



# CSREES Southwest States & Pacific Islands Regional Water Quality Program

*Applying knowledge to improve water quality*

## Water Issues are a High Priority in American Samoa

A 37 - question survey was developed by the Pacific Islands Water Quality Team to document public awareness, attitudes and actions toward water quality in American Samoa, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federal States of Micronesia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the republic of Palau. This statistically designed survey was completed by at least 50 residents of each Island who were solicited for this study in early 2004. The collected data was analyzed using the SAS procedure at the University of Idaho. The sampling error of this survey was +/- 4 %.

As part of the attitude portion of the survey, residents were asked about 10 specific regional water issues. Respondents were asked to label each water issue as not important, somewhat important, very important, extremely important, or having no opinion.

When the *very important* and *extremely important* responses were added together, a majority of respondents considered all ten issues as having **high priority**. These will be described throughout this pamphlet. Over 90% of respondents considered clean drinking water and household water supply the highest priority (Table 1).

**Table 1. The percent of survey respondents living in American Samoa and on all the Pacific Island's ranking the following water issues as very or extremely important.**

Issue	Extremely or Very Important (%)	
	in American Samoa	- on all Islands
Clean drinking water	100	100
Household water supply	88	96
Clean ground water	88	87
Clean streams and lakes	86	76
Water for agriculture	74	86
Aquatic organism protection	69	85
Water for recreation	66	78
Water for industry	64	75
Watershed restoration	55	66
Wetlands	53	60



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**Regional Website**

<http://ag.arizona.edu/region9wq/index.htm>

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*American Samoa Environmental  
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[http://www.epa.gov/region09/cross\\_pr/  
islands/samoa.html](http://www.epa.gov/region09/cross_pr/islands/samoa.html)

*Coral Reef Advisory Group (CRAG)*

<http://doc.asg.as/CRAG/Default.htm>

*Natural Resource Conservation  
Service(NRCS),*

<http://www.pb.nrcs.usda.gov>

Over 80% of respondents also considered clean groundwater, water for agriculture and aquatic organism protection as being high priority. Over 70% placed clean rivers, streams and lakes, water for recreation and water for industry in the high priority category. Watershed restoration and wetlands received 65% and 60% respectively.

Community size, length of residency and education did not greatly impact how people viewed water issues. However, American Samoans viewed some water quality issues differently from other Islanders. They were more likely to rate clean streams a high priority issue compared to other islands. But they were less likely to rate watershed restoration and wetlands as high priority issues compared to other islands (Table 1).

Age also impacted answers to some water quality issues (Table 2). Younger respondents were more likely to rate clean ground water a high priority. Whereas older respondents were more likely to rate water for agriculture more important.

**Table 2. The influence of age on the percentage of respondents ranking water issues as very or extremely important.**

Issue	Age in years		
	< 40	40-59	>59
Clean groundwater	92	86	65
Water for agriculture	83	86	88

The results shown above indicate that all respondents care about water quality issues. Based on this information the land grant associated institutions in the Pacific plan to develop programs that address those issues.



**For more information please visit our website**

**[http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/rwq/american\\_samoa](http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/rwq/american_samoa)**

*CREES is the Cooperative States Research, Education and Extension Service, a sub-agency of the United States Department of Agriculture, and is the federal partner in this water quality program.*