

2007 FARM BILL

Idaho farmers' opinions
and preferences on
agricultural, food, and
public policy

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author would like to express his thanks to the Idaho Grain Producers Association for providing the majority of funds for this project.

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INTRODUCTION

The Farm Bill is among the most important pieces of federal legislation impacting the welfare of agriculture and rural communities. While commonly referred to as the "Farm Bill," this legislation has implications for all U.S. citizens. The current Farm Bill, the 421-page "Farm Security and Rural Investments Act of 2002," has provided direction on farm programs for the past five years. It expires at the end of September 2007.

The bill has 10 separate titles: (1) commodity programs, (2) conservation, (3) trade, (4) nutrition, (5) credit, (6) rural development, (7) research, (8) forestry, (9) energy, and (10) miscellaneous. While the commodity programs component has traditionally received most of the attention, particularly with the farm organizations, more recent farm bills have increasingly stressed conservation, trade, and, most recently, energy.

Each new Farm Bill amends the permanent legislation that dates to 1949. Failure by Congress to pass new legislation or to extend the current Farm Bill means reverting to the permanent 1949 legislation.

Commodity programs authorized today under the permanent legislation would, however, be prohibitively expensive and extremely difficult to implement. The threat of reverting to the provisions of the permanent legislation forces Congress to take action and to make the compromises needed to get new legislation approved. Indeed, some policy analysts claim that the desire to maintain that threat is the reason the permanent legislation has never been repealed. The process of writing farm legislation becomes especially challenging and politicized when authorizing legislation is debated during an election year, as happened with the 2002 Farm Bill and will happen again with the 2007 Farm Bill.

Farm bills are influenced by the political and economic conditions that exist when they are written. This short-term focus has resulted in legislation that does not always serve the best longer-term interests of farmers, taxpayers, or consumers. Regardless of how the policy debate is structured and regardless of the final outcome, policy makers need input from constituents to guide the process.

The late University of Idaho agricultural economist Dr. Neil Meyer used to say that developing public policy is like pouring concrete, with enabling legislation the "form" that determines what policy will look like. After a form has been built and the concrete poured and hardened, it is very difficult and expensive to change the outcome. Neil always argued that farmers and other interested parties needed to focus their attention on building the "form" in order to get the results they wanted. Once legislation has passed, it is

difficult if not impossible to get something changed, as Idaho producers have found out on more than one occasion. Having input from farm constituents is an important part of the process of building the proper legislative forms in order to get the desired policies.

Extension specialists at the nation's land-grant institutions have a long history of gathering and disseminating information on farmers' opinions, attitudes, and preferences regarding agricultural, food, and public policy. National policy preference surveys, coordinated by the National Public Policy Education Committee and Farm Foundation, were conducted in 1984, 1989, 1994, and 2001. The National Public Policy Education Committee and Farm Foundation again coordinated the 2005/06 surveys, including the one described here. In addition, USDA-NASS field offices in cooperating states provided critical assistance.

PROJECT GOALS

The survey results summarized in this publication are part of a nationally coordinated project to provide input from farmers to the process of writing a new farm bill. The project's first goal is to provide measures of farmer opinions, attitudes, and preferences regarding agricultural, food, and public policy alternatives being discussed as part of the Farm Bill debate. To achieve this goal the project coordinated and conducted the survey described here and summarized survey results.

The second goal is to produce coordinated information on policy alternatives, preferences, and analysis. To achieve this goal the project will develop and deliver issue papers on policy options and deliver educational information to stakeholders and policy makers.

A national task force was set up by the National Public Policy Education Committee to develop and implement the survey project by working with extension specialists and state statisticians in participating states. The task force secured the resources to oversee and coordinate the project and for data compilation, data processing, and reporting. Twenty-seven states participated in this effort. The task force will publish a summary showing responses by state, region, and nation. State-specific survey data was provided to each cooperating state for analysis.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The survey was mailed to a stratified random sample of farmers and ranchers in each state. Stratification was by farm size based on value of sales: (1) small (< \$100,000), (2) medium (\$100,000 - \$250,000), and (3) large (> \$250,000). Equal samples were drawn from each stratum, with the total sample size dictated by available funding and the cost of the survey and follow-up method chosen. A minimum sample size was established for each state based on the number of farms and an expected survey return rate. Each state was responsible for raising funds to pay for distributing the survey and to provide any state-specific analysis and educational materials.

Each state used a standardized four-page questionnaire format, although there was a limited opportunity for each state to customize the survey. Each state's survey contained 29 policy questions, often with multiple parts, and 13 demographic questions. Approximately a half page of the survey was available for optional questions. Optional questions could be either state-specific or drawn from a national pool of 10 optional questions. All optional questions asked of Idaho farmers and ranchers came from the national pool of optional questions.

The USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service field offices selected the survey samples and mailed out surveys during November and December 2005. The surveys were returned either to the cooperating extension specialist or to a NASS central data processing center. Completed surveys were collected, bundled, and sent to the University of Nebraska where the data was entered into a computer database. State-specific data sets with survey responses were provided to state extension specialists in June 2006.

