting changes in soil organic C stocks due to agricultural land-use and management activities on mineral and organic soils.<sup>211</sup>

Typical well-drained mineral soils contain from 1 to 6 percent organic C by weight, although mineral soils that are saturated with water for substantial periods during the year may contain significantly more C (NRCS 1999). Conversion of mineral soils from their native state to agricultural uses can cause as much as half of the SOC to be decomposed and the C lost to the atmosphere. The rate and ultimate magnitude of C loss will depend on pre-conversion conditions, conversion method and subsequent management practices, climate, and soil type. In the tropics, 40 to 60 percent of the C loss generally occurs within the first 10 years following conversion; C stocks continue to decline in subsequent decades but at a much slower rate. In temperate regions, C loss can continue for several decades, reducing stocks by 20 to 40 percent of native C levels. Eventually, the soil can reach a new equilibrium that reflects a balance between C inputs (e.g., decayed plant matter, roots, and organic amendments such as manure and crop residues) and C loss through microbial decomposition of organic matter. However, land use, management, and other conditions may change before the new equilibrium is reached. The quantity and quality of organic matter inputs and their rate of decomposition are determined by the combined interaction of climate, soil properties, and land use. Land use and agricultural practices such as clearing, drainage, tillage, planting, grazing, crop residue management, fertilization, and flooding can modify both organic matter inputs and decomposition, and thereby result in a net flux of C to or from the pool of soil C.

Organic soils, also referred to as histosols, include all soils with more than 12 to 20 percent organic C by weight, depending on clay content (NRCS 1999, Brady and Weil 1999). The organic layer of these soils can be very deep (i.e., several meters), forming under inundated conditions in which minimal decomposition of plant residue occurs. When organic soils are prepared for crop production, they are drained and tilled, leading to aeration of the soil, which accelerates the rate of decomposition and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Because of the depth and richness of the organic layers, C loss from drained organic soils can continue over long periods of time. The rate of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions varies depending on climate and composition (i.e., decomposability) of the organic matter. Also, the use of organic soils for annual crop production leads to higher C loss rates than drainage of organic soils in grassland or forests, due to deeper drainage and more intensive management practices in cropland (Armentano and Verhoeven 1990, as cited in IPCC/UNEP/OECD/IEA 1997). Carbon losses are estimated from drained organic soils under both grassland and cropland management in this Inventory.

*Cropland Remaining Cropland* includes all cropland in an inventory year that had been cropland for the last 20 years<sup>212</sup> according to the USDA NRI land-use survey (USDA-NRCS 2000). The Inventory includes all privately-owned croplands in the conterminous United States and Hawaii, but there is a minor amount of cropland on federal lands that is not currently included in the estimation of C stock changes, leading to a discrepancy between the total amount of managed area in *Cropland Remaining Cropland* (see Section 7.1) and the cropland area included in the Inventory. Plans are being made to include federal croplands in future C inventories.

The area of *Cropland Remaining Cropland* changes through time as land is converted to or from cropland management. CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and removals<sup>213</sup> due to changes in mineral soil C stocks are estimated using a Tier 3 approach for the majority of annual crops. A Tier 2 IPCC method is used for the remaining crops (vegetables, tobacco, perennial/horticultural crops, and rice) not included in the Tier 3 method. In addition, a Tier 2 method is used for very gravelly, cobbly, or shaley soils (i.e., classified as soils that have greater than 35 percent of soil volume comprised of gravel, cobbles, or shale) and for additional changes in mineral soil C stocks that were not addressed with the Tier 3 approach (i.e., change in C stocks after 2003 due to Conservation Reserve Program enrollment). Emissions from organic soils are estimated using a Tier 2 IPCC method.

Of the two sub-source categories, land-use and land management of mineral soils was the most important component of total net C stock change between 1990 and 2010 (see Table 7-17 and Table 7-18). In 2010, mineral soils were estimated to remove 43.3 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (11.8 Tg C). This rate of C storage in mineral soils represented

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<sup>211</sup> CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with liming are also estimated but are included in a separate section of the report.

<sup>212</sup> NRI points were classified according to land-use history records starting in 1982 when the NRI survey began, and consequently the classifications were based on less than 20 years from 1990 to 2001.

<sup>213</sup> Removals occur through crop and forage uptake of CO<sub>2</sub> into biomass C that is later incorporated into soil pools.

about a 24 percent decrease in the rate since the initial reporting year of 1990. Emissions from organic soils were 27.7 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (7.5 Tg C) in 2010. In total, U.S. agricultural soils in *Cropland Remaining Cropland* removed approximately 15.6 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (4.3 Tg C) in 2010.

Table 7-17: Net CO<sub>2</sub> Flux from Soil C Stock Changes in *Cropland Remaining Cropland* (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.)

Soil Type	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Mineral Soils	(56.8)	(45.9)	(46.8)	(47.3)	(45.7)	(45.1)	(43.3)
Organic Soils	27.4	27.7	27.7	27.7	27.7	27.7	27.7
<b>Total Net Flux</b>	<b>(29.4)</b>	<b>(18.3)</b>	<b>(19.1)</b>	<b>(19.7)</b>	<b>(18.1)</b>	<b>(17.4)</b>	<b>(15.6)</b>

Note: Parentheses indicate net sequestration. Shaded areas indicate values based on a combination of historical data and projections. All other values are based on historical data only. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

Table 7-18: Net CO<sub>2</sub> Flux from Soil C Stock Changes in *Cropland Remaining Cropland* (Tg C)

Soil Type	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Mineral Soils	(15.5)	(12.5)	(12.8)	(12.9)	(12.5)	(12.3)	(11.8)
Organic Soils	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5
<b>Total Net Flux</b>	<b>(8.0)</b>	<b>(5.0)</b>	<b>(5.2)</b>	<b>(5.4)</b>	<b>(4.9)</b>	<b>(4.7)</b>	<b>(4.3)</b>

Note: Parentheses indicate net sequestration. Shaded areas indicate values based on a combination of historical data and projections. All other values are based on historical data only. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

The net reduction in soil C accumulation over the time series (47 percent from 1990 to 2010) was largely due to the declining influence of annual cropland enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, which began in the late 1980s. However, there were still positive increases in C stocks from land enrolled in the reserve program, as well as intensification of crop production by limiting the use of bare-summer fallow in semi-arid regions, increased hay production, and adoption of conservation tillage (i.e., reduced- and no-till practices).

The spatial variability in annual CO<sub>2</sub> flux associated with C stock changes in mineral and organic soils is displayed in Figure 7-5 and Figure 7-6. The highest rates of net C accumulation in mineral soils occurred in the Midwest, which is the area with the largest amounts of cropland managed with conservation tillage. Rates were also high in the Great Plains due to enrollment in the Conservation Reserve Program. Emission rates from drained organic soils were highest along the southeastern coastal region, in the northeast central United States surrounding the Great Lakes, and along the central and northern portions of the West Coast.

Figure 7-5: Total Net Annual CO<sub>2</sub> Flux for Mineral Soils under Agricultural Management within States, 2010, *Cropland Remaining Cropland*

Figure 7-6: Total Net Annual CO<sub>2</sub> Flux for Organic Soils under Agricultural Management within States, 2010, *Cropland Remaining Cropland*

## Methodology

The following section includes a description of the methodology used to estimate changes in soil C stocks due to: (1) agricultural land-use and management activities on mineral soils; and (2) agricultural land-use and management activities on organic soils for *Cropland Remaining Cropland*.

Soil C stock changes were estimated for *Cropland Remaining Cropland* (as well as agricultural land falling into the IPCC categories *Land Converted to Cropland*, *Grassland Remaining Grassland*, and *Land Converted to Grassland*) according to land-use histories recorded in the USDA National Resources Inventory (NRI) survey (USDA-NRCS 2000). The NRI is a statistically-based sample of all non-federal land, and includes approximately 260,000 points in

agricultural land for the conterminous United States and Hawaii.<sup>214</sup> Each point is associated with an “expansion factor” that allows scaling of C stock changes from NRI points to the entire country (i.e., each expansion factor represents the amount of area with the same land-use/management history as the sample point). Land-use and some management information (e.g., crop type, soil attributes, and irrigation) were originally collected for each NRI point on a 5-year cycle beginning in 1982. For cropland, data were collected for 4 out of 5 years in the cycle (i.e., 1979-1982, 1984-1987, 1989-1992, and 1994-1997). However, the NRI program began collecting annual data in 1998, this inventory is based on annual data through 2003. A new NRI dataset is available with land use and management information through 2007, and the inventory will be updated with this additional activity data by the next NIR. NRI points were classified as *Cropland Remaining Cropland* in a given year between 1990 and 2010 if the land use had been cropland for 20 years.<sup>215</sup> Cropland includes all land used to produce food and fiber, or forage that is harvested and used as feed (e.g., hay and silage).

