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Staff Paper

**Public Opinions about Farmland and Farmland
Preservation: Results from a Survey in
Kent County, Michigan**

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Public Opinions about Farmland and Farmland Preservation: Results from a Survey in Kent County, Michigan

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Abstract

Retention of agricultural land has become a principal goal for Michigan and its local governments. Purchase of Development Rights is one farmland preservation policy option being considered by many local units of government. Maximizing the benefits from such a program requires an understanding of why the public is interested in farmland preservation. The type and magnitude of benefit will differ depending upon which land is targeted for preservation. This paper reports the results of a survey conducted to ask residents of Kent County, Michigan, what characteristics of farmland are important and how farmland preservation programs should be targeted. The survey also asked whether respondents would support farmland preservation. Results indicate that characteristics of farmland do matter and that support of a farmland preservation program is likely driven by program cost.

29 pages

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Public Opinions about Farmland and Farmland Preservation: Results from a Survey in Kent County, Michigan

Introduction

Retention of agricultural land has become a principal goal for Michigan and its local governments. As interest in farmland preservation has grown, so has consideration of alternative farmland preservation programs. Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) programs are receiving particular attention. Generally, PDR programs involve expenditure of public funds to purchase development rights from agricultural properties. An important component of these programs is determining which agricultural land should be preserved. Public investment in farmland preservation is based on the assumption that the public will receive some benefit in return, but the type and magnitude of benefit differ depending upon which land is targeted for preservation.

Maximizing the benefits from farmland preservation efforts requires an understanding of why the public is interested in farmland preservation. What is it that people want to preserve? This paper reports the results of a survey conducted to begin answering this question. Residents of Kent County, Michigan, were asked about benefits associated with farmland and how farmland preservation efforts should be targeted. Results of the survey suggest that characteristics of the farmland matter. Data from this survey is used also in an empirical analysis of the demand for farmland preservation which is presented in another paper.

Kent County Survey

Kent County, Michigan, contains the Grand Rapids metropolitan area and has traditionally been one of the more important agricultural counties (in terms of gross revenue) in the state. Kent County also contains the "Fruit Ridge", an agricultural area located in the northwestern portion of the county. The location of the Fruit Ridge relative to Lake Michigan and its relatively high altitude have contributed to its capacity

for fruit production (mainly apples). To Kent County residents, the label “Fruit Ridge” identifies a particular farming area in the county.

To assess residents’ concerns about the loss of farmland and perceived amenities associated with farmland, a personal interview survey was conducted with a stratified random sample of Kent County households. The survey also asked about respondents’ willingness to support a program to purchase development rights from agricultural landowners in the county.

A random sample of urban and rural addresses was taken from a data base of all listed phone numbers.¹ Because only 10% of households in the county are in rural areas, the sample was stratified insure adequate representation of rural households. An equal number of rural household addresses and urban addresses (200 of each) were drawn from the data base. Then, 205 addresses were selected at random with rural and urban households equally likely to be selected.

Twelve of the 205 households either were not in the county or had addresses that did not exist. Hence, the effective sample was 193 households. The survey response rate was 73% (141 surveys returned). However, several surveys were returned with one or more questions unanswered. This report summarizes results from 133 surveys returned and sufficiently completed.

Survey Design

The survey design was developed with the assistance of two focus groups of Kent County residents (one rural and the other urban residents). Pre-testing of the survey involved over twenty door-to-door visits of residents in Kent County. The focus group and door-to-door visits strongly influenced the method by which the final survey was administered. In particular, the survey method needed to allow the respondent to complete the survey at his or her convenience.

¹ For the purposes of this survey, rural areas were defined as census tracts in which 100% of the population was defined in the 1990 census as rural.

The final survey was administered as follows. First, the survey was delivered to the door by an enumerator. If someone was home (a male or female who regarded himself or herself as a head of the household), the enumerator introduced the survey. An introduction to the survey required, on average, 10-15 minutes and involved describing each section of the survey to the respondent. The respondent was then asked to fill out the survey at his or her convenience, and arrangements were made to pick up the survey sometime that day or during that week. In a few cases the respondent requested to mail back the survey. In four cases, the survey was read to the respondent and the enumerator filled out the survey as directed by the resident respondent.