In Idaho, the survey was mailed to 1,731 Idaho producers, with 577 in each of the three sales strata. The 2002 Census of Agriculture farm population was used in estimating the necessary sample size. The minimum sample size to provide statistical validity was determined to be 1,282 based on a population of roughly 25,000 Idaho farmers and an assumed response rate of 30%. Based on the 2002 census, the percentages of Idaho farmers in the three sales categories are 84% small, 6.4% medium, and 9.6% large. In absolute terms, this amounts to 21,000 small, 1,600 medium, and 2,400 large farms.

To attain a higher initial sample with the approximately \$4,000 available to pay for the survey, Idaho sent nonrespondents a postcard reminder, not a full second survey, which may have contributed to the lower than expected response, 21% (362 returned surveys and 349 usable surveys). This was far below the 33% return rate achieved by Idaho in the 2001 survey but matches the 2001 national response of 20%.

OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS AND GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Is there a definitive answer to the question, What do farmers want from government farm programs? The answer, not surprisingly, is no. The answer depends on which farmer is being asked the question. Idaho agriculture is diverse and so too are the opinions of Idaho farmers when it comes to public policy and government programs.

Interpreting the survey responses presented some challenges. At times, opinions expressed in one question seemed to conflict with or even to contradict the answer to another question. While it is important to try and figure out what farmers want, it is also important to keep in mind that the opinions and preferences they expressed in this survey are the beginning of the process, not the end product. Discussing the results of this survey will hopefully lead to a fuller and more dynamic debate as the process of crafting a new Farm Bill moves forward.

The survey contained a large number of questions, and most of the aggregate results are presented with limited explanation or analysis. No analysis by size, commodity, or other characteristic is provided. In many cases, the data speak for themselves and require no interpretation. But the responses to other questions are less clear and provide much more opportunity for discussion and interpretation. In some cases, the responses to several questions, when looked at together, tell an interesting story that is not apparent when looking at each question in isolation.

As characterized by survey respondents, Idaho farmers are older (55% over 55), well-educated (38% have a B.S. or advanced college degree), white (99%), males (91%) who own a sizeable amount of the land that they farm (57% own 75% or more). It would be fair to say they believe that "the government is best that governs least"—sometimes. They also favor a strong role for government in areas where they as individuals feel powerless and at the mercy of market forces, large multi-national firms, or foreign governments. They favor the government closest to home to administer programs over distant federal bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., or federal employees in Idaho. This attitude is obvious in Idaho farmers' support of transferring control of conservation programs to states in block grants (table 7).

In the area of Farm Bill goals and funding for programs (tables 1 and 2), one seeming contradiction stands out. Responses to question #1 indicate that reducing price/income risk should be one of the lower-ranked goals of the Farm Bill. But the responses to question #2 indicate that funding disaster assistance programs and risk management programs (crop and livestock insurance) rank highest (table 2). Since these programs are designed to help reduce price and income risk, why the seeming disconnect?

Farmers obviously recognize the inherent production and price risk associated with agriculture and the impact that these have on farm income. But it appears that farmers would rather have tools to help them manage risk (insurance) or to help them deal with the consequence of risk (disaster assistance) than a program focused on commodity prices and income. Or, stated another way, they want tools to help them protect income, not income protection per se. This may be a subtle distinction, but it is an important one for those drafting the new Farm Bill to recognize.

Idaho farmers appear to be satisfied with government programs. No more than 31% indicated any of the programs listed were less important or least important (table 2). And while a fifth favored eliminating farm program payments completely, about the same percentage that favored reducing payments (table 4), a strong majority (55.6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with phasing out commodity payments. Idaho farmers do want to see change, however: targeting commodity payments to small farmers and eliminating the three-entity rule.

Idaho farmers may not have thought much about some program options, or they may have insufficient information to form an opinion about them, such as the buyout option (table 5), with its high percentage of don't know / no opinion responses. The same can be said for extending technical and financial assistance to carbon sequestration and maintaining biodiversity (table 8). It's not just farmers' opinions, but also their lack of opinions that are important.

Trade policy (table 11) appears to be an area of general dissatisfaction, especially free-trade agreements. Idaho farmers strongly favor adding labor, environmental, and food safety standards to any trade agreement, and also favor emphasizing domestic economic and social goals rather than trade. Idaho farmers and farm groups often advocate that free trade must be fair trade.

There are some important and possibly irreconcilable issues. How, for example, can the competitiveness of U.S. agriculture in the global market be increased, which Idaho farmers favor (table 1), without more trade agreements, which they don't favor (table 11)? How can a farm policy with a goal of assuring a safe, secure, abundant, and affordable food supply, which Idaho farmers favor overwhelmingly (table 1), be achieved without the low commodity prices that hurt farmers, raise the cost of the program, and bring charges that the U.S. government unfairly subsidizes its farmers? Lawmakers truly have some major challenges to overcome in writing the next Farm Bill.

SURVEY RESULTS

Survey results are summarized in a series of tables and figures. Questions from the survey are identified by number. Many questions are actually statements with which respondents were asked to agree or disagree, or to express their view on the relative importance of various aspects of a program. There were seven sections to the survey.

Farm programs and budget priorities

Farmers indicated the relative importance of various priorities using a numeric scale from 1 = least important to 5 = most important. A sixth option, don't know/no opinion was also available. While farmers were not asked to rank the programs, the author devised two ranking schemes and used them to analyze and summarize responses.

The first ranking scheme uses the percentage of respondents who rate the priority as important or most important. A higher percentage is equated to a higher ranking. This is referred to as the percentage ranking scale.