### *Mineral Soil Carbon Stock Changes*

An IPCC Tier 3 model-based approach was applied to estimate C stock changes for mineral soils used to produce a majority of annual crops in the United States (Ogle et al. 2010). The remaining crops on mineral soils were estimated using an IPCC Tier 2 method (Ogle et al. 2003), including vegetables, tobacco, perennial/horticultural crops, rice, and crops rotated with these crops. The Tier 2 method was also used for very gravelly, cobbly, or shaley soils (greater than 35 percent by volume). Mineral SOC stocks were estimated using a Tier 2 method for these areas because the Century model, which is used for the Tier 3 method, has not been fully tested to address its adequacy for estimating C stock changes associated with certain crops and rotations, as well as cobbly, gravelly, or shaley soils. An additional stock change calculation was made for mineral soils using Tier 2 emission factors, accounting for enrollment patterns in the Conservation Reserve Program after 2003, which was not addressed by the Tier 3 methods.

Further elaboration on the methodology and data used to estimate stock changes from mineral soils are described below and in Annex 3.13.

### *Tier 3 Approach*

Mineral SOC stocks and stock changes were estimated using the Century biogeochemical model (Parton et al. 1987, 1988, 1994; Metherell et al. 1993), which simulates the dynamics of C and other elements in cropland, grassland, forest, and savanna ecosystems. It uses monthly weather data as an input, along with information about soil physical properties. Input data on land use and management are specified at monthly resolution and include land-use type, crop/forage type, and management activities (e.g., planting, harvesting, fertilization, manure amendments, tillage, irrigation, residue removal, grazing, and fire). The model computes net primary productivity and C additions to soil, soil temperature, and water dynamics, in addition to turnover, stabilization, and mineralization of soil organic matter C and nutrient (N, K, S) elements. This method is more accurate than the Tier 1 and 2 approaches provided by the IPCC, because the simulation model treats changes as continuous over time rather than the simplified discrete changes represented in the default method (see Box 7-3 for additional information). National estimates were obtained by simulating historical land-use and management patterns as recorded in the USDA National Resources Inventory (NRI) survey.

[BEGIN BOX]

### Box 7-3: Tier 3 Approach for Soil C Stocks Compared to Tier 1 or 2 Approaches

A Tier 3 model-based approach is used to inventory soil C stock changes on the majority of agricultural land with mineral soils. This approach entails several fundamental differences compared to the IPCC Tier 1 or 2 methods,

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<sup>214</sup> NRI points were classified as agricultural if under grassland or cropland management between 1990 and 2003.

<sup>215</sup> NRI points were classified according to land-use history records starting in 1982 when the NRI survey began. Therefore, the classification prior to 2002 was based on less than 20 years of recorded land-use history for the time series.

which are based on a classification of land areas into a number of discrete classes based on a highly aggregated classification of climate, soil, and management (i.e., only six climate regions, seven soil types and eleven management systems occur in U.S. agricultural land under the IPCC classification). Input variables to the Tier 3 model, including climate, soils, and management activities (e.g., fertilization, crop species, tillage, etc.), are represented in considerably more detail both temporally and spatially, and exhibit multi-dimensional interactions through the more complex model structure compared with the IPCC Tier 1 or 2 approach. The spatial resolution of the analysis is also finer in the Tier 3 method compared to the lower tier methods as implemented in the United States for previous Inventories (e.g., 3,037 counties versus 181 Major Land Resource Areas [MLRAs], respectively).

In the Century model, soil C dynamics (and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and uptake) are treated as continuous variables, which change on a monthly time step. Carbon emissions and removals are an outcome of plant production and decomposition processes, which are simulated in the model structure. Thus, changes in soil C stocks are influenced by not only changes in land use and management but also inter-annual climate variability and secondary feedbacks between management activities, climate, and soils as they affect primary production and decomposition. This latter characteristic constitutes one of the greatest differences between the methods, and forms the basis for a more complete accounting of soil C stock changes in the Tier 3 approach compared with Tier 2 methodology.

Because the Tier 3 model simulates a continuous time period rather than the equilibrium step change used in the IPCC methodology (Tier 1 and 2), the Tier 3 model addresses the delayed response of soils to management and land-use changes. Delayed responses can occur due to variable weather patterns and other environmental constraints that interact with land use and management and affect the time frame over which stock changes occur. Moreover, the Tier 3 method also accounts for the overall effect of increasing yields and, hence, C input to soils that have taken place across management systems and crop types within the United States. Productivity has increased by 1 to 2 percent annually over the past 4 to 5 decades for most major crops in the United States (Reilly and Fuglie 1998), which is believed to have led to increases in cropland soil C stocks (e.g., Allmaras et al. 2000). This is a major difference from the IPCC-based Tier 1 and 2 approaches, in which trends in soil C stocks only capture discrete changes in management and/or land use, rather than a longer term trend such as gradual increases in crop productivity.

[END BOX]

Additional sources of activity data were used to supplement the land-use information from NRI. The Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC 1998) provided annual data on tillage activity at the county level since 1989, with adjustments for long-term adoption of no-till agriculture (Towery 2001). Information on fertilizer use and rates by crop type for different regions of the United States were obtained primarily from the USDA Economic Research Service Cropping Practices Survey (ERS 1997) with additional data from other sources, including the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS 1992, 1999, 2004). Frequency and rates of manure application to cropland during 1997 were estimated from data compiled by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (Edmonds et al. 2003), and then adjusted using county-level estimates of manure available for application in other years. Specifically, county-scale ratios of manure available for application to soils in other years relative to 1997 were used to adjust the area amended with manure (see Annex 3.13 for further details). Greater availability of managed manure N relative to 1997 was, thus, assumed to increase the area amended with manure, while reduced availability of manure N relative to 1997 was assumed to reduce the amended area. The amount of manure produced by each livestock type was calculated for managed and unmanaged waste management systems based on methods described in the Manure Management section (Section 6.2) and annex (Annex 3.10).

Manure amendments were an input to the Century Model based on manure N available for application from all managed or unmanaged systems except Pasture/Range/Paddock.<sup>216</sup> Data on the county-level N available for application were estimated for managed systems based on the total amount of N excreted in manure minus N losses during storage and transport, and including the addition of N from bedding materials. Nitrogen losses include direct

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<sup>216</sup> Pasture/Range/Paddock manure additions to soils are addressed in the *Grassland Remaining Grassland and Land Converted to Grassland* categories.

nitrous oxide emissions, volatilization of ammonia and NO<sub>x</sub>, runoff and leaching, and poultry manure used as a feed supplement. More information on these losses is available in the description of the Manure Management source category. For unmanaged systems, it is assumed that no N losses or additions occur prior to the application of manure to the soil.

Monthly weather data were used as an input in the model simulations, based on an aggregation of gridded weather data to the county scale from the Parameter-elevation Regressions on Independent Slopes Model (PRISM) database (Daly et al. 1994). Soil attributes, which were obtained from an NRI database, were assigned based on field visits and soil series descriptions. Each NRI point was run 100 times as part of the uncertainty assessment, yielding a total of over 18 million simulation runs for the analysis. Carbon stock estimates from Century were adjusted using a structural uncertainty estimator accounting for uncertainty in model algorithms and parameter values (Ogle et al. 2007, 2010). C stocks and 95 percent confidence intervals were estimated for each year between 1990 and 2003, but C stock changes from 2004 to 2010 were assumed to be similar to 2003, but these data will be updated by the next NIR.

### *Tier 2 Approach*

In the IPCC Tier 2 method, data on climate, soil types, land-use, and land management activity were used to classify land area to apply appropriate stock change factors. MLRAs formed the base spatial unit for mapping climate regions in the United States; each MLRA represents a geographic unit with relatively similar soils, climate, water resources, and land uses (NRCS 1981). MLRAs were classified into climate regions according to the IPCC categories using the PRISM climate database of Daly et al. (1994).

Reference C stocks were estimated using the National Soil Survey Characterization Database (NRCS 1997) with cultivated cropland as the reference condition, rather than native vegetation as used in IPCC (2003, 2006). Changing the reference condition was necessary because soil measurements under agricultural management are much more common and easily identified in the National Soil Survey Characterization Database (NRCS 1997) than those that are not considered cultivated cropland.