If the respondent was not home, the survey was left at the door with a note attached requesting that the survey be filled out and left at a specified place for pick-up the following day. A subsequent visit was made to all homes at which a survey was dropped off. Subsequent visits were of three types: 1) pickups, in which completed surveys were left at a specified place by the respondent and were retrieved by the enumerator; 2) introductions, in which the survey was introduced to the respondent and arrangements were made in a similar manner to the initial visit described in the paragraph above; and 3) mail drops, in which a survey was left with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Eighty-eight percent of the completed surveys were introduced by an enumerator. The remaining 12 percent of the surveys were split evenly between what is referred to above as pickups and mail drops.

The survey instrument consisted of six major sections (Appendix A). The first section of the survey introduced the respondent to the survey and defined a number of key words that would be used throughout the survey. Respondents were encouraged to refer back to these words as they completed the survey. The second and third sections of the survey asked respondents to indicate, on a Likert scale, opinions about services provided by farmland and attributes of farmland.

The fourth section of the survey described a potential program to preserve farmland in Kent County. The program was described as a Purchase of Conservation

Easements (PACE) program² and the major components of the program were described and reviewed. The fifth section provided three hypothetical voting scenarios in which the respondent was asked to vote on three different proposals for a PACE program in Kent County.

Each of the hypothetical referenda proposed preservation of 10% of the county's farmland. The specific preservation programs proposed varied by four factors: 1) cost to each household; 2) the location of the farmland to be preserved; 3) the agricultural productivity of the farmland to be preserved; and 4) an environmental quality index for the farmland to be preserved. Each factor varied by three levels. With four factors varied by 3 levels, a full factorial design would require 81 (3^4) treatment combinations, where a treatment combination defines a unique combination of factors and levels. Because 81 treatment combinations is difficult to manage and costly to sample, only a fraction of the 81 treatment combinations were applied to the survey population. An orthogonal design was used to draw nine treatment combinations from the possible 81. These nine treatment combinations enabled estimation of the main effects, the effect of each factor absent any interaction effects, on the dependent variable (the choice to vote). (Table 1 provides a description of the nine possible program descriptions from among which three were included in each survey instrument.) The sample survey instrument in Appendix A provides an example of the referendum scenario. Finally the last section of the survey asked respondents to provide basic demographic information.

Survey Results

Demographic characteristics of respondents are shown in table 2. Respondents are compared to Kent County residents and to residents of the state of Michigan. Survey respondents were more educated than Kent County residents, in general. Over 44% of the respondents had at least a college degree, compared with only 33.5% of

² Recent literature has begun referring to PDR programs as PACE programs.

Kent County residents. Average age of respondents was 49, compared to a county average of 44.8. The sample respondents were comprised of 38.3% female respondents and 61.7% male respondents; this compares to a county demographic of 50.8% females and 49.2 males. (In many cases, both male and female heads of households were present during the completion of the survey, but the male actually completed the questionnaire.) Average annual household income for the respondents was \$62,562. Median annual income of respondents was \$50,000, which compares to a median annual household income of \$45,980 for Kent County.

As a result of the stratification targeting rural households, the responding sample consisted of 71 urban households and 62 rural households. Respondents were asked whether they lived in urban, suburban or rural areas. Responses are summarized in table 3. Of the 71 households at urban addresses, 31 considered themselves urban residents and 33 considered themselves suburban residents. (Two urban households did not answer this question.) Five of the urban households considered themselves rural. Of the 62 households at rural addresses, 42 considered themselves rural residents and 18 considered themselves suburban residents. Two of the rural households considered themselves urban. Twenty-two respondents reported owning farmland; 17 of these were rural households and 4 were urban.

