



Engaging Absentee Landowners in Conservation

Jamie Ridgely, Agren



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Today

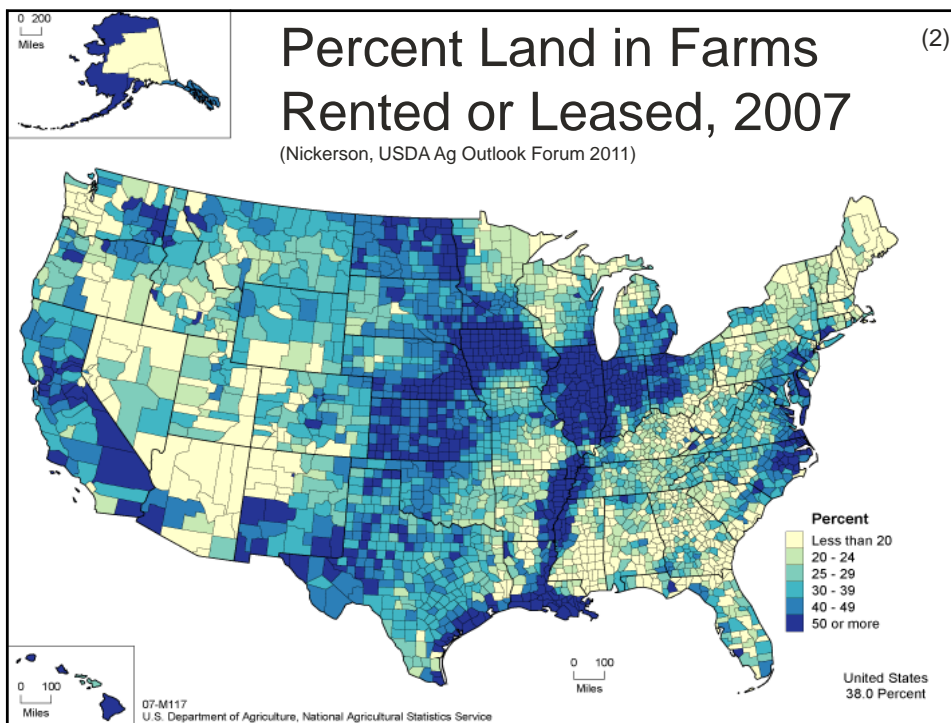
- Why absentee/non-operator landowners?
- Brief history
- Survey snippets