U.S.-specific stock change factors were derived from published literature to determine the impact of management practices on SOC storage, including changes in tillage, cropping rotations and intensification, and land-use change between cultivated and uncultivated conditions (Ogle et al. 2003, Ogle et al. 2006). U.S. factors associated with organic matter amendments were not estimated because there were an insufficient number of studies to analyze those impacts. Instead, factors from IPCC (2003) were used to estimate the effect of those activities. Euliss and Gleason (2002) provided the data for computing the change in SOC storage resulting from restoration of wetland enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program.

Activity data were primarily based on the historical land-use/management patterns recorded in the NRI. Each NRI point was classified by land use, soil type, climate region (using PRISM data, Daly et al. 1994) and management condition. Classification of cropland area by tillage practice was based on data from the Conservation Tillage Information Center (CTIC 1998, Towery 2001) as described above. Activity data on wetland restoration of Conservation Reserve Program land were obtained from Euliss and Gleason (2002). Manure N amendments over the inventory time period were based on application rates and areas amended with manure N from Edmonds et al. (2003), in addition to the managed manure production data discussed in the previous methodology subsection on the Tier 3 analysis for mineral soils.

Combining information from these data sources, SOC stocks for mineral soils were estimated 50,000 times for 1982, 1992, and 1997, using a Monte Carlo Stochastic Simulation approach and the probability distribution functions for U.S.-specific stock change factors, reference C stocks, and land-use activity data (Ogle et al. 2002, Ogle et al. 2003). The annual C flux for 1990 through 1992 was determined by calculating the average annual change in stocks between 1982 and 1992; annual C flux for 1993 through 2010 was determined by calculating the average annual change in stocks between 1992 and 1997.

### *Additional Mineral C Stock Change*

Annual C flux estimates for mineral soils between 1990 and 2010 were adjusted to account for additional C stock changes associated with gains or losses in soil C after 2003 due to changes in Conservation Reserve Program enrollment. The change in enrollment acreage relative to 2003 was based on data from USDA-FSA (2010) for 2004 through 2010, and the differences in mineral soil areas were multiplied by 0.5 metric tons C per hectare per year to

estimate the net effect on soil C stocks. The stock change rate is based on estimations using the IPCC method (see Annex 3.13 for further discussion).

### *Organic Soil Carbon Stock Changes*

Annual C emissions from drained organic soils in *Cropland Remaining Cropland* were estimated using the Tier 2 method provided in IPCC (2003, 2006), with U.S.-specific C loss rates (Ogle et al. 2003) rather than default IPCC rates. The final estimates included a measure of uncertainty as determined from the Monte Carlo Stochastic Simulation with 50,000 iterations. Emissions were based on the 1992 and 1997 *Cropland Remaining Cropland* areas from the 1997 *National Resources Inventory* (USDA-NRCS 2000). The annual flux estimated for 1992 was applied to 1990 through 1992, and the annual flux estimated for 1997 was applied to 1993 through 2010.

### Uncertainty and Time-Series Consistency

Uncertainty associated with the *Cropland Remaining Cropland* land-use category was addressed for changes in agricultural soil C stocks (including both mineral and organic soils). Uncertainty estimates are presented in Table 7-19 for mineral soil C stocks and organic soil C stocks disaggregated to the level of the inventory methodology employed (i.e., Tier 2 and Tier 3). Uncertainty for the portions of the Inventory estimated with Tier 2 and 3 approaches was derived using a Monte Carlo approach (see Annex 3.13 for further discussion). A combined uncertainty estimate for changes in soil C stocks is also included. Uncertainty estimates from each component were combined using the error propagation equation in accordance with IPCC (2006). The combined uncertainty was calculated by taking the square root of the sum of the squares of the standard deviations of the uncertain quantities. More details on how the individual uncertainties were developed are in Annex 3.13. The combined uncertainty for soil C stocks in *Cropland Remaining Cropland* ranged from 192 percent below to 186 percent above the 2010 stock change estimate of -15.6 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.

Table 7-19: Tier 2 Quantitative Uncertainty Estimates for Soil C Stock Changes occurring within *Cropland Remaining Cropland* (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. and Percent)

Source	2010 Flux Estimate (Tg CO <sub>2</sub> Eq.)	Uncertainty Range Relative to Flux Estimate			
		(Tg CO <sub>2</sub> Eq.)		(%)	
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Mineral Soil C Stocks: Cropland Remaining Cropland, Tier 3 Inventory Methodology	(42.3)	(69.6)	(15.1)	-64%	+64%
Mineral Soil C Stocks: Cropland Remaining Cropland, Tier 2 Inventory Methodology	(3.0)	(6.9)	0.8	-127%	+128%
Mineral Soil C Stocks: Cropland Remaining Cropland (Change in CRP enrollment relative to 2003)	(2.1)	(1.0)	(3.1)	-50%	+50%
Organic Soil C Stocks: Cropland Remaining Cropland, Tier 2 Inventory Methodology	27.7	15.8	36.9	-43%	+33%
<b>Combined Uncertainty for Flux associated with Agricultural Soil Carbon Stock Change in Cropland Remaining Cropland</b>	<b>(15.6)</b>	<b>(45.6)</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>-192%</b>	<b>+186%</b>

Note: Parentheses indicate net sequestration. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

Methodological recalculations were applied to the entire time-series to ensure time-series consistency from 1990 through 2010. Details on the emission trends through time are described in more detail in the Methodology section, above.

### QA/QC and Verification

Quality control measures included checking input data, model scripts, and results to ensure data were properly handled throughout the inventory process. As discussed in the uncertainty section, results were compared to field measurements, and a statistical relationship was developed to assess uncertainties in the model's predictive

capability. The comparisons included over 40 long-term experiments, representing about 800 combinations of management treatments across all of the sites (Ogle et al. 2007). Inventory reporting forms and text were reviewed and revised as needed to correct transcription errors.

### Planned Improvements

The first improvement is to update the Tier 2 and 3 inventory analysis with the latest annual National Resources Inventory (NRI) data. This improvement will extend the time series of the land use data from 2003 through 2007.

The second improvement is to incorporate remote sensing in the analysis for estimation of crop and forage production, and conduct the Tier 3 assessment of soil C stock changes and soil nitrous oxide emissions in a single analysis. Specifically, the Enhanced Vegetation Index (EVI) product that is derived from MODIS satellite imagery is being used to refine the production estimation for the Tier 3 assessment framework based on the DAYCENT simulation model. EVI reflects changes in plant “greenness” over the growing season and can be used to compute production based on the light use efficiency of the crop or forage (Potter et al. 1993). In the current framework, production is simulated based on the weather data, soil characteristics, and the genetic potential of the crop. While this method produces reasonable results, remote sensing can be used to refine the productivity estimates and reduce biases in crop production and subsequent C input to soil systems. It is anticipated that precision in the Tier 3 assessment framework will be increased by 25 percent or more with the new method. In addition, DAYCENT is currently used for estimating soil nitrous oxide emissions in the Inventory, and can also be used to estimate soil organic C stock changes using the same algorithms in the CENTURY model. Simulating both soil C stock changes and nitrous oxide emissions in a single analysis will ensure consistency in the treatment of these sources, which are coupled through the N and C cycles in agricultural systems. These improvements are anticipated for the next inventory analysis.

### CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Agricultural Liming

IPCC (2006) recommends reporting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from lime additions (in the form of crushed limestone (CaCO<sub>3</sub>) and dolomite (CaMg(CO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>) to agricultural soils. Limestone and dolomite are added by land managers to ameliorate acidification. When these compounds come in contact with acid soils, they degrade, thereby generating CO<sub>2</sub>. The rate and ultimate magnitude of degradation of applied limestone and dolomite depends on the soil conditions, climate regime, and the type of mineral applied. Emissions from liming have fluctuated over the past nineteen years, ranging from 3.8 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. to 5.0 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. In 2010, liming of agricultural soils in the United States resulted in emissions of 3.9 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (1.1 Tg C), representing about a 16 percent decrease in emissions since 1990 (see Table 7-20 and Table 7-21). The trend is driven entirely by the amount of lime and dolomite estimated to have been applied to soils over the time period.

Table 7-20: Emissions from Liming of Agricultural Soils (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.)

Source	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Liming of Soils <sup>1</sup>	4.7	4.3	4.2	4.5	5.0	3.7	3.9

Note: Shaded areas indicate values based on a combination of data and projections. All other values are based on data only.

<sup>1</sup> Also includes emissions from liming on *Land Converted to Cropland, Grassland Remaining Grassland, Land Converted to Grassland, and Settlements Remaining Settlements*.

Table 7-21: Emissions from Liming of Agricultural Soils (Tg C)

Source	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Liming of Soils <sup>1</sup>	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.0	1.1

Note: Shaded areas indicate values based on a combination of data and projections. All other values are based on data only.