The second ranking scheme uses a numeric value calculated by assigning a value, or weight, to each response category, multiplying this by the percentage of respondents selecting this answer, and then summing these values. Again, a higher value implies a higher ranking. This ranking scheme is referred to as the numeric ranking scale. A neutral response was assigned a value of zero, less important a value of -1, least important a value of -2, important a value of +1, and most important a value of +2. Don't know/no

opinion was not assigned a numeric value. The resulting composite number can be positive or negative. The numbers generated are valid only for that question and cannot be used to make comparisons between questions.

Importance of Farm Bill goals—Table 1 shows Idaho farmers' relative importance ratings of eight farm bill goals given in question #1, as well as their numeric index scale values. The top-ranked three goals using the percentage ranking scale, starting with the highest priority, were:

- (g) Assure a safe, secure, and affordable food supply (79.9%)
- (c) Increase competitiveness of U.S. agriculture in the global marketplace (79.3%)
- (h) Reduce the nation's dependency on non-renewable sources of energy (77.9%)

The numeric scale produced the same top three, but their order was (h) 1.27, (g) 1.25, and (c) 1.24. Given the small differences separating these values using either scale, it is best not to make too much of their relative placement. These are simply the respondent's top three goals.

The three lowest-ranking program goals, based on the highest percentage of respondents rating them as least important or less important, starting with the lowest priority, were:

- (e) Contribute to protection of the nation's land, water, and environmental resources (15.2%)
- (a) Enhance farm income (13.1%)
- (b) Reduce price/income risk (11.4%)

Table 1. Idaho farmers' views on the relative importance of specified Farm Bill goals.

Farm programs and budget priorities	Numeric scale*	Least important	Less important	Neutral	Important	Most important	Don't know/No opinion
Q1. The goals of the Farm Bill should be to							
(a) Enhance farm income	1.02	5.7%	7.4%	13.6%	23.5%	48.7%	1.1%
(b) Reduce price/income risk	0.83	8.3%	3.1%	19.4%	30.9%	36.0%	2.3%
(c) Increase competitiveness of U.S. agriculture in the global marketplace	1.24	3.1%	3.4%	12.7%	25.2%	54.1%	1.4%
(d) Enhance opportunities for small farms/ranches and beginning farms/ranches	1.15	3.1%	4.2%	17.5%	24.5%	50.4%	0.3%
(e) Contribute to protection of the nation's land, water, and environmental resources	0.65	4.2%	11.0%	27.2%	29.7%	27.2%	0.6%
(f) Enhance rural communities	0.93	4.0%	5.2%	18.1%	37.1%	34.8%	0.9%
(g) Assure a safe, secure, abundant, and affordable food supply	1.25	3.7%	3.1%	13.0%	24.0%	55.9%	0.3%
(h) Reduce the nation's dependency on non-renewable sources of energy	1.27	2.0%	2.0%	17.6%	22.4%	55.5%	0.6%

*The numeric scale is the sum of the percentage response in each opinion category multiplied by the response category weight. Weight values ranged from -2 for least important to +2 for most important, with neutral weighted zero. The numeric scale value can be used to rank the goals based on the relative importance implied by respondents' answers, where a higher value equates to a higher ranking.

The numeric scale showed similar results, including two of these three. The three lowest-ranked program goals were (e) 0.65, (b) 0.83, and (f) 0.93. Goal (a) would place fourth with a value of 1.02. It is important to recognize that Idaho farmers are not saying these are unimportant, just less important than other goals listed.

Importance of maintaining program funding—

Table 2 shows how Idaho farmers rated the relative importance of maintaining funding for 10 existing programs. Using the percentage ranking scale, the top three programs, starting with the highest priority, were:

- (j) Disaster assistance programs (65%)
- (h) Risk management programs (crop and livestock insurance programs) (51.7%)
- (c) Crop commodity payments tied to price and production (51.4%)

Crop commodity programs tied to price, program (b), came in a close fourth with 50% of producers rating it important or most important. Using the numeric ranking scale, the top three programs were the same with only a difference in order: (j) 0.84, (c) 0.49, and (h) 0.45.

Table 2. Idaho farmers' views on the relative importance of maintaining program funding.

Farm programs and budget priorities	Numeric scale*	Least important	Less important	Neutral	Important	Most important	Don't know/ No opinion
Q2. How important is it to maintain funding for the following existing programs?							
(a) Fixed, decoupled crop commodity payments (direct payments)	0.37	13.7%	10.3%	21.9%	18.5%	28.2%	7.4%
(b) Crop commodity payments tied to price (counter-cyclical payments)	0.42	11.4%	9.7%	20.7%	25.3%	24.7%	8.2%
(c) Crop commodity payments tied to price and production (commodity loans, LDPs, etc.)	0.49	10.5%	8.8%	21.3%	23.6%	27.8%	8.0%
(d) Livestock commodity supports tied to price and production (milk support programs, MILK payments, etc.)	-0.03	17.1%	13.7%	27.1%	19.4%	12.5%	10.3%
(e) Land retirement conservation programs (CRP, WRP)	0.10	15.8%	13.3%	29.1%	18.1%	18.6%	5.1%
(f) Working land conservation programs (EQIP, WHIP, CSP, etc.)	0.36	9.7%	10.0%	29.4%	23.4%	20.9%	6.6%
(g) Wildlife habitat, agricultural land, and grassland preservation programs (WHIP, FRPP, GRP)	0.22	9.5%	15.2%	31.2%	20.3%	17.8%	6.0%
(h) Risk management programs (crop and livestock insurance programs)	0.45	8.9%	11.4%	23.7%	29.4%	22.3%	4.3%
(i) Agricultural credit programs (FSA direct and guaranteed loans)	0.37	8.6%	13.1%	27.1%	25.1%	21.1%	4.9%
(j) Disaster assistance programs	0.84	4.6%	7.7%	19.8%	29.5%	35.5%	2.9%