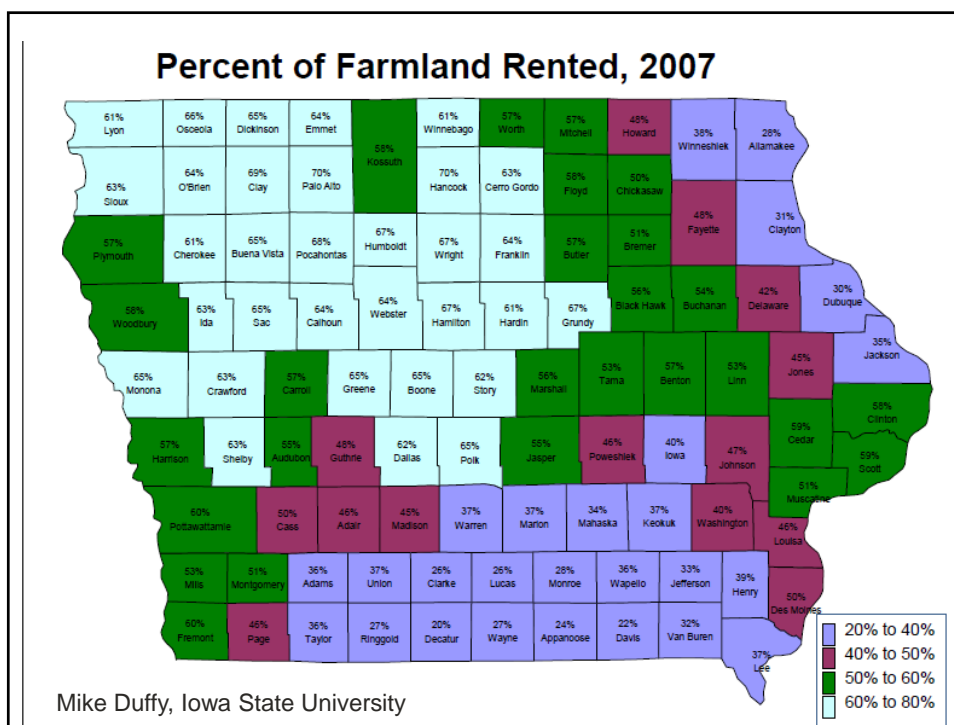
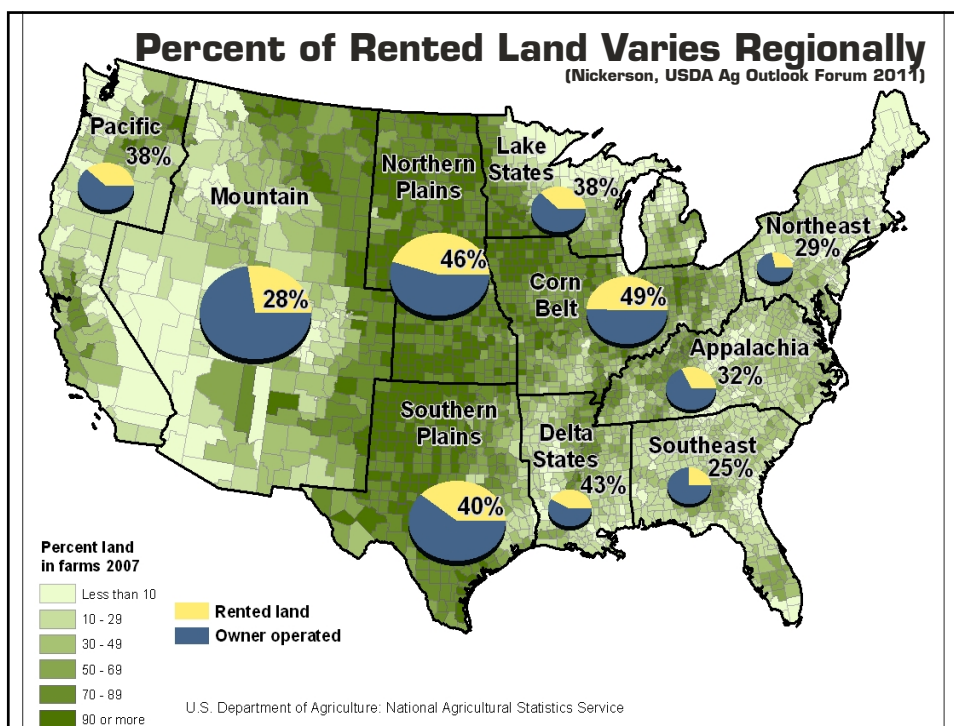
Break/questions

- Results & lessons learned
- Resources



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Why do we care?

- Nationwide, owner-operators enrolled about 1.7 times more land than absentee landowners in CRP and WRP
- 85% of AL/non-operator not actively engaged in decision making on the farm
- Landowner & tenant inherently have conflicting management objectives...short-term profitability vs. long-term value
- Now more than ever, ag landowners have money to invest, but public sector assistance very limited

Can you afford to only work with half the population?

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Project History

- 2005: Partner with Carroll SWCD
- 2006: Center for Absentee Landowners
- 2007: Great Lakes- Demographic study & pilot outreach/ direct marketing begins
- 2008:Outreach projects continue
 - IA , WI, NY, MI
 - *Focus turns to "building to action"*
- 2009: CDI- market-based incentives for conservation- Survey work, landowner outreach, operator certification
- 2011: Potomac Conservancy- landowner outreach

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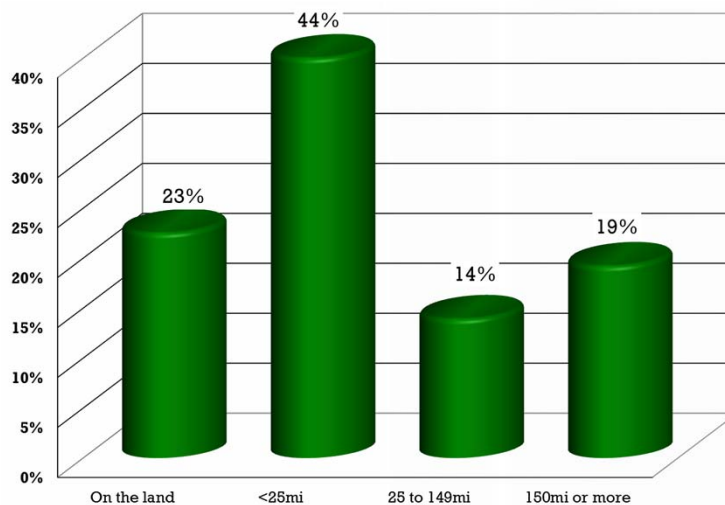
Projects