Additional information describing survey respondents is provided in table 4. Almost half of respondents reported that at least one of their parents lived on a farm. Eleven percent of respondents are members of an environmental organization. Sixty-two percent of respondents support the involvement of Kent County government in land use issues. Almost 84 percent of respondents own their own home, and the average number of years of residency in Kent County is just over 33. Almost one-half of the households include children under the age of 25.

Table 5 reports respondents' opinions about amenities provided by farmland. The amenity most associated with farmland was a sense of heritage, followed closely by open space. The importance of farmland to the local economy was recognized slightly more than was the need for current farmland to provide an adequate food

supply. Water quality and air quality were associated with farmland by fewer respondents. Over 70% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that farmland provides air quality, but only 49% of respondents felt similarly about water quality.

When asked what farmland should be preserved, respondents placed the most emphasis on the environmental quality index of the land – where the index is based on soil erosion, wildlife habitat, and surface and ground water quality (table 6). Almost 90% strongly agreed or agreed that farmland with an above average index should be preserved. Second most important was the productivity of the land; almost 87% strongly agreed or agreed that farmland with above average productivity should be preserved. With respect to location, just over 85% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that farmland on the Fruit Ridge should be preserved. Less than half of the respondents (46.1%) strongly agreed or agreed that farmland observable from the highway should be preserved. More than half of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that farmland located near other blocks of protected farmland (77.4%), farmland where local preservation funds are available (67.8%), and farmland faced with development pressure (64.3%) should be preserved.

With 133 surveys completed, 399 responses to referenda were received. Respondents voted yes on 135 or 33.8% of the referenda. The responses are summarized in table 7 by version of referendum. Responses by urban and rural households are shown in table 8. A chi-square test ($\alpha=.05$) indicates there was no significant difference in responses between urban and rural respondents.

Each respondent was asked about his or her support for a low-cost, mid-cost and high-cost version of the program (with other characteristics varied as well). Positive responses were much more likely for the lower-cost programs – for the three low-cost programs, just over 54% percent of respondents voted to support the program (table 9). Support for the mid-cost program was indicated by 32% of respondents, while the high-cost programs were supported by only 13% of respondents.

Table 10 summarizes respondents' willingness to support the farmland preservation program based on the location of the farmland preserved. Less than 25% of respondents' voted in favor a programs that supported protecting land next to highways. Programs targeting the Fruit Ridge area received support by 41 percent of respondents. As shown in table 11, farmland of average productivity received support by almost 40% of respondents. Interest in preserving land with a higher environmental quality index was indicated by almost 40% of respondents (table 12).

Summary

This survey of Kent County residents suggests that as many as one-half of county residents may be supportive of a farmland preservation program, so long as the cost of the program is relatively low. Respondents to the survey indicated that farmland is important for reasons in addition to production of food; in particular, farmland provides a sense of local heritage. The importance of saving farmland in the Fruit Ridge suggests that this area of the county may, indeed, be recognized as an important part of the County's agricultural heritage. Respondents also feel strongly that the farmland preserved should be protective of the environment and should be highly productive.

Table 1. Alternative Program Descriptions for Survey Referendum Questions

Program Description	Program Cost ¹			Farmland Location			Agricultural Productivity			Environmental Quality Index		
	Low	Medium	High	Anywhere	Along highways	Fruit Ridge	Below Avg.	Avg.	Above Avg.	Below Avg.	Avg.	Above Avg.
1	X			X			X			X		
2	X					X		X			X	
3	X				X				X			X
4		X		X				X				X
5		X				X			X	X		
6		X			X		X				X	
7			X	X					X		X	
8			X			X	X					X
9			X		X			X		X		

¹ The first 23 completed surveys described program costs of \$20, \$100, and \$300 per household per year for five years. Initial results indicated that these costs were too high to obtain sufficient variation in responses. The remainder of the surveys described program costs of \$10, \$50 and \$100 per household per year for five years.