<sup>1</sup> Also includes emissions from liming on *Land Converted to Cropland, Grassland Remaining Grassland, Land Converted to Grassland, and Settlements Remaining Settlements*.

### Methodology

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from degradation of limestone and dolomite applied to agricultural soils were estimated using a Tier

2 methodology consistent with IPCC (2006). The annual amounts of limestone and dolomite applied (see Table 7-22) were multiplied by CO<sub>2</sub> emission factors from West and McBride (2005). These emission factors (0.059 metric ton C/metric ton limestone, 0.064 metric ton C/metric ton dolomite) are lower than the IPCC default emission factors because they account for the portion of agricultural lime that may leach through the soil and travel by rivers to the ocean (West and McBride 2005). This analysis of lime dissolution is based on liming occurring in the Mississippi River basin, where the vast majority of all U.S. liming takes place (West 2008). U.S. liming that does not occur in the Mississippi River basin tends to occur under similar soil and rainfall regimes, and, thus, the emission factor is appropriate for use across the United States (West 2008). The annual application rates of limestone and dolomite were derived from estimates and industry statistics provided in the *Minerals Yearbook* and *Mineral Industry Surveys* (Tepordei 1993 through 2006; Willett 2007a, b, 2009 through 2011; USGS 2008 through 2011). To develop these data, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS; U.S. Bureau of Mines prior to 1997) obtained production and use information by surveying crushed stone manufacturers. Because some manufacturers were reluctant to provide information, the estimates of total crushed limestone and dolomite production and use were divided into three components: (1) production by end-use, as reported by manufacturers (i.e., “specified” production); (2) production reported by manufacturers without end-uses specified (i.e., “unspecified” production); and (3) estimated additional production by manufacturers who did not respond to the survey (i.e., “estimated” production).

The “unspecified” and “estimated” amounts of crushed limestone and dolomite applied to agricultural soils were calculated by multiplying the percentage of total “specified” limestone and dolomite production applied to agricultural soils by the total amounts of “unspecified” and “estimated” limestone and dolomite production. In other words, the proportion of total “unspecified” and “estimated” crushed limestone and dolomite that was applied to agricultural soils (as opposed to other uses of the stone) was assumed to be proportionate to the amount of “specified” crushed limestone and dolomite that was applied to agricultural soils. In addition, data were not available for 1990, 1992, and 2010 on the fractions of total crushed stone production that were limestone and dolomite, and on the fractions of limestone and dolomite production that were applied to soils. To estimate the 1990 and 1992 data, a set of average fractions were calculated using the 1991 and 1993 data. These average fractions were applied to the quantity of “total crushed stone produced or used” reported for 1990 and 1992 in the 1994 *Minerals Yearbook* (Tepordei 1996). To estimate 2010 data, the previous year’s fractions were applied to a 2009 estimate of total crushed stone presented in the USGS *Mineral Industry Surveys: Crushed Stone and Sand and Gravel in the First Quarter of 2011* (USGS 2011); thus, the 2010 data in Table 7-20 through Table 7-22 are shaded to indicate that they are based on a combination of data and projections.

The primary source for limestone and dolomite activity data is the *Minerals Yearbook*, published by the Bureau of Mines through 1994 and by the USGS from 1995 to the present. In 1994, the “Crushed Stone” chapter in the *Minerals Yearbook* began rounding (to the nearest thousand metric tons) quantities for total crushed stone produced or used. It then reported revised (rounded) quantities for each of the years from 1990 to 1993. In order to minimize the inconsistencies in the activity data, these revised production numbers have been used in all of the subsequent calculations. Since limestone and dolomite activity data are also available at the state level, the national-level estimates reported here were broken out by state, although state-level estimates are not reported here.

Table 7-22: Applied Minerals (Million Metric Tons)

Mineral	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Limestone	19.01	18.09	16.54	17.46	20.46	15.58	16.55
Dolomite	2.36	1.85	2.73	2.92	2.55	1.31	1.39

Note: Data represent amounts applied to *Cropland Remaining Cropland, Land Converted to Cropland, Grassland Remaining Grassland, Land Converted to Grassland, and Settlements Remaining Settlements*. Shaded areas indicate values based on a combination of data and projections. All other values are based on data only.

### Uncertainty and Time-Series Consistency

Uncertainty regarding limestone and dolomite activity data inputs was estimated at ±15 percent and assumed to be uniformly distributed around the inventory estimate (Tepordei 2003b). Analysis of the uncertainty associated with the emission factors included the following: the fraction of agricultural lime dissolved by nitric acid versus the fraction that reacts with carbonic acid, and the portion of bicarbonate that leaches through the soil and is transported

to the ocean. Uncertainty regarding the time associated with leaching and transport was not accounted for, but should not change the uncertainty associated with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (West 2005). The uncertainties associated with the fraction of agricultural lime dissolved by nitric acid and the portion of bicarbonate that leaches through the soil were each modeled as a smoothed triangular distribution between ranges of zero percent to 100 percent. The uncertainty surrounding these two components largely drives the overall uncertainty estimates reported below. More information on the uncertainty estimates for Liming of Agricultural Soils is contained within the Uncertainty Annex.

A Monte Carlo (Tier 2) uncertainty analysis was applied to estimate the uncertainty of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from liming. The results of the Tier 2 quantitative uncertainty analysis are summarized in Table 7-23. Carbon dioxide emissions from Liming of Agricultural Soils in 2010 were estimated to be between 0.11 and 8.27 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. at the 95 percent confidence level. This indicates a range of 97 percent below to 112 percent above the 2010 emission estimate of 3.91 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.

Table 7-23: Tier 2 Quantitative Uncertainty Estimates for CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Liming of Agricultural Soils (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. and Percent)

Source	Gas	2010 Emission Estimate (Tg CO <sub>2</sub> Eq.)	Uncertainty Range Relative to Emissions Estimate <sup>a</sup>			
			Uncertainty Range Relative to Emissions Estimate <sup>a</sup> (Tg CO <sub>2</sub> Eq.)		Uncertainty Range Relative to Emissions Estimate <sup>a</sup> (%)	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Liming of Agricultural Soils <sup>1</sup>	CO <sub>2</sub>	3.9	0.11	8.27	-97%	+112%

<sup>a</sup>Range of emission estimates predicted by Monte Carlo Stochastic Simulation for a 95 percent confidence interval.

<sup>1</sup> Also includes emissions from liming on *Land Converted to Cropland, Grassland Remaining Grassland, Land Converted to Grassland, and Settlements Remaining Settlements*.

Methodological recalculations were applied to the entire time-series to ensure time-series consistency from 1990 through 2010. Details on the emission trends through time are described in more detail in the Methodology section, above.

### QA/QC and Verification

A QA/QC analysis was performed for data gathering and input, documentation, and calculation. The QA/QC analysis did not reveal any inaccuracies or incorrect input values.

### Recalculations Discussion

Several adjustments were made in the current Inventory to improve the results. The quantity of applied minerals reported in the previous inventory for 2008 has been revised; the updated activity data for 2008 for limestone are approximately 6,000 thousand metric tons greater and the 2008 data for dolomite are approximately 400 thousand metric tons less than the data used for the previous inventory, consequently, the reported emissions resulting from liming in 2008 decreased by about 0.3 percent. In the previous inventory, to estimate 2009 data, the previous year's fractions were applied to a 2009 estimate of total crushed stone presented in the USGS *Mineral Industry Surveys: Crushed Stone and Sand and Gravel in the First Quarter of 2010* (USGS 2010). Since publication of the previous inventory, the *Minerals Yearbook* has published actual quantities of crushed stone sold or used by producers in the United States in 2009. These values have replaced those used in the previous inventory to calculate the quantity of minerals applied to soil and the emissions from liming. The updated activity data for 2009 are approximately 40,496 thousand metric tons less than the data used in the previous Inventory. As a result, the reported emissions from liming in 2009 decreased by about 13 percent.

### CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Urea Fertilization

The use of urea (CO(NH<sub>2</sub>)<sub>2</sub>) as fertilizer leads to emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> that was fixed during the industrial production process. Urea in the presence of water and urease enzymes is converted into ammonium (NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>), hydroxyl ion (OH<sup>-</sup>), and bicarbonate (HCO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>). The bicarbonate then evolves into CO<sub>2</sub> and water. Emissions from urea fertilization in the United States totaled 4.1 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (1.1 Tg C) in 2010 (Table 7-24 and Table 7-25). Emissions from urea fertilization have grown 71 percent between 1990 and 2010, due to an increase in the use of urea as fertilizer.

Table 7-24: CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Urea Fertilization in *Cropland Remaining Cropland* (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.)

Source	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Urea Fertilization <sup>1</sup>	2.4	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.6	4.1

Note: Shaded areas indicate values based on a combination of data and projections. All other values are based on data only.