* The numeric scale is the sum of the percentage response in each opinion category multiplied by the response category weight. Weight values ranged from -2 for least important to +2 for most important, with neutral weighted zero. The numeric scale value can be used to rank the goals based on the relative importance implied by respondents' answers, where a higher value equates to a higher ranking.

Table 3. Idaho farmers' views on the relative importance of providing new funds or reallocating existing funds for specified programs.

Farm programs and budget priorities	Numeric scale*	Least important	Less important	Neutral	Important	Most important	Don't know/ No opinion
Q3. How important is it to provide new or reallocated funds to the following programs?							
(a) Support payments tied to farm income level	0.41	11.8%	8.6%	24.5%	23.9%	24.8%	6.3%
(b) Support payments for commodities not included in existing programs (fruits, vegetables, nursery crops, livestock, and wood products)	-0.04	19.2%	12.0%	28.9%	18.6%	14.0%	7.2%
(c) Incentives for farm savings accounts	0.32	10.3%	10.6%	26.1%	26.7%	18.1%	8.0%
(d) Bioenergy production incentives	0.76	6.0%	6.3%	22.4%	27.6%	33.3%	4.3%
(e) Biosecurity incentives and assistance	0.31	8.3%	11.5%	29.6%	25.3%	17.0%	8.3%
(f) Food safety programs and assistance	0.58	6.3%	5.4%	28.4%	32.4%	21.9%	5.7%
(g) Traceability and certification programs	0.25	10.9%	10.9%	30.0%	26.3%	15.4%	6.6%

* The numeric scale is the sum of the percentage response in each opinion category multiplied by the response category weight. Weight values ranged from -2 for least important to +2 for most important, with neutral weighted zero. The numeric scale value can be used to rank the goals based on the relative importance implied by respondents' answers, where a higher value equates to a higher ranking.

The three lowest-ranked programs based on having the highest percentage of respondents rating them as least important or less important for funding, starting with the lowest ranked, were:

- (d) Livestock commodity supports tied to price and production (30.8%)
- (e) Land retirement conservation programs (29.1%)
- (g) Wildlife habitat, agricultural land, and grassland preservation programs (24.7%)

The numeric scale produced the same ranking:
(d) -0.03, (e) 0.10, and (g) 0.22.

Importance of new funding or funding reallocations—Table 3 shows how Idaho farmers rated the importance of providing new funding or reallocating existing funds for seven programs. The top three ranked programs using the percentage ranking scale, starting with the highest priority, were:

- (d) Bioenergy production incentives (60.9%),
- (f) Food safety programs and assistance (54.3%)
- (a) Support payments tied to farm income level (48.7%)

The numeric scale had the same top three priorities in the same order: (d) 0.76, (f) 0.58, and (a) 0.41. As was also apparent in question #1, energy costs are of current concern to Idaho farmers.

The three lowest-ranking programs, starting with the lowest priority based on the percentage of respondents rating them less or least important, were:

- (b) Support payments for commodities not included in existing programs (31.2%)
- (g) Traceability and certification programs (21.8%)
- (c) Incentives for farm savings accounts (20.9%)

The numeric ranking scale showed the lowest-ranked programs as (b) -0.04, (g) 0.25, and (e) 0.31. Program (c) was in a virtual tie with (e) for third lowest with a value of 0.32.

Commodity programs and risk management policy

Questions in this section had to do with potential changes in farm policy, such as discontinuing a particular program or targeting program benefits. In six questions, farmers were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each statement. A numeric scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree was used. A sixth option, don't know or no opinion, was also available.

Table 4 lists each statement, respondents' level of agreement given as a percentage, as well as the numeric index values. The seventh question asked farmers to agree (yes response) or disagree (no response) with five buyout options for existing programs (table 5). The eighth question in this section dealt with federal dairy programs. Farmers were asked to choose among four options (table 6).

A slightly different approach was used to analyze responses in table 4 than was used in the first three tables. An index value was calculated using weights from -2 (strongly disagree) to +2 (strongly agree), similar to the approach described earlier. This index value helps to show the degree of consensus among respondents. A higher positive value implies a consensus agreement with the potential change and a lower negative value implies a consensus disagreement. This numeric value and the percentages of respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed, or who disagreed or strongly disagreed, are compared.

Commodity and risk management programs—

The responses in table 4 generated three positive index values and three negative index values. The highest positive value (0.74) was found with question #6: Farm program commodity payments should be targeted to

Table 4. Idaho farmers' opinions on potential changes in commodity and risk management programs for the 2007 Farm Bill.