Table 2. Selected demographics of survey respondents, Kent County, MI and the State of Michigan

	Survey	Kent County	Michigan
Education (%) (n=133)			
Less than college degree	55.6	66.4 ¹	71.2 ¹
College degree or higher	44.4	33.5	28.8
Age (average in years) (n=127)	49.0	44.8 ²	46.5 ²
Gender (%) (n=133)			
Female	38.3	50.8 ³	51.0 ³
Male	61.7	49.2	49.0
Household Income (\$) (n=121)			
Average	\$62,562		
Median	\$50,000	\$45,980 ³	\$44,667 ³

¹Educational attainment, population age 25 and older. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

²Average age of population age 20 and above. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

³Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

Table 3. Survey respondents by address location and by self-described location

	Rural address	Urban address
Urban	2	31
Suburban	18	33
Rural	42	5
No Answer	0	2

Table 4. Additional descriptions of survey respondents

Respondent Descriptions	Percent of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Percent with parents who live on a farm	47.7	n=132
Percent who belong to an environmental organization	11.3	n=133
Percent who support Kent County government involvement in land use issues	62.0	n=124
Percent who own their own home ¹	83.5	n=133
Percent who rent their home ¹	15.0	n=133
Average acres owned (range 0 to 230 acres)	7.5	n=127
Average number of years lived in Kent County	33.1	n=131
Average number of children under 25	1.3	n=132
Percent of households with children under 25	45.4	n=132

¹ Two respondents are non-owners who occupy their homes but do not pay rent.

Table 5. Respondents' opinions about farmland (percent responding), from highest to lowest level of agreement

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Farmland provides a sense of local heritage.	44.4	47.8	5.2	2.6	0
Farmland provides open space.	36.5	53.9	7.8	0.9	0.9
Farmland supports the local economy.	34.8	49.6	12.2	3.5	0
Farmland provides scenic beauty.	42.6	40.8	9.6	7.0	0
Farmland prevents urban sprawl.	45.2	37.4	5.2	11.3	0.9
Farmland protects wildlife.	30.4	48.7	12.2	7.8	0.9
Current amount of farmland is needed to provide adequate food supply.	28.7	47.8	13.0	10.4	0
Farmland protects air quality.	23.5	47.8	22.6	5.2	0.9
Farmland protects water quality.	11.3	37.4	28.7	21.7	0.9

Table 6. Respondents' opinions about which farmland should be preserved (percent responding)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Farmland with an above average EQI	40.9	47.8	8.7	2.6	0.0
Farmland with above average productivity	45.2	41.7	6.1	6.1	0.9
Farmland on the Fruit Ridge	36.5	48.7	9.6	5.2	0.0
Farmland located near other blocks of protected farmland	24.4	53.0	18.3	4.4	0.0
Farmland where matching funds are available from local governments or local organizations	21.7	46.1	22.6	7.8	1.7
Farmland faced with development pressure	24.3	40.0	24.3	9.6	1.7
Farmland that can be seen from the highway	12.2	33.9	31.3	20.9	1.7

Table 7. Number of respondents willing to support farmland preservation program, by version of program described.

Program Description¹	Yes (% of total)	No (% of total)
1	22 (45.8)	26 (54.2)
2	30 (69.8)	13 (30.2)
3	23 (54.8)	19 (45.2)
4	19 (46.3)	22 (53.7)
5	17 (35.4)	31 (64.6)
6	6 (13.9)	37 (86.1)
7	6 (14.3)	36 (85.7)
8	8 (18.6)	35 (81.4)
9	4 (8.2)	45 (91.8)

¹ Program descriptions as explained, by number, in table 1.

Table 8. Number of urban and rural respondents willing to support farmland preservation

	Yes (% of total)	No (% of total)
Urban address	78 (36.6)	135 (63.4)
Rural address	57 (30.7)	129 (69.3)

Table 9. Number of respondents willing to support farmland preservation program, by cost of program described.

Cost	Yes (% of total)	No (% of total)
Low	75 (56.4)	58 (43.6)
Medium	42 (31.8)	90 (68.2)
High	18 (13.4)	116 (86.6)

Table 10. Number of respondents willing to support farmland preservation program, by location of farmland preserved.