<sup>1</sup> Also includes emissions from urea fertilization on *Land Converted to Cropland, Grassland Remaining Grassland, Land Converted to Grassland, Settlements Remaining Settlements, and Forest Land Remaining Forest Land*.

Table 7-25: CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Urea Fertilization in *Cropland Remaining Cropland* (Tg C)

Source	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Urea Fertilization <sup>1</sup>	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1

Note: Shaded areas indicate values based on a combination of data and projections. All other values are based on data only.

<sup>1</sup> Also includes emissions from urea fertilization on *Land Converted to Cropland, Grassland Remaining Grassland, Land Converted to Grassland, Settlements Remaining Settlements, and Forest Land Remaining Forest Land*.

## Methodology

Carbon dioxide emissions from the application of urea to agricultural soils were estimated using the IPCC (2006) Tier 1 methodology. The annual amounts of urea fertilizer applied (see Table 7-26) were derived from state-level fertilizer sales data provided in *Commercial Fertilizers* (TVA 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994; AAPFCO 1995 through 2011b) and were multiplied by the default IPCC (2006) emission factor of 0.20, which is equal to the C content of urea on an atomic weight basis. Because fertilizer sales data are reported in fertilizer years (July through June), a calculation was performed to convert the data to calendar years (January through December). According to historic monthly fertilizer use data (TVA 1992b), 65 percent of total fertilizer used in any fertilizer year is applied between January and June of that calendar year, and 35 percent of total fertilizer used in any fertilizer year is applied between July and December of the previous calendar year. Since 2011 fertilizer year data were not available, July through December 2010 fertilizer consumption was estimated by calculating the percent change in urea use from January through June 2009 to January through June 2010. This percent change was then multiplied by the July through December 2009 data to estimate July through December 2010 fertilizer use; thus, the 2010 data in Table 7-24 through Table 7-26 are shaded to indicate that they are based on a combination of data and projections. State-level estimates of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the application of urea to agricultural soils were summed to estimate total emissions for the entire United States.

Table 7-26: Applied Urea (Million Metric Tons)

	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Urea Fertilizer <sup>1</sup>	3.30	4.78	4.98	5.12	4.93	4.86	5.65

Note: Shaded areas indicate values based on a combination of data and projections. All other values are based on data only.

<sup>1</sup>These numbers represent amounts applied to all agricultural land, including *Land Converted to Cropland, Grassland Remaining Grassland, Land Converted to Grassland, Settlements Remaining Settlements, and Forest Land Remaining Forest Land*.

## Uncertainty and Time-Series Consistency

Uncertainty estimates are presented in Table 7-27 for Urea Fertilization. A Tier 2 Monte Carlo analysis was completed. The largest source of uncertainty was the default emission factor, which assumes that 100 percent of the C applied to soils is ultimately emitted into the environment as CO<sub>2</sub>. This factor does not incorporate the possibility that some of the C may be retained in the soil. The emission estimate is, therefore, likely to be high. In addition, each urea consumption data point has an associated uncertainty. Urea for non-fertilizer use, such as aircraft deicing, may be included in consumption totals; it was determined through personal communication with Fertilizer Regulatory Program Coordinator David L. Terry (2007), however, that this amount is most likely very small.

Research into aircraft deicing practices also confirmed that urea is used minimally in the industry; a 1992 survey found a known annual usage of approximately 2,000 tons of urea for deicing; this would constitute 0.06 percent of the 1992 consumption of urea (EPA 2000). Similarly, surveys conducted from 2002 to 2005 indicate that total urea use for deicing at U.S. airports is estimated to be 3,740 MT per year, or less than 0.07 percent of the fertilizer total for 2007 (Itle 2009). Lastly, there is uncertainty surrounding the assumptions behind the calculation that converts fertilizer years to calendar years. Carbon dioxide emissions from urea fertilization of agricultural soils in 2010 were estimated to be between 2.36 and 4.30 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. at the 95 percent confidence level. This indicates a range of 43 percent below to 4 percent above the 2010 emission estimate of 4.14 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.

Table 7-27: Quantitative Uncertainty Estimates for CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions from Urea Fertilization (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. and Percent)

Source	Gas	2010 Emission Estimate (Tg CO <sub>2</sub> Eq.)	Uncertainty Range Relative to Emissions Estimate <sup>a</sup>			
			(Tg CO <sub>2</sub> Eq.)		(%)	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Urea Fertilization	CO <sub>2</sub>	4.14	2.36	4.29	-43%	+4%

<sup>a</sup>Range of emission estimates predicted by Monte Carlo Stochastic Simulation for a 95 percent confidence interval.

Note: These numbers represent amounts applied to all agricultural land, including *Land Converted to Cropland, Grassland Remaining Grassland, Land Converted to Grassland, Settlements Remaining Settlements, and Forest Land Remaining Forest Land.*

Methodological recalculations were applied to the entire time-series to ensure time-series consistency from 1990 through 2010. Details on the emission trends through time are described in more detail in the Methodology section, above.

### QA/QC and Verification

A QA/QC analysis was performed for data gathering and input, documentation, and calculation. Inventory reporting forms and text were reviewed. No errors were found.

### Recalculations Discussion

In the current Inventory, July to December 2008 urea application data were updated with assumptions for fertilizer year 2009, and the 2008 emission estimate was revised accordingly. The activity data increased about 1,620 metric tons for 2008 and this change resulted in an approximately 0.03 percent increase in emissions in 2008 relative to the previous Inventory. In the previous Inventory, the application for this period was calculated based on application during July to December 2007. January to June 2009 and July to December 2009 data were also used to update 2009 emission estimates. The activity data decreased about 60,880 metric tons for 2009, resulting in an approximately 1.2 percent decrease in emissions in 2009 relative to the previous Inventory.

### Planned Improvements

The primary planned improvement is to investigate using a Tier 2 or Tier 3 approach, which would utilize country-specific information to estimate a more precise emission factor.

## 7.5. Land Converted to Cropland (IPCC Source Category 5B2)

*Land Converted to Cropland* includes all cropland in an inventory year that had been another land use at any point during the previous 20 years<sup>217</sup> according to the USDA NRI land-use survey (USDA-NRCS 2000). Consequently, lands are retained in this category for 20 years as recommended by the IPCC guidelines (IPCC 2006) unless there is another land-use change. The Inventory includes all privately-owned croplands in the conterminous United States and Hawaii, but there is a minor amount of cropland on federal lands that is not currently included in the estimation of C stock changes, leading to a discrepancy between the total amount of managed area in *Land Converted to*

<sup>217</sup> NRI points were classified according to land-use history records starting in 1982 when the NRI survey began, and consequently the classifications were based on less than 20 years from 1990 to 2001.

*Cropland* (see Section 7.1) and the cropland area included in the Inventory. Plans are being made to include these areas in future C inventories.

Background on agricultural C stock changes is provided in *Cropland Remaining Cropland* and will only be summarized here for *Land Converted to Cropland*. Soils are the largest pool of C in agricultural land, and also have the greatest potential for storage or release of C, because biomass and dead organic matter C pools are relatively small and ephemeral compared with soils. The IPCC (2006) recommends reporting changes in soil organic C stocks due to: (1) agricultural land-use and management activities on mineral soils, and (2) agricultural land-use and management activities on organic soils.<sup>218</sup>

Land-use and management of mineral soils in *Land Converted to Cropland* generally led to relatively small increases in soil C during the 1990s but the pattern changed to small losses of C through the latter part of the time series (Table 7-28 and Table 7-29). The total rate of change in soil C stocks was 5.9 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (1.6 Tg C) in 2010. Mineral soils were estimated to lose 3.3 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (0.9 Tg C) in 2010, while drainage and cultivation of organic soils led to annual losses of 2.6 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (0.7 Tg C) in 2010.

Table 7-28: Net CO<sub>2</sub> Flux from Soil C Stock Changes in *Land Converted to Cropland* (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.)

Soil Type	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Mineral Soils	(0.3)	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
Organic Soils	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
<b>Total Net Flux</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.9</b>

Note: Parentheses indicate net sequestration. Shaded areas indicate values based on a combination of historical data and projections. All other values are based on historical data only. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

Table 7-29: Net CO<sub>2</sub> Flux from Soil C Stock Changes in *Land Converted to Cropland* (Tg C)

Soil Type	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Mineral Soils	(0.1)	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Organic Soils	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
<b>Total Net Flux</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.6</b>

Note: Parentheses indicate net sequestration. Shaded areas indicate values based on a combination of historical data and projections. All other values are based on historical data only. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

The spatial variability in annual CO<sub>2</sub> flux associated with C stock changes in mineral and organic soils for *Land Converted to Cropland* is displayed in Figure 7-7 and Figure 7-8. While a large portion of the United States had net losses of soil C for *Land Converted to Cropland*, there were some notable areas with net C accumulation in the Great Plains, Midwest, mid-Atlantic states. These areas were gaining C following conversion, because the land had been brought into hay production, including grass and legume hay, leading to enhanced plant production relative to the previous land use, and thus higher C input to the soil. Emissions from organic soils were largest in California, Florida, and the upper Midwest, which coincided with largest concentrations of cultivated organic soils in the United States.