- Demographic studies
- Direct marketing
- Landowner advisor/advocate
- Conservation report card
- Operator certification
- Precision conservation planning tools
- Market analysis/ database search



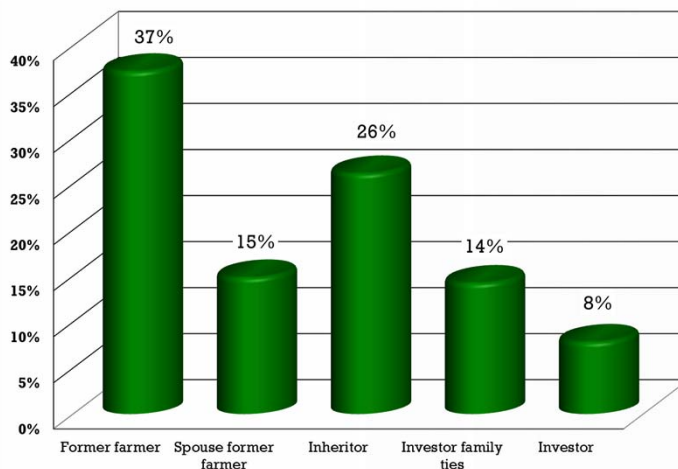
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Where do they live in relation to the land?



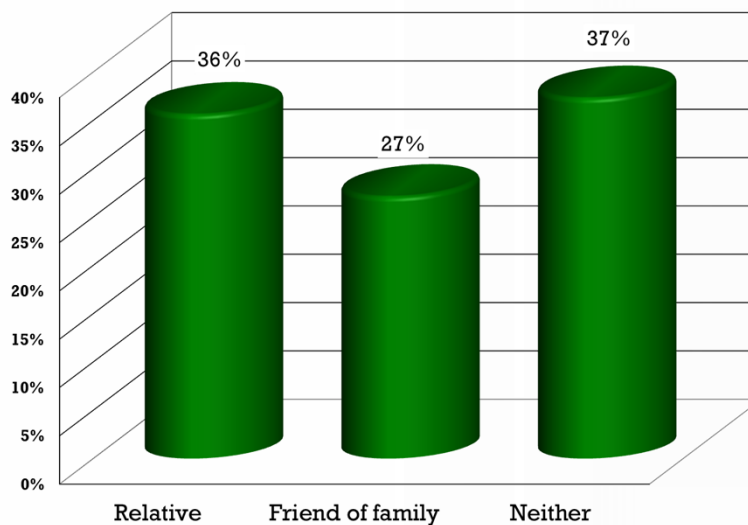
Arbuckle, J. Iowa Farmland Owner & Operator Survey,
Sociology Technical Report 1022, October 2010.

What is their connection to the land?



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

To whom do they rent?



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

Findings from Iowa Operators

- Nearly 1 in 5 operators see the need for more conservation on the land they rent.
- 1 in 8 felt land protection was inadequate on their landlord's farm.
- About 30% of operators said grassed waterways should be implemented or improved - *versus 10% of landowners*

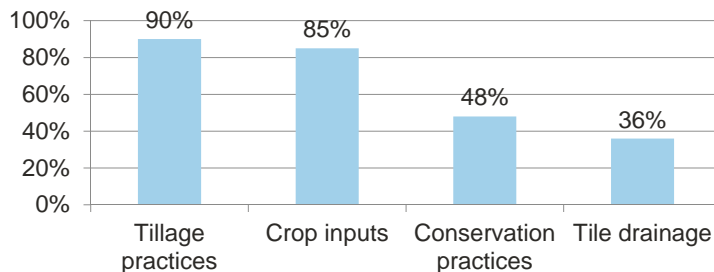


Arbuckle, J. Iowa Farmland Owner & Operator Survey,
Sociology Technical Report 1022, October 2010.

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Who Makes the Decisions?

% of Landowners Indicating Operator as
Primary Decision Maker



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

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Disconnect?

- 94% of landowners say their operator “does a good job”
 - Maintaining soil productivity
 - Avoiding soil erosion
 - Avoiding runoff into stream



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Sociology Technical Report 1022, October 2010.

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Questions?