Farm programs and budget priorities	Index value*	Least important	Less important	Neutral	Important	Most important	Don't know/ No opinion
Q4. Farm program commodity payments should be phased out over the length of the 2007 Farm Bill.	-0.63	41.8%	13.8%	16.3%	7.7%	13.5%	6.9%
Q5. Farm program commodity payments should be reduced, but not phased out in the 2007 Farm Bill.	-0.69	39.3%	18.1%	15.5%	13.8%	6.9%	6.6%
Q6. Farm program commodity payments should be targeted to small farmers.	+0.74	10.0%	8.0%	16.0%	24.2%	38.7%	3.1%
Q7. Existing commodity program payment limits should be reduced to lower levels.	-0.16	24.0%	16.6%	19.4%	14.0%	17.4%	8.6%
Q8. Existing commodity program payment limits should be changed to apply to a single individual, eliminating what is known as the three-entity rule.	+0.56	5.1%	7.1%	21.9%	13.7%	29.9%	22.2%
Q9. Existing commodity program payment limits on marketing loans should be changed to eliminate the unlimited use of certificate and forfeiture gains.	+0.29	4.3%	5.1%	30.3%	13.4%	14.6%	32.3%

* The value is the sum of the percentage response in each opinion category multiplied by the response category weight. Weight values ranged from -2 for strongly disagree to +2 for strongly agree, with neutral weighted a zero.

Table 5. Idaho farmers' opinions on offering a buyout option on existing commodity programs.

Commodity programs and risk management policy			Don't know/
	Yes	No	No opinion
Q10. Indicate your preference for each of the following buyout options:			
(a) Producers should be offered a buyout of existing commodity programs.	26.9%	46.9%	26.3%
(b) If a buyout were offered in a single lump-sum equal to 15 years worth of my current commodity payments, I would take it.	24.9%	40.4%	34.7%
(c) I would accept an equal value of the buyout described in (b) if it were paid in a series of annual installments.	21.6%	38.8%	39.7%
(d) If a buyout were offered in a single lump-sum equal to 25 years worth of my current commodity payments, I would take it.	34.2%	33.9%	31.9%
(e) I would accept an equal value of the buyout described in (d) if it were paid in a series of annual installments.	24.8%	37.5%	37.8%

Table 6. Idaho farmers' opinions on federal dairy programs.

Commodity programs and risk management policy	Support
Q11. What should be the policy regarding future dairy programs?	
(a) Eliminate all dairy support programs	40.1%
(b) Eliminate the MILC program and retain only the dairy price support program	12.5%
(c) Eliminate the dairy price support program and provide direct payments only in a method similar to the MILC program	15.8%
(d) Reauthorize both the current dairy price support program and the MILC program	31.6%

small farmers. Not surprisingly, question #6 also had the highest percentage of respondents (62.9%) agreeing or strongly agreeing and only 18% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

The second highest positive numeric value (0.56) was with question #8: Existing commodity program payment limits should be changed to apply to a single individual, eliminating what is known as the three-entity rule. More respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement (43.6%) than disagreed or strongly disagreed (12.2%), but a high percentage (22.2%) marked don't know/no opinion.

The third question with a positive index value (0.29) was question #9, which would place limits on marketing loan gains and forfeitures. While more respondents agreed or strongly agreed (28%) than disagreed or strongly disagreed (9.4%), a third (32.3%) marked don't know/no opinion and 30.3% were neutral. The low positive number shows a lack of consensus, which is verified by the percentage responses.

The lowest negative index number (-0.69) is associated with question #5: Farm program commodity payments should be reduced, but not eliminated in the 2007 Farm Bill. A majority (57.4%) of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, but a fifth (20.7%) agreed or strongly agreed and only 15.5% were neutral.

The second lowest negative index number (-0.63) is associated with question #4: Farm program commodity payments should be phased out over the length of the 2007 Farm Bill. A majority (55.6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, but a fifth (21.2%) agreed or strongly agreed and only 16.3% were neutral.

The third and smallest negative index number is associated with question #7: Existing commodity program payment limits should be reduced to lower levels. This low value implies a split opinion with no consensus. More respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed (40.6%) than agreed or strongly agreed (31.4%) and nearly a fifth (19.4%) were neutral.

Program buyout options—Question #10 provided survey respondents an opportunity to indicate their preference on some program buyout options. Responses are summarized in table 5. Part (a) simply asked whether producers should be offered a buyout of existing commodity programs. Nearly as many respondents checked don't know/no opinion (26.3%) as favored this option (26.9%), and more respondents opposed (46.9%) than supported it.

When asked if they would take a single lump sum equal to 15 years of current commodity payments (b), more said no (40.4%) than said yes (24.9%), and over one-third (34.7%) checked don't know or no opinion. The alternative in 10(c) was similar except the payment would be made in a series of annual payments and not a lump sum. Fewer respondents supported this option (21.6%) than supported a lump-sum payment (24.9%). Almost 40% checked don't know/no opinion.

Option buyout 10(d), a lump sum of 25 years worth of commodity program payments, interested more respondents (34.2% yes) than the 15-year option (24.9%), but the percentages of yes, no, and don't know/no opinion were fairly equal at 34.2%, 33.9%, and 31.9%, respectively. And if this 25-year option were paid in a series of installments, interest dropped from one-third (34.2% yes) to a fourth (24.8%).

