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Agricultural Outlook Forum
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Presented: February 24-25, 2011

**Conservation Certification:
Assurances for the Absentee Landowner**

**Jamie Ridgely
AGREN**

Conservation Certification: Assurances for the Absentee Landowner

Jamie Ridgely, Agren

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Where agriculture
impacts the environment,
Agren offers answers.





**Is this the game
we want to play?**

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Stacking the Deck

1. Direct marketing
2. Landowner advisor
3. Operator certification

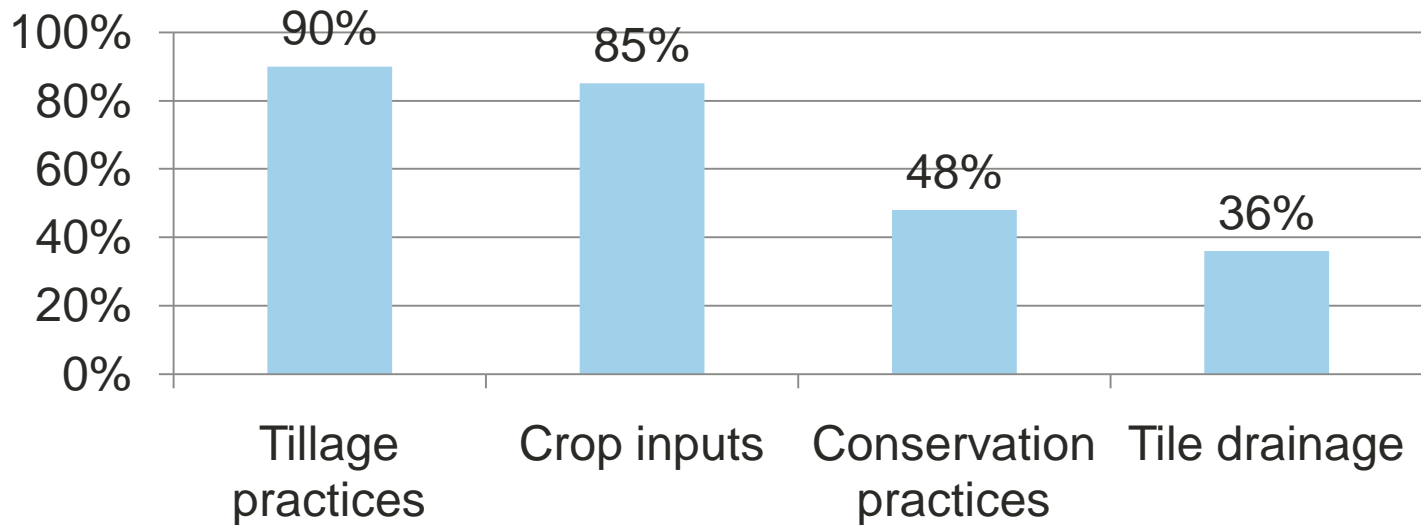
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Who Makes the Decisions?

N=712

% of Landowners Indicating Operator as Primary Decision Maker



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Arbuckle, J. Iowa Farmland Owner & Operator Survey, Sociology Technical Report 1022, October 2010.



The most efficient and economic way to get more conservation on the ground is to get more ground farmed by conservation farmers.

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Smart landowner

+ Conservation operator

 **SWAPA** 

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How is This Different?



vs.

- ~~– Field~~
- ~~– Farm~~
- ~~– Process~~
- ~~– Product~~

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**Great idea,
will it work?**

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Criteria Landowners Use to Evaluate Renters

- Amount of rent paid
- Trustworthiness
- Ability to maintain soil productivity
- Reliability in paying rent on time
- Reputation as a good farmer
- Ability to avoid soil erosion
- Ability to avoid contaminating waterways
- Ability to maintain wildlife habitat
- Active in the community
- Like them as a person
- Care about my land



Criteria Landowners Use to Evaluate Renters

1. Trustworthiness
 2. Reputation as a good farmer
 3. Ability to maintain soil productivity
 4. Cares about landlord & land
-

9. Amount of rent paid



Attitudes Towards Master Conservationist Program

Would you...	% Not Opposed
Favor a Master Conservationist program that “certifies” a farmers ability to apply soil and water conservation?	71
Rent to a Master Conservationist over someone who was not certified, if rent did not change?	69
Accept a lower annual rental rate in order to rent to a Master Conservationist?	32
Want your renter to become certified?	75



Details

- Who will administer?
- Qualification criteria?
- Quality control?
- Standards first or market first?





Are you playing with a full deck?

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