Figure 7-7: Total Net Annual CO<sub>2</sub> Flux for Mineral Soils under Agricultural Management within States, 2010, *Land Converted to Cropland*

Figure 7-8: Total Net Annual CO<sub>2</sub> Flux for Organic Soils under Agricultural Management within States, 2010, *Land Converted to Cropland*

<sup>218</sup> CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with liming are also estimated but included in a separate section of the report.

## Methodology

The following section includes a brief description of the methodology used to estimate changes in soil C stocks due to agricultural land-use and management activities on mineral and organic soils for *Land Converted to Cropland*. Further elaboration on the methodologies and data used to estimate stock changes for mineral and organic soils are provided in the *Cropland Remaining Cropland* section and Annex 3.13.

Soil C stock changes were estimated for *Land Converted to Cropland* according to land-use histories recorded in the USDA NRI survey (USDA-NRCS 2000). Land-use and some management information (e.g., crop type, soil attributes, and irrigation) were originally collected for each NRI point on a 5-year cycle beginning in 1982. However, the NRI program began collecting annual data in 1998, and this inventory is based on annual data through 2003. A new NRI dataset is available with land use and management information through 2007, and the inventory will be updated with this additional activity data by the next NIR. NRI points were classified as *Land Converted to Cropland* in a given year between 1990 and 2010 if the land use was cropland but had been another use during the previous 20 years. Cropland includes all land used to produce food or fiber, or forage that is harvested and used as feed (e.g., hay and silage).

### Mineral Soil Carbon Stock Changes

A Tier 3 model-based approach was applied to estimate C stock changes for soils on *Land Converted to Cropland* used to produce a majority of all crops (Ogle et al. 2010). Soil C stock changes on the remaining soils were estimated with the IPCC Tier 2 method (Ogle et al. 2003), including land used to produce vegetable, tobacco, perennial/horticultural crops, and rice; land on very gravelly, cobbly, or shaley soils (greater than 35 percent by volume); and land converted from forest or federal ownership.<sup>219</sup>

#### *Tier 3 Approach*

Mineral SOC stocks and stock changes were estimated using the Century biogeochemical model for the Tier 3 methods. National estimates were obtained by using the model to simulate historical land-use change patterns as recorded in the USDA National Resources Inventory (USDA-NRCS 2000). The methods used for *Land Converted to Cropland* are the same as those described in the Tier 3 portion of *Cropland Remaining Cropland* section for mineral soils (see *Cropland Remaining Cropland* Tier 3 methods section and Annex 3.13 for additional information).

#### *Tier 2 Approach*

For the mineral soils not included in the Tier 3 analysis, SOC stock changes were estimated using a Tier 2 Approach for *Land Converted to Cropland* as described in the Tier 2 portion of *Cropland Remaining Cropland* section for mineral soils (see *Cropland Remaining Cropland* Tier 2 methods section for additional information).

### Organic Soil Carbon Stock Changes

Annual C emissions from drained organic soils in *Land Converted to Cropland* were estimated using the Tier 2 method provided in IPCC (2003, 2006), with U.S.-specific C loss rates (Ogle et al. 2003) rather than default IPCC rates. The final estimates included a measure of uncertainty as determined from the Monte Carlo Stochastic Simulation with 50,000 iterations. Emissions were based on the 1992 and 1997 *Land Converted to Cropland* areas from the 1997 *National Resources Inventory* (USDA-NRCS 2000). The annual flux estimated for 1992 was applied to 1990 through 1992, and the annual flux estimated for 1997 was applied to 1993 through 2010.

## Uncertainty and Time-Series Consistency

Uncertainty analysis for mineral soil C stock changes using the Tier 3 and Tier 2 approaches were based on the same method described for *Cropland Remaining Cropland*, except that the uncertainty inherent in the structure of the Century model was not addressed. The uncertainty for annual C emission estimates from drained organic soils in

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<sup>219</sup> Federal land is not a land use, but rather an ownership designation that is treated as forest or nominal grassland for purposes of these calculations. The specific use for federal lands is not identified in the NRI survey (USDA-NRCS 2000).

*Land Converted to Cropland* was estimated using the Tier 2 approach, as described in the *Cropland Remaining Cropland* section.

Uncertainty estimates are presented in Table 7-30 for each subsource (i.e., mineral soil C stocks and organic soil C stocks) disaggregated to the level of the inventory methodology employed (i.e., Tier 2 and Tier 3). Uncertainty for the portions of the Inventory estimated with Tier 2 and 3 approaches was derived using a Monte Carlo approach (see Annex 3.13 for further discussion). A combined uncertainty estimate for changes in agricultural soil C stocks is also included. Uncertainty estimates from each component were combined using the error propagation equation in accordance with IPCC (2006), i.e., by taking the square root of the sum of the squares of the standard deviations of the uncertain quantities. The combined uncertainty for soil C stocks in *Land Converted to Cropland* was estimated to be 40 percent below and 36 percent above the inventory estimate of 5.9 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.

Table 7-30: Tier 2 Quantitative Uncertainty Estimates for Soil C Stock Changes occurring within *Land Converted to Cropland* (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. and Percent)

Source	2010 Flux Estimate (Tg CO <sub>2</sub> Eq.)	Uncertainty Range Relative to Flux Estimate (Tg CO <sub>2</sub> Eq.)			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound (%)	Upper Bound (%)
Mineral Soil C Stocks: Land Converted to Cropland, Tier 3 Inventory Methodology	(0.8)	(1.5)	(0.1)	-84%	+84%
Mineral Soil C Stocks: Land Converted to Cropland, Tier 2 Inventory Methodology	4.1	2.3	5.8	-44%	+41%
Organic Soil C Stocks: Land Converted to Cropland, Tier 2 Inventory Methodology	2.6	1.2	3.7	-53%	+41%
<b>Combined Uncertainty for Flux associated with Soil Carbon Stock Change in Land Converted to Cropland</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>-40%</b>	<b>+36%</b>

Note: Parentheses indicate net sequestration. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

Methodological recalculations were applied to the entire time-series to ensure time-series consistency from 1990 through 2010. Details on the emission trends through time are described in more detail in the Methodology section, above.

## QA/QC and Verification

See QA/QC and Verification section under *Cropland Remaining Cropland*.

## Planned Improvements

The main planned improvement for the next Inventory is to integrate the assessments of soil C stock changes and soil N<sub>2</sub>O emissions into a single analysis. This improvement will ensure that the N and C cycles are treated consistently in the national inventory, which is important because the cycles of these elements are linked through plant and soil processes in agricultural lands. In addition, the empirically-based uncertainty estimator described in the *Cropland Remaining Cropland* section for the Tier 3 approach has not been developed to estimate uncertainties related to the structure of the Century model for *Land Converted to Cropland*, but this is a planned improvement. This improvement will produce a more rigorous assessment of uncertainty. See Planned Improvements section under *Cropland Remaining Cropland* for additional planned improvements.

## 7.6. Grassland Remaining Grassland (IPCC Source Category 5C1)

*Grassland Remaining Grassland* includes all grassland in an inventory year that had been grassland for the previous 20 years<sup>220</sup> according to the USDA NRI land use survey (USDA-NRCS 2000). The Inventory includes all privately-owned grasslands in the conterminous United States and Hawaii, but does not address changes in C stocks

<sup>220</sup> NRI points were classified according to land-use history records starting in 1982 when the NRI survey began, and consequently the classifications were based on less than 20 years from 1990 to 2001.

for grasslands on federal lands, leading to a discrepancy between the total amount of managed area in *Grassland Remaining Grassland* (see Section 7.1) and the grassland area included in the Inventory. While federal grasslands probably have minimal changes in land management and C stocks, plans are being made to further evaluate and potentially include these areas in future C inventories.