Location	Yes (% of total)	No (% of total)
Anywhere in the county	47 (35.9)	84 (64.1)
Can be seen from the highway	33 (24.6)	101 (75.4)
On the Fruit Ridge	55 (41.0)	79 (59.0)

Table 11. Number of respondents willing to support farmland preservation program, by productivity of farmland preserved.

Productivity	Yes (% of total)	No (% of total)
Below average	36 (26.9)	98 (73.1)
Average	53 (39.9)	80 (60.1)
Above average	46 (34.9)	86 (65.1)

Table 12. Number of respondents willing to support farmland preservation program, by environmental quality index (EQI) of farmland preserved.

Environmental Quality Index	Yes (% of total)	No (% of total)
Below average EQI	43 (29.7)	102 (70.3)
Average EQI	42 (32.8)	86 (67.2)
Above average EQI	50 (39.7)	76 (60.3)

Appendix A

Sample Survey Instrument

Survey A

**What Do You Think About
Farmland Preservation?**

Introduction to the Survey

You have been selected at random to participate in a survey designed to increase understanding of Kent County residents' opinions about farmland and farmland preservation. The survey is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Patricia Norris who is a faculty member at Michigan State University. The opinions of people like you are important because we are trying to understand County residents' opinions about these issues. Results from the survey will be used to inform policy makers and other researchers about attitudes toward farmland preservation.

This survey is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate at all or refuse to answer certain questions. However, you may be assured that your responses will remain completely confidential. All survey results will be released as summaries; no individual's answers will be identified; and your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

The survey is designed to take about 10 minutes to fill out. At the end of the survey there is space for you to provide comments about any thoughts or concerns you might have. In the event that you would like to discuss any questions about the research, please contact the principal researcher, Dr. Patricia Norris (Michigan State University) at (517) 353 - 7856. If you have any concerns about your rights as a participant you may contact Dr. David Wright at Michigan State University's office of Research and Graduate Studies (517) 355 - 2180.

You indicate your voluntary agreement by completing and returning this questionnaire. Thank you very much for helping with this important study.

Survey Language

There are some specific words that are used in the survey. We want you to have a good idea of what we mean when we use these words. **You may want to refer to these definitions as you fill out the survey.**

Farmland	Farmland describes privately-owned land that includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. agricultural land where hay, crops, fruit trees or Christmas trees are grown 2. pastures for farm animals 3. buildings used by farmers
Farmland in Kent County	<p>There are about 186,453 acres of farmland in Kent County. Farmland takes up about 30% of the total land area in Kent County.</p> <p>Between 1992 and 1997 farmland acreage declined by about 2% (about 4,000 acres).</p>
Fruit Ridge	<p>The Fruit Ridge refers to an area of land where high elevation, hills, and distance from Lake Michigan make it well suited for growing fruits, mainly apples.</p> <p>In Kent County, the fruit ridge is located in the northwestern portion of the County in Alpine, Sparta, and Tyrone townships.</p>
Environmental Quality Index	<p>Scores farmland based on its current effect on: (1) <i>soil erosion</i>, (2) <i>wildlife habitat</i>, and (3) <i>surface and ground water quality</i>.</p> <p>Below average refers to farmland with an Environmental Quality Index is lower than that of the average acre of farmland in Kent County.</p> <p>Above average refers to farmland with an Environmental Quality Index that is better than the average acre of farmland in Kent County.</p>
Productivity	<p>Below average productivity refers to farmland where soil type or unique land features contribute to per acre yields or production that are less than the County average.</p> <p>Above average productivity refers to farmland where soil type or unique land features contribute to per acre yields or production that are greater than the County average.</p>
Highway	<p>State and U.S. highways in Kent County. Specifically:</p> <p>State #: 11, 21,37, 44, 45, 46, 50, 57; U.S. #: 131; Interstate #: 96,196.</p>

Section 1: Opinions about Farmland

In this section we make a number of statements about **farmland in Kent County**. After each statement please check one box that best describes what you think about each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Farmland protects water quality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The current quantity of farmland is needed to ensure an adequate food supply.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Farmland protects wildlife.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Farmland provides scenic beauty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Farmland supports the local economy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Farmland provides a sense of local heritage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Farmland protects air quality.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Farmland provides open space.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Farmland prevents urban sprawl.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 2: Characteristics of Farmland

The state of Michigan currently has a program designed to preserve farmland. The State has limited funding, so the program prioritizes farmland based on certain characteristics of the land. In this section we make a number of statements **concerning which farmland should be preserved**. After each statement please check one box that best describes what you think about each statement.