Federal dairy program—The last question dealing with commodity program options covered the federal dairy program. Question #11 presented four alternatives and asked farmers to pick one (table 6). While there was not a majority for any of the four alternatives, elimination of all dairy support programs, alternative (a), was chosen by 40.1%, while 31.6% chose alternative (d), reauthorization of the current dairy price support pro-

Table 7. How strongly Idaho farmers agree or disagree with the concept of greater local control of conservation programs.

Conservation and environmental policy	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Strongly agree	Agree	Don't know/No opinion
Q13. Conservation funds should be transferred to states through block grants, along with more state authority for implementation.	9.1%	6.0%	11.4%	35.2%	30.4%	8.0%

Table 8. Idaho farmers' preferences on conservation and environmental policy.

Conservation and environmental policy	No federal assistance	Technical assistance only	Technical and financial assistance	Don't know/No opinion
Q12. Indicate your preference for technical and financial assistance:				
(a) Water quality protection	8.5%	20.4%	63.2%	7.9%
(b) Soil erosion control	9.3%	25.2%	58.6%	6.8%
(c) Air quality control	12.4%	29.0%	47.6%	11.0%
(d) Wildlife habitat protection	15.5%	30.1%	44.5%	9.9%
(e) Open space protection	18.4%	25.8%	39.4%	16.4%
(f) Management of animal wastes	13.0%	29.4%	46.6%	11.0%
(g) Carbon sequestration	15.0%	23.2%	26.9%	34.8%
(h) Maintenance of biodiversity	14.2%	26.1%	31.7%	28.0%

gram and the MILC program. Smaller percentages of respondents favored eliminating the MILC program and retaining the price support program (12.5%), or eliminating the price support program and retaining MILC or some similar direct payment program (15.8%).

Conservation and environmental policy

Transfer of funding, authority to states—The first of four questions dealt with the transfer of federal funds through block grants to states and giving states more authority to implement conservation programs. Farmers were asked to rate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with this option. Table 7 summarizes respondents' opinions, with 65.6% agreeing or strongly agreeing and only 15.1% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Obviously, Idaho farmers are strong supporters of local control.

Federal assistance for achieving environmental goals—The second question in this section asked farmers their preferences for receiving federal technical and financial assistance to achieve eight stated environmental goals (table 8). Farmers were to indicate whether they preferred no federal assistance, technical assistance only, or technical and financial assistance. They could also respond with no opinion/don't know.

A clear majority favored private landowners receiving both technical and financial assistance to achieve (a) water quality protection (63.2%) and (b) soil erosion control (58.6%). Fewer than 10% favored no assistance for these two goals.

A smaller but still significant percentage of respondents favored both technical and financial assistance

for (c) air quality control (47.6%), (f) management of animal wastes (46.6%), and (d) wildlife protection (44.5%). A somewhat higher percentage favored no support for these goals, 12.4% to 15.5%, than favored no support for water quality protection and erosion control.

Open space protections, biodiversity maintenance, carbon sequestration—Support for three newer environmental goals, (e) open space protection, (h) maintenance of biodiversity, and (g) carbon sequestration, while strong, was less than for the longer-running, more traditional ones. There was also a corresponding increase in respondents checking don't know/no opinion on these newer three, with over a third (34.8%) choosing this for carbon sequestration and 28% for maintenance of biodiversity. Again, this may simply mean that Idaho farmers don't have as clear an understanding of the newer programs.

Conservation Reserve Program—The third question in this section dealt with alternatives for CRP (Conservation Reserve Program). The survey presented four alternatives and farmers were asked to indicate their preference (table 9). The alternatives ranged from (a) keep the current rules and allow expiring contracts to compete for re-enrollment to (d) eliminate CRP. A majority (61.3%) favored either (a) or (b), both of which could be viewed as *status quo*, with alternative (b) allowing automatic re-enrollment of land scoring highest in environmental benefits. Only 16% favored reducing CRP acreage as contracts expire by re-enrolling only high-priority, environmentally sensitive land. Over a fifth of respondents (22.7%) favored the elimination of CRP as contracts expire.

Conservation Security Program—The fourth and final question dealt with the CSP (Conservation Security Program). Three alternatives were presented and farmers were to choose among them (table 10). A majority of respondents (52.9%) favored the *status quo* of implementing CSP on a watershed basis as funding allows. Approximately one-fifth (19.7%) favored increasing funding to allow nationwide implementation of CSP, while 27.4% favored the elimination of CSP as current contracts expire.

Trade policy

The trade policy section of the questionnaire contained seven statements about various aspects of trade policy. Farmers were asked to rate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each statement on a scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree (table 11).

Free trade agreements—On question 16, regarding whether the U.S. should continue free trade agreements, only 29% agreed or strongly agreed, while a slight majority (50.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Labor laws, environmental impacts, food safety standards—On the issue of including labor laws, environmental impacts, and food safety standards in trade negotiations, question #17, three-fourths (75.4%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they should be included, while only 10.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Export credits and payments for cotton—A slight majority of respondents (50.3%) opted for don't know / no opinion when it came to eliminating export credits and payments for cotton, question #18. A slightly larger percentage of respondents agreed or strongly agreed

Table 9. Idaho farmers' opinions on alternative Conservation Reserve Program policies.