Background on agricultural C stock changes is provided in the *Cropland Remaining Cropland* section and will only be summarized here for *Grassland Remaining Grassland*. Soils are the largest pool of C in agricultural land, and also have the greatest potential for storage or release of C, because biomass and dead organic matter C pools are relatively small and ephemeral compared to soils. IPCC (2006) recommends reporting changes in soil organic C stocks due to: (1) agricultural land-use and management activities on mineral soils, and (2) agricultural land-use and management activities on organic soils.<sup>221</sup>

Land-use and management of mineral soils in *Grassland Remaining Grassland* increased soil C, while organic soils lost relatively small amounts of C in each year 1990 through 2010. Due to the pattern for mineral soils, the overall trend was a gain in soil C over the time series although the rates varied from year to year, with a net removal of 8.3 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (2.3 Tg C) in 2010. There was considerable variation over the time series driven by variability in weather patterns and associated interaction with land management activity. The change rates on per hectare basis were small, however, even in the years with larger total changes in stocks. Overall, flux rates declined by 43.8 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. (12.0 Tg C) when comparing the net change in soil C from 1990 and 2010.

Table 7-31: Net CO<sub>2</sub> Flux from Soil C Stock Changes in *Grassland Remaining Grassland* (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.)

Soil Type	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Mineral Soils	(56.0)	(12.6)	(12.4)	(12.3)	(12.2)	(12.0)	(12.0)
Organic Soils	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7
<b>Total Net Flux</b>	<b>(52.2)</b>	<b>(8.9)</b>	<b>(8.8)</b>	<b>(8.6)</b>	<b>(8.5)</b>	<b>(8.3)</b>	<b>(8.3)</b>

Note: Parentheses indicate net sequestration. Shaded areas indicate values based on a combination of historical data and projections. All other values are based on historical data only. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

Table 7-32: Net CO<sub>2</sub> Flux from Soil C Stock Changes in *Grassland Remaining Grassland* (Tg C)

Soil Type	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Mineral Soils	(15.3)	(3.4)	(3.4)	(3.4)	(3.3)	(3.3)	(3.3)
Organic Soils	1.1	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
<b>Total Net Flux</b>	<b>(14.2)</b>	<b>(2.4)</b>	<b>(2.4)</b>	<b>(2.3)</b>	<b>(2.3)</b>	<b>(2.3)</b>	<b>(2.3)</b>

Note: Parentheses indicate net sequestration. Shaded areas indicate values based on a combination of historical data and projections. All other values are based on historical data only. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

The spatial variability in annual CO<sub>2</sub> flux associated with C stock changes in mineral and organic soils is displayed in Figure 7-9 and Figure 7-10. Grassland gained soil organic C in several regions during 2010, including the Northeast, Midwest, Southwest and far western states; although these were relatively small increases in C on a per-hectare basis. Emission rates from drained organic soils were highest along the southeastern coastal region, in the northeast central United States surrounding the Great Lakes, and along the central and northern portions of the West Coast.

Figure 7-9: Total Net Annual CO<sub>2</sub> Flux for Mineral Soils under Agricultural Management within States, 2010, *Grassland Remaining Grassland*

Figure 7-10: Total Net Annual CO<sub>2</sub> Flux for Organic Soils under Agricultural Management within States, 2010, *Grassland Remaining Grassland*

<sup>221</sup> CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with liming are also estimated but included in a separate section of the report.

## Methodology

The following section includes a brief description of the methodology used to estimate changes in soil C stocks due to agricultural land-use and management activities on mineral and organic soils for *Grassland Remaining Grassland*. Further elaboration on the methodologies and data used to estimate stock changes from mineral and organic soils are provided in the *Cropland Remaining Cropland* section and Annex 3.13.

Soil C stock changes were estimated for *Grassland Remaining Grassland* according to land-use histories recorded in the USDA NRI survey (USDA-NRCS 2000). Land-use and some management information (e.g., crop type, soil attributes, and irrigation) were originally collected for each NRI point on a 5-year cycle beginning in 1982. However, the NRI program began collecting annual data in 1998; this inventory is based on annual data through 2003. NRI points were classified as *Grassland Remaining Grassland* in a given year between 1990 and 2010 if the land use had been grassland for 20 years. Grassland includes pasture and rangeland used for grass forage production, where the primary use is livestock grazing. Rangelands are typically extensive areas of native grassland that are not intensively managed, while pastures are often seeded grassland, possibly following tree removal, that may or may not be improved with practices such as irrigation and interseeding legumes.

### Mineral Soil Carbon Stock Changes

An IPCC Tier 3 model-based approach was applied to estimate C stock changes for most mineral soils in *Grassland Remaining Grassland*. The C stock changes for the remaining soils were estimated with an IPCC Tier 2 method (Ogle et al. 2003), including gravelly, cobbly, or shaley soils (greater than 35 percent by volume) and additional stock changes associated with sewage sludge amendments.

#### *Tier 3 Approach*

Mineral soil organic C stocks and stock changes for *Grassland Remaining Grassland* were estimated using the Century biogeochemical model, as described in *Cropland Remaining Cropland*. Historical land-use and management patterns were used in the Century simulations as recorded in the USDA National Resources Inventory (NRI) survey, with supplemental information on fertilizer use and rates from the USDA Economic Research Service Cropping Practices Survey (ERS 1997) and National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS 1992, 1999, 2004). Frequency and rates of manure application to grassland during 1997 were estimated from data compiled by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (Edmonds et al. 2003), and then adjusted using county-level estimates of manure available for application in other years. Specifically, county-scale ratios of manure available for application to soils in other years relative to 1997 were used to adjust the area amended with manure (see Annex 3.13 for further details). Greater availability of managed manure N relative to 1997 was, thus, assumed to increase the area amended with manure, while reduced availability of manure N relative to 1997 was assumed to reduce the amended area.

The amount of manure produced by each livestock type was calculated for managed and unmanaged waste management systems based on methods described in the Manure Management Section (Section 6.2) and Annex (Annex 3.10). In contrast to manure amendments, Pasture/Range/Paddock (PRP) manure N deposition was estimated internally in the Century model, as part of the grassland system simulations (i.e., PRP manure deposition was not an external input into the model). See the Tier 3 methods in *Cropland Remaining Cropland* section for additional discussion on the Tier 3 methodology for mineral soils.

#### *Tier 2 Approach*

The Tier 2 approach is based on the same methods described in the Tier 2 portion of *Cropland Remaining Cropland* section for mineral soils (see *Cropland Remaining Cropland* Tier 2 methods section and Annex 3.13 for additional information).

#### *Additional Mineral C Stock Change Calculations*

Annual C flux estimates for mineral soils between 1990 and 2010 were adjusted to account for additional C stock changes associated with sewage sludge amendments using a Tier 2 method. Estimates of the amounts of sewage

sludge N applied to agricultural land were derived from national data on sewage sludge generation, disposition, and N content. Total sewage sludge generation data for 1988, 1996, and 1998, in dry mass units, were obtained from an EPA report (EPA 1999) and estimates for 2004 were obtained from an independent national biosolids survey (NEBRA 2007). These values were linearly interpolated to estimate values for the intervening years. N application rates from Kellogg et al. (2000) were used to determine the amount of area receiving sludge amendments. Although sewage sludge can be added to land managed for other land uses, it was assumed that agricultural amendments occur in grassland. Cropland is assumed to rarely be amended with sewage sludge due to the high metal content and other pollutants in human waste. The soil C storage rate was estimated at 0.38 metric tons C per hectare per year for sewage sludge amendments to grassland. The stock change rate is based on country-specific factors and the IPCC default method (see Annex 3.13 for further discussion).

### Organic Soil Carbon Stock Changes

Annual C emissions from drained organic soils in *Grassland Remaining Grassland* were estimated using the Tier 2 method provided in IPCC (2003, 2006), which utilizes U.S.-specific C loss rates (Ogle et al. 2003) rather than default IPCC rates. Emissions were based on the 1992 and 1997 *Grassland Remaining Grassland* areas from the 1997 *National Resources Inventory* (USDA-NRCS 2000). The annual flux estimated for 1992 was applied to 1990 through 1992, and the annual flux estimated for 1997 was applied to 1993 through 2010.

### Uncertainty and Time-Series Consistency

Uncertainty estimates are presented in Table 7-33 for each subsource (i.e., mineral soil C stocks and organic soil C stocks) disaggregated to the level of the inventory methodology employed (i.e., Tier 2 and Tier 3). Uncertainty for the portions of the Inventory estimated with Tier 2 and 3 approaches was derived using a Monte Carlo approach (see Annex 3.13 for further discussion). A combined uncertainty estimate for changes in agricultural soil C stocks is also included. Uncertainty estimates from each component were combined using the error propagation equation in accordance with IPCC (2006), i.e., by taking the square root of the sum of the squares of the standard deviations of the uncertain quantities. The combined uncertainty for soil C stocks in *Grassland Remaining Grassland* was estimated to be 32 percent below and 25 percent above the inventory estimate of -8.3 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.