Which farmland should be preserved?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10. Farmland with above average productivity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Farmland that can be seen from the highway.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Farmland on the Fruit Ridge.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Farmland faced with development pressure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Farmland that is located near other blocks of protected farmland.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Farmland where matching funds are available from local governments or local organizations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Farmland with an above average Environmental Quality Index.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 3: A Plan to Preserve Farmland in Kent County

One way to make sure that some farmland remains available for agricultural use in Kent County is for the County government to set up a program to ‘Purchase Agricultural Conservation Easements’ (PACE) on farmland. In this program farmland is appraised for what it would be worth on the open market and then for what it would be worth if it could only be used for farming. This difference is then paid to farmland owners who want to participate.

In return for the payment, the farmland owner allows the County to place an agricultural conservation easement on the farmland. The easement is a legal arrangement that restricts development of farmland for non-farm uses like new residential or commercial buildings. Participating farmland owners would maintain all other ownership rights. For example, farmland owners would still have the right to live on and farm the land as well as rent or sell the land. However, if the land is sold, the conservation easement will remain with the land and apply to the new landowner.

The Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easement program (PACE) has five important characteristics:

- 1.** Owners of farmland are free to choose whether they want to sell a conservation easement to the County government.
- 2.** The County reviews offers from farmland owners and decides which land it wants to purchase a conservation easement on.
- 3.** The County and landowners agree on the price of the conservation easement.
- 4.** The County places a conservation easement (a legal restriction) on the farmland, guaranteeing that the land will permanently remain un-developed, as farmland.
- 5.** The farmland owner who sells the easement maintains all other ownership rights.

Section 4: PACE Proposals for Kent County

In this section you are presented with three different proposals for a PACE program in Kent County. Because there are many different cost estimates and types of farmland, the proposals differ by: (1) **Cost** to each household; (2) **Productivity** of farmland preserved; (3) **Location** of farmland in the County, and (4) **Environmental Quality Ranking** of farmland.

Suppose Kent County were to have a vote on whether to place a special County tax on each household to pay for a program to **Purchase Agricultural Conservation Easements** on 10% (18,000 acres) of the farmland in Kent County. How would you vote?

Please vote on each of the three proposals on the following pages. **Vote on each proposal as if it were the only one you would face in the voting booth.**

Turn Page to Vote

Ballot Proposal

If a majority of Kent County residents vote **yes**, your household will pay the special County tax and the County Government will purchase agricultural conservation easements on farmland with the characteristics described in the box below.

If a majority of Kent County residents vote **no**, your household will not pay the special tax and the County Government will not purchase agricultural conservation easements on farmland in the County.

Proposal A summarizes the proposal on which *you* are asked to vote:

Proposal A	
Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE)	
Cost:	<u>\$10</u> per household each year for the next five years.
Quantity:	10% of the farmland in Kent County (18,000 acres)
Location:	Anywhere in the County
Productivity:	Below average farmland productivity
Environmental Quality	Below average Environmental Quality Index

17. Please Indicate Your Vote in one box below:

Vote <u>for</u> Proposal A <input type="checkbox"/>	Vote <u>against</u> Proposal A <input type="checkbox"/>
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Reminder: Please Vote on Each Proposal

If a majority of Kent County residents vote yes, your household will pay the special County tax and the County Government will purchase agricultural conservation easements on farmland with the characteristics described in the box below.

If a majority of Kent County residents vote no, your household will not pay the special tax and the County Government will not purchase agricultural conservation easements on farmland in the County.