Conservation and environmental policy	Preferred alternative
Q14. If changes to the CRP policy are considered, which of the following alternatives would you prefer to see?	
(a) Keep current rules and allow current contracts to expire on schedule and compete for re-enrollment against other land being offered for enrollment	31.4%
(b) Allow current contracts ranking highest in environmental benefits to be automatically eligible for re-enrollment at existing annual rental rates	29.9%
(c) Reduce the acreage in the CRP as current contracts expire by restricting future enrollments to high-priority, environmentally sensitive lands	16.0%
(d) Eliminate the CRP as current contracts expires	22.7%

Table 10. Idaho farmers' opinions on the Conservation Security Programs (CSP).

Conservation and environmental policy	Preferred alternative
Q15. How should the CSP be handled in the next Farm Bill?	
(a) Continue the current policy of implementing the CSP on a watershed-by-watershed basis as funding allows	52.9%
(b) Increase funding to allow immediate nationwide implementation of the CSP	19.7%
(c) Eliminate the CSP as existing contracts in pilot watersheds expire	27.4%

Table 11. Idaho farmers' agreement with various trade policy positions.

Trade policy	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/ No opinion
Q16. The U.S. should continue to pursue free trade agreements (WTO, CAFTA, etc.) to reduce and eliminate trade barriers.	37.5%	12.9%	15.2%	15.5%	13.5%	5.4%
Q17. Labor laws, environmental impacts, and food safety standards should be included as part of international trade negotiations.	5.4%	4.9%	9.5%	23.8%	51.6%	4.9%
Q18. To comply with the recent WTO ruling on cotton, the U.S. should eliminate export credits and industry payments such as Step 2 cotton payments.	7.8%	4.4%	21.2%	7.3%	9.0%	50.3%
Q19. The U.S. should emphasize domestic economic and social policy goals rather than trade policies	12.9%	9.1%	22.5%	18.1%	25.1%	12.3%
Q20. The U.S. should withdraw from the WTO.	13.3%	11.8%	22.0%	11.6%	24.9%	16.5%
Q21. If the U.S. withdraws from the WTO, U.S. producers will face greater market access problems getting agricultural exports into other countries.	13.6%	14.2%	26.6%	16.5%	11.0%	18.2%
Q22. The U.S. should eliminate unilateral sanctions prohibiting food trade with certain other countries.	14.5%	10.4%	20.5%	19.9%	20.2%	14.5%

(16.3%) than disagreed or strongly disagreed (12.2%), but an even larger percentage (21.2%) was neutral.

Domestic vs. trade emphasis—On question #19, whether the U.S. should emphasize domestic economic and social policy goals rather than trade policies, more agreed or strongly agreed (43.2%) than disagreed or strongly disagreed (22%), while an equal percentage (22.5%) was neutral.

Withdrawal from WTO—Question #20, on whether the U.S. should withdraw from WTO (World Trade Organization), produced an interesting split of opinions. Over one-third (36.5%) agreed or strongly agreed, while a quarter (25.1%) disagreed or strongly disagreed and a surprising one-fifth (22%) were neutral.

WTO withdrawal and market access—On question #21, whether the U.S. would face greater market access problems with agricultural exports if the U.S. withdrew from WTO, respondents were split between those agreeing or strongly agreeing (27.5%) and those disagreeing or strongly disagreeing (27.8%). An almost equally large group (26.6%) was neutral, and 18.2% didn't know or had no opinion.

Unilateral trade sanctions—On the seventh and final question on whether the U.S. should eliminate unilateral trade sanctions prohibiting food trade with certain other countries, 40.1% agreed or strongly agreed, 24.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 20.5% were neutral.

Food system and regulatory policy

Farmers were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with seven statements on a scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. They could

also opt to not express an opinion by choosing don't know (table 12).

Country-of-origin labeling—On the implementation of mandatory country of origin labeling (question #23), a whopping 86.8% agreed or strongly agreed and only 4.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Voluntary labeling guidelines—On the use of voluntary labeling guidelines (question #24), a majority (54.3%) still agreed or strongly agreed, but almost one-third (31.1%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Food product traceability—On the government increasing efforts to improve traceability of food products (question #25), nearly two-thirds (64.6%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that such an undertaking was worthwhile, while only 11.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed. A somewhat surprising 21.8% were neutral.

Mandatory animal identification—On the adoption of mandatory animal identification (question #26), one-half (49.7%) agreed or strongly agreed, while just over one-fifth (21.5%) disagreed or strongly disagreed and nearly one-fourth (24.1%) were neutral.

BSE testing—On the adoption of mandatory BSE testing on cattle over 30 months of age (question #27), 39.7% agreed or strongly agreed, while 26% disagreed or strongly disagreed with almost as many respondents neutral (24.9%). Establishment of guidelines for voluntary BSE testing (question #28) received more support with almost one-half (49%) agreeing or strongly agreeing and only one-fifth (19.6%) disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Again, a fairly high percentage (22.9%) was neutral.

Table 12. Idaho farmers' agreement with various food system regulatory policies.