**Discussion
interests?**



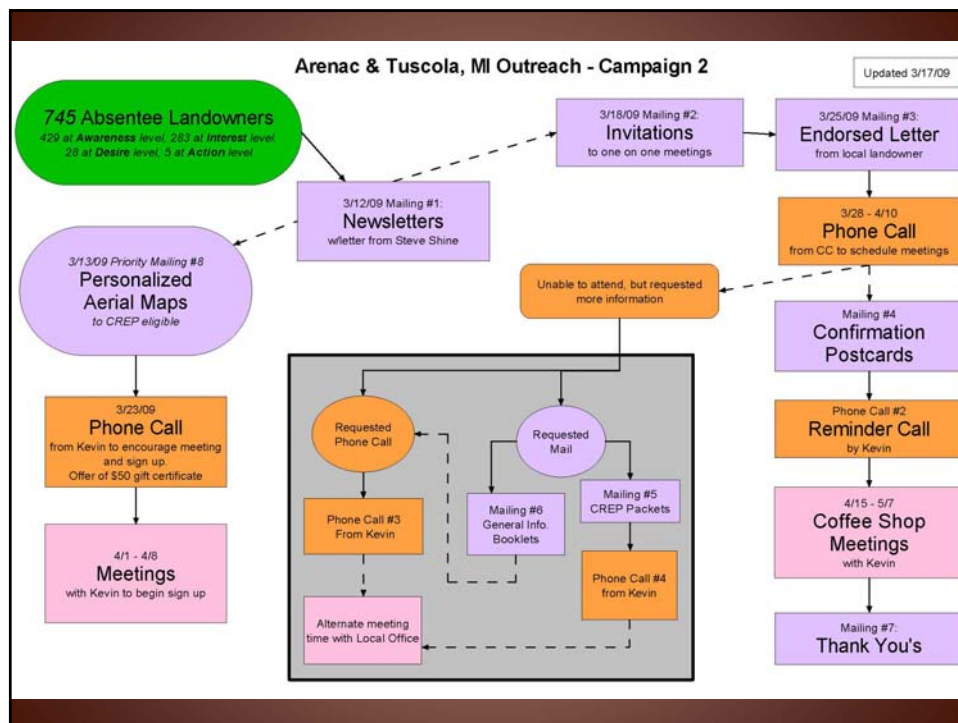
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Direct Marketing

- 6-16 contacts
- Targeted audience, tailored message, direct offer, branded
- Multi-media
 - Direct mail
 - Phone calls ... Telemarketing!
 - Small group or one-on-one meetings
 - Website, toll-free hotline
 - Other- conference calls, bus tour, email
- Designed to move landowners through AIDA



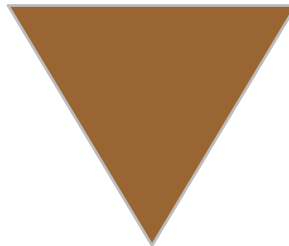
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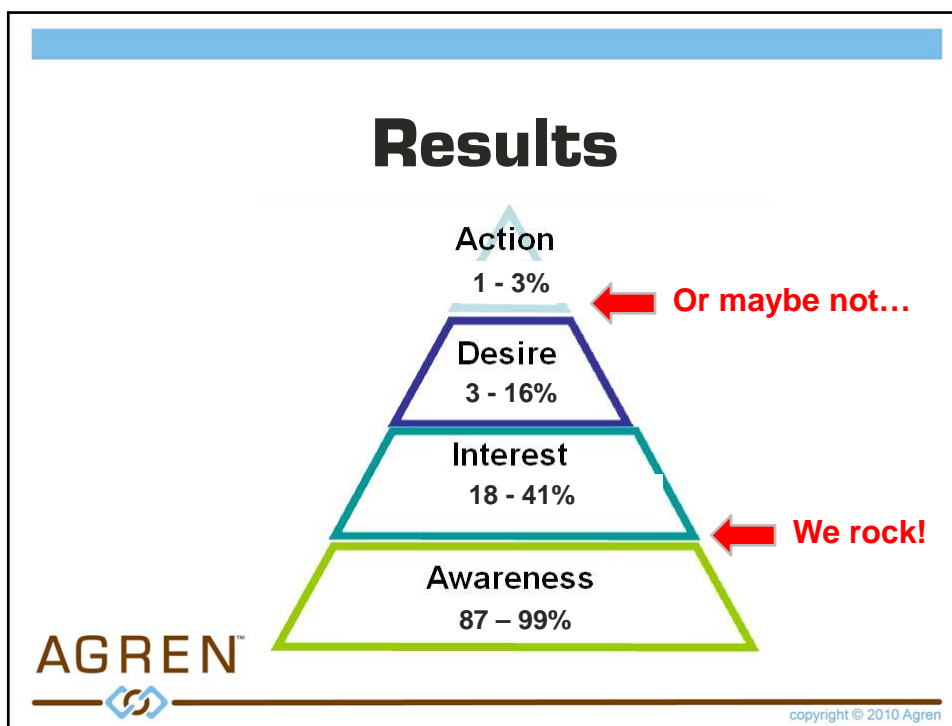




AIDA

- Step 1: Awareness
- Step 2: Interest
- Step 3: Desire
- Step 4: Action





Why?