Proposal B summarizes the proposal on which *you* are asked to vote:

Proposal B	
Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE)	
Costs:	<u>\$50</u> per household each year for the next five years
Quantity:	10% of the farmland in Kent County (18,000 acres)
Location:	Fruit Ridge
Productivity:	Above average farmland productivity
Environmental Quality	Below average Environmental Quality Index

18. Please Indicate Your Vote in one box below:

Vote <u>for</u> Proposal B <input type="checkbox"/>	Vote <u>against</u> Proposal B <input type="checkbox"/>
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Reminder: Please Vote on Each Proposal

Ballot Proposal

If a majority of Kent County residents vote **yes**, your household will pay the special County tax and the County Government will purchase agricultural conservation easements on farmland with the characteristics described in the box below.

If a majority of Kent County residents vote **no**, your household will not pay the special tax and the County Government will not purchase agricultural conservation easements on farmland in the County.

Proposal C summarizes the proposal on which *you* are asked to vote:

Proposal C	
Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE)	
Costs:	<u>\$100</u> per household each year for the next five years
Quantity:	10% of the farmland in Kent County (18,000 acres)
Location:	Next to the Highway
Productivity:	Average farmland productivity
Environmental Quality	Below average Environmental Quality Index

19. Please Indicate Your Vote in one box below:

Vote <u>for</u> Proposal C <input type="checkbox"/>	Vote <u>against</u> Proposal C <input type="checkbox"/>
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Section 5: General Information

Note: We use this information to see if our survey sample is similar to that of the entire population of Kent County. Your answers will be kept confidential. Please answer each question.

Please mark each box indicating yes or no to the following questions:

- | | Yes | No |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 20. Do you own farmland? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21. Did either of your parents live on a farm? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22. Do you belong to an environmental club or organization? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23. Do you support the Kent County Government's involvement in land use issues? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

24. What is the highest grade of school you finished? (Mark one box below)

- Grade School High School College graduate Graduate Degree

25. Is the house, apartment or mobile home in which you live:

- Owned by you or someone in this household.
 Rented for cash rent.
 Occupied without payment of cash rent.

26. Approximately how many acres of land in Kent County do you own? (Fill in Blank)

27. How many years have you lived in Kent County? (Fill in Blank)

28. What year were you born? (Fill in Blank)

29. How many children, under 25, do you have? (Fill in Blank)

30. Are you male or female? (Mark one box below)

Male

Female

31. What term best describes where you live? (Mark one box below)

Urban

Suburban

Rural

32. Please mark one box in the table below that best describes what you think your total family income will be this year before you pay taxes. (Mark one box)

<input type="checkbox"/> \$0 to \$19,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$140,000 to \$159,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 to \$39,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$160,000 to \$179,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 to \$59,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$180,000 to \$199,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 to \$79,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$200,000 to \$219,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000 to \$99,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$220,000 to \$239,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000 to \$119,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$240,000 to \$259,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$120,000 to \$139,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$260,000 or greater

33. Please mark one box in the table below that best describes what the State Equalized Value (SEV) of your property is. The State Equalized Value represents the assessors' appraisal of ½ the market value of your property. (Mark one box)

<input type="checkbox"/> rent/don't own	<input type="checkbox"/> \$140,000 to \$159,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$300,000 to \$349,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$0 to \$19,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$160,000 to \$179,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$350,000 to \$399,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 to \$ 39,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$180,000 to \$199,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$400,000 to \$449,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 to \$ 59,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$200,000 to \$219,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$450,000 to \$499,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$60,000 to \$ 79,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$220,000 to \$239,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$500,000 to \$599,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$80,000 to \$ 99,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$240,000 to \$259,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$600,000 or greater
<input type="checkbox"/> \$100,000 to \$119,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$260,000 to \$279,999	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$120,000 to \$139,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$280,000 to \$299,999	

We welcome any comments or criticisms you might have concerning the survey, farmland preservation, or other issues. Please use the space below to make any written comments you would like to make.

This is the end of the survey! Your participation in the survey is greatly appreciated! Please take the time to check the survey and make sure you have answered all thirty-three questions.