Table 7-33: Tier 2 Quantitative Uncertainty Estimates for C Stock Changes occurring within *Grassland Remaining Grassland* (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq. and Percent)

Source	2010 Flux Estimate (Tg CO <sub>2</sub> Eq.)	Uncertainty Range Relative to Flux Estimate (%)			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Mineral Soil C Stocks Grassland Remaining Grassland, Tier 3 Methodology	(10.6)	(11.4)	(9.8)	-7%	+7%
Mineral Soil C Stocks: Grassland Remaining Grassland, Tier 2 Methodology	(0.2)	(0.3)	0.0	-89%	+127%
Mineral Soil C Stocks: Grassland Remaining Grassland, Tier 2 Methodology (Change in Soil C due to Sewage Sludge Amendments)	(1.2)	(1.9)	(0.6)	-50%	+50%
Organic Soil C Stocks: Grassland Remaining Grassland, Tier 2 Methodology	3.7	1.2	5.5	-66%	+49%
<b>Combined Uncertainty for Flux Associated with Agricultural Soil Carbon Stock Change in Grassland Remaining Grassland</b>	<b>(8.3)</b>	<b>(11.0)</b>	<b>(6.3)</b>	<b>-32%</b>	<b>+25%</b>

Note: Parentheses indicate net sequestration. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

Methodological recalculations were applied to the entire time-series to ensure time-series consistency from 1990 through 2010. Details on the emission trends through time are described in more detail in the Methodology section, above.

## Uncertainties in Mineral Soil Carbon Stock Changes

The uncertainty analysis for *Grassland Remaining Grassland* using the Tier 3 approach and Tier 2 approach were based on the same method described for *Cropland Remaining Cropland*, except that the uncertainty inherent in the structure of the Century model was not addressed. See the Tier 3 approach for mineral soils under the *Cropland Remaining Cropland* section for additional discussion.

A  $\pm 50$  percent uncertainty was assumed for additional adjustments to the soil C stocks between 1990 and 2010 to account for additional C stock changes associated with amending grassland soils with sewage sludge.

## Uncertainties in Soil Carbon Stock Changes for Organic Soils

Uncertainty in C emissions from organic soils was estimated using country-specific factors and a Monte Carlo analysis. Probability distribution functions for emission factors were derived from a synthesis of 10 studies, and combined with uncertainties in the NRI land use and management data for organic soils in the Monte Carlo analysis. See the Tier 2 section under minerals soils of *Cropland Remaining Cropland* for additional discussion.

## QA/QC and Verification

Quality control measures included checking input data, model scripts, and results to ensure data were properly handled through the inventory process. A minor error was found in the post-processing results to compute the final totals, which was corrected. No additional errors were found.

## Planned Improvements

The main planned improvement for the next Inventory is to integrate the assessments of soil C stock changes and soil N<sub>2</sub>O emissions into a single analysis. This improvement will ensure that the N and C cycles are treated consistently in the Inventory, which is important because the cycles of these elements are linked through plant and soil processes in agricultural lands. This improvement will include the development of an empirically-based uncertainty analysis, which will provide a more rigorous assessment of uncertainty. See Planned Improvements section under *Cropland Remaining Cropland* for additional planned improvements. Also, a new NRI dataset is available with land use and management information through 2007, and the inventory will be updated with this additional activity data.

### 7.7. Land Converted to Grassland (IPCC Source Category 5C2)

*Land Converted to Grassland* includes all grassland in an inventory year that had been in another land use at any point during the previous 20 years<sup>222</sup> according to the USDA NRI land-use survey (USDA-NRCS 2000). Consequently, lands are retained in this category for 20 years as recommended by IPCC (2006) unless there is another land use change. The Inventory includes all privately-owned grasslands in the conterminous United States and Hawaii, but does not address changes in C stocks for grasslands on federal lands, leading to a discrepancy between the total amount of managed area for *Land Converted to Grassland* (see Section 7.1) and the grassland area included in the Inventory. Plans are being made to include these areas in future C inventories.

Background on agricultural C stock changes is provided in *Cropland Remaining Cropland* and will only be summarized here for *Land Converted to Grassland*. Soils are the largest pool of C in agricultural land, and also have the greatest potential for storage or release of C, because biomass and dead organic matter C pools are relatively small and ephemeral compared with soils. IPCC (2006) recommend reporting changes in soil organic C stocks due to: (1) agricultural land-use and management activities on mineral soils, and (2) agricultural land-use and management activities on organic soils.<sup>223</sup>

Land-use and management of mineral soils in *Land Converted to Grassland* led to an increase in soil C stocks from 1990 through 2010, which was largely due to annual cropland conversion to pasture (see Table 7-34 and Table 7-35). For example, the stock change rates were estimated to remove 20.3 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq./yr (5.5 Tg C) and 24.5 Tg

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<sup>222</sup> NRI points were classified according to land-use history records starting in 1982 when the NRI survey began, and consequently the classifications were based on less than 20 years from 1990 to 2001.

<sup>223</sup> CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with liming are also estimated but included in a separate section of the report.

CO<sub>2</sub> Eq./yr (6.7 Tg C) from mineral soils in 1990 and 2010, respectively. Drainage of organic soils for grazing management led to losses varying from 0.5 to 0.9 Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq./yr (0.1 to 0.2 Tg C).

Table 7-34: Net CO<sub>2</sub> Flux from Soil C Stock Changes for *Land Converted to Grassland* (Tg CO<sub>2</sub> Eq.)

Soil Type	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Mineral Soils <sup>a</sup>	(20.3)	(25.3)	(25.1)	(24.9)	(24.7)	(24.5)	(24.5)
Organic Soils	0.5	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
<b>Total Net Flux</b>	<b>(19.8)</b>	<b>(24.4)</b>	<b>(24.2)</b>	<b>(24.0)</b>	<b>(23.8)</b>	<b>(23.6)</b>	<b>(23.6)</b>

Note: Parentheses indicate net sequestration. Shaded areas indicate values based on a combination of historical data and projections. All other values are based on historical data only. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

<sup>a</sup> Stock changes due to application of sewage sludge are reported in *Grassland Remaining Grassland*.

Table 7-35: Net CO<sub>2</sub> Flux from Soil C Stock Changes for *Land Converted to Grassland* (Tg C)

Soil Type	1990	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Mineral Soils <sup>a</sup>	(5.5)	(6.9)	(6.8)	(6.8)	(6.7)	(6.7)	(6.7)
Organic Soils	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
<b>Total Net Flux</b>	<b>(5.4)</b>	<b>(6.7)</b>	<b>(6.6)</b>	<b>(6.5)</b>	<b>(6.5)</b>	<b>(6.4)</b>	<b>(6.4)</b>

Note: Parentheses indicate net sequestration. Shaded areas indicate values based on a combination of historical data and projections. All other values are based on historical data only. Totals may not sum due to independent rounding.

<sup>a</sup> Stock changes due to application of sewage sludge in *Land Converted to Grassland* are reported in *Grassland Remaining Grassland*.

The spatial variability in annual CO<sub>2</sub> flux associated with C stock changes in mineral soils is displayed in Figure 7-11 and Figure 7-12. Soil C stock increased in most states for *Land Converted to Grassland*. The largest gains were in the South-Central region, Midwest, and northern Great Plains. The patterns were driven by conversion of annual cropland into continuous pasture. Emissions from organic soils were largest in California, Florida, and the upper Midwest, coinciding with largest concentrations of organic soils in the United States that are used for agricultural production.

Figure 7-11: Total Net Annual CO<sub>2</sub> Flux for Mineral Soils under Agricultural Management within States, 2010, *Land Converted to Grassland*

Figure 7-12: Total Net Annual CO<sub>2</sub> Flux for Organic Soils under Agricultural Management within States, 2010, *Land Converted to Grassland*

## Methodology

This section includes a brief description of the methodology used to estimate changes in soil C stocks due to agricultural land-use and management activities on mineral soils for *Land Converted to Grassland*. Biomass C stock changes are not explicitly included in this category but losses of associated with conversion of forest to grassland are included in the *Forest Land Remaining Forest Land* section. Further elaboration on the methodologies and data used to estimate stock changes from mineral and organic soils are provided in the *Cropland Remaining Cropland* section and Annex 3.13.

Soil C stock changes were estimated for *Land Converted to Grassland* according to land-use histories recorded in the USDA NRI survey (USDA-NRCS 2000). Land-use and some management information (e.g., crop type, soil attributes, and irrigation) were originally collected for each NRI point on a 5-year cycle beginning in 1982. However, the NRI program began collecting annual data in 1998, and this inventory is based on annual data through