- Very new audience- majority never worked with field offices
- Building to action takes time for landowners to consider and commit
- Unique barriers
- “Lead nurturing” is EXTREMELY important
- Must demonstrate a problem before there’s interest in a solution
- Challenging (at best) for field offices to provide necessary time and resources

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More Lessons Learned

- Expect & plan for extended timelines & multiple contacts- “drip marketing”
- Target, target, target your audience
 - But not necessarily your message
- Make a single offer
- Not simply an issue of lack of information
- No silver bullets

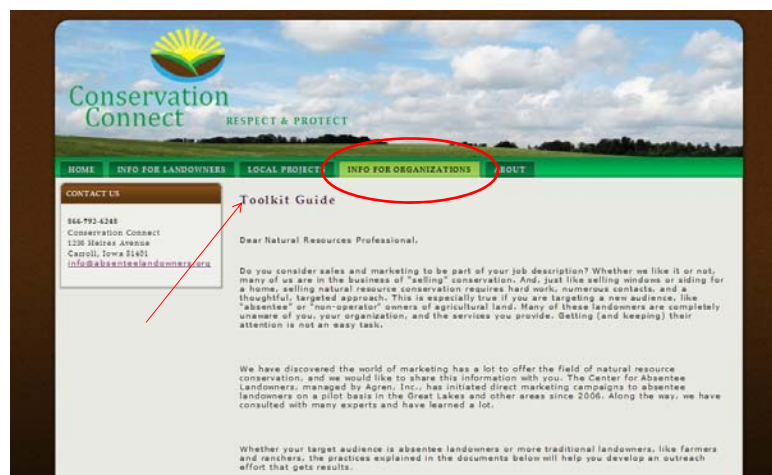
BUT, can you afford to only work with half the

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population?



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<http://www.absenteelandowners.org/info-for-organizations/64>

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Survey results & papers

- **Petzelka, P., T. Buman, J. Ridgely.** Engaging absentee landowners in conservation practice decisions: A descriptive study of an understudied group. *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*, vol. 64 no. 3 94A-99A. May 2009.
- **Arbuckle, J. Gordon Jr.** 2010. "Landowners and Operators Caring About the Land (LOCAL): Iowa Farmland Owner and Operator Survey." *Sociology Technical Report 1033*. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Extension.



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Where agriculture
impacts the environment,
Agren offers answers.

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Questions?

Discussion?



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Building to Action

- Landowner advisor
- Conservation report card
- Advanced conservation planning tools
- Certified conservation farm operator
- Advanced landowner targeting



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Landowner Advisor

- Synonyms
 - Advocate
 - Supporter
 - Sponsor
 - Promoter
 - Spokesman
- Analogy
 - Patient advocate
 - Case file manager



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Conservation Report Card

- Offered last fall & this spring
- Concept= Must identify problem before buy/sell solution
- Tangible service/product
- Easy to understand
- Documentation & communication tool



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Advanced Conservation Planning Tools

- Technology to evaluate, target, & communicate
- Distance planning



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Certified Conservation Operator

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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How is This Different?



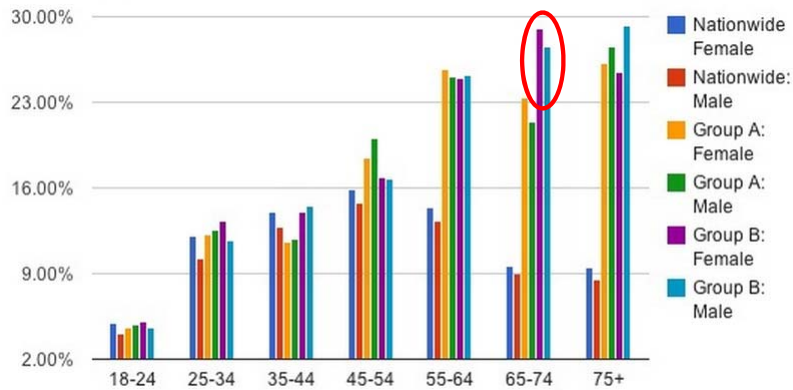
vs.

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



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Gender & Age in Household



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