Food systems and regulatory policy	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/ No opinion
Q23. The government should implement mandatory labeling rules to identify the country of origin on food products.	3.1%	1.1%	7.6%	21.8%	65.0%	1.4%
Q24. The government should develop voluntary labeling guidelines to better establish what the identification of the country of origin means for food products.	21.0%	10.1%	11.5%	22.4%	31.9%	3.2%
Q25. The government should increase efforts to improve traceability of food products from the consumer back to the producer.	7.1%	4.2%	21.8%	30.9%	33.7%	2.3%
Q26. The government should adopt mandatory animal identification rules to improve animal health and food safety monitoring efforts.	11.6%	9.9%	24.1%	22.7%	27.0%	4.5%
Q27. The government should adopt mandatory BSE testing of all cattle over 30 months of age.	14.7%	11.3%	24.9%	15.9%	23.8%	9.3%
Q28. The government should establish guidelines for voluntary BSE testing of cattle by private industry.	10.5%	9.1%	22.9%	26.9%	22.1%	8.5%
Q29. Food products made with biotechnology should be labeled regardless of whether there is a scientifically determined difference in the product.	17.9%	10.8%	21.3%	20.5%	23.6%	6.0%

Labeling of biotechnology-made products—

Idaho farmers expressed less support for labeling food made with biotechnology (question #29), with 44.1% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing, 28.7 disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, and 21.3% staying neutral.

Related policy issues: public lands

The first optional question dealt with policies on the administration of public lands. Because of the prevalence of public lands in the West, all western states participating in the policy survey included this among their optional questions. There were 10 statements with which farmers were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement, based on a scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. They could also answer don't know/no opinion (table 13).

User fees—Part (a) stated that all users of public lands should pay fees comparable to fair market value. Not quite half (48.5%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, while 27.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Economic criteria for access—Part (b) stated that users of public lands should gain access based on economic criteria. A fairly high percentage (25.4%) of respondents were neutral, while 42.8% agreed or strongly agreed and nearly one-fourth (23.1%) disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Ecological criteria for access—Part (c) stated that users' access to public lands should be based on ecological criteria. Again, a fairly high percentage of respondents (28.6%) were neutral, while the percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing (28%) was slightly less than the percentage who disagreed or strongly disagreed (31.7%).

Transfer of management to states—Part (d) stated that management of public lands should be transferred to the states where they are located. Not surprisingly, a strong majority (72.1%) agreed or strongly agreed and only 13.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed, while 12.1% were neutral.

Privatization of public lands—Part (e) stated that the sale or transfer of federal lands to private ownership should be encouraged. Just over one-third (35.3%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, 39.8% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and nearly one-fifth (19.5%) were neutral.

Acquisition of private lands—Idaho farmers do not favor federal dollars being used to acquire privately owned lands. Part (f) stated that federal funds should be allocated to allow federal land management agencies to acquire privately owned lands. Over two-thirds (67.7%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, 14% agreed or strongly agreed, and 14.6% were neutral.

Table 13. Idaho farmers' agreement with policies related to management of public lands.

Related policy issues: Public lands	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know/ No opinion
Q30. Several policies affect those who use public lands administered by the federal agencies (BLM, Forest Service, etc.). Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:						
(a) All users (grazing, timber, recreation, mining) of public lands should pay fees comparable to fair market value as suggested in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.	15.9%	11.8%	16.4%	23.1%	25.4%	7.5%
(b) Users (grazing, timber, recreation, mining) of public lands should gain access to these lands based on economic criteria.	11.7%	11.4%	25.4%	25.7%	17.1%	8.6%
(c) Users (grazing, timber, recreation, mining) of public lands should gain access to these lands based on ecological criteria.	16.3%	15.4%	28.6%	15.7%	12.3%	11.7%
(d) Management of federal lands should be transferred to the states where they are located.	8.6%	4.6%	12.1%	24.7%	47.4%	2.6%
(e) The sale or transfer of federal lands to private ownership should be encouraged.	24.3%	15.5%	19.5%	13.3%	22.0%	5.4%
(f) Federal funds should be allocated to allow federal land management agencies to acquire lands that are currently privately owned.	52.6%	15.1%	14.6%	6.6%	7.4%	3.7%
(g) Grazing and timber cutting on federal lands should be encouraged.	2.5%	5.9%	11.9%	27.5%	51.0%	1.1%
(h) Oil and gas exploration on federal lands should be encouraged.	3.1%	3.4%	11.0%	25.2%	55.0%	2.3%
(i) A larger portion of revenues currently coming from federal lands should be returned to local units of government.	1.4%	2.3%	13.6%	31.5%	49.1%	2.0%
(j) Payments in lieu of taxes should be increased as a means of supporting local government services.	7.1%	6.3%	19.9%	24.5%	33.0%	9.1%

Grazing and timber harvest—Part (g) stated that grazing and timber harvest on federal lands should be encouraged. A strong majority (78.5%) agreed or strongly agreed, while only 8.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed and 11.9% were neutral.

Oil and gas exploration—Part (h) stated that oil and gas exploration on federal lands should be encouraged. Not surprisingly, a large majority (80.2%) agreed or strongly agreed, while only 6.5% disagreed and 11% were neutral.

Revenue sharing—Part (i) stated that a larger portion of revenues from federal lands should be returned to local units of government. Respondents strongly supported this concept with 80.6% agreeing or strongly agreeing and only 3.7% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing and 13.6% neutral.

Payments in lieu of taxes—Part (j) stated that payments in lieu of taxes should be increased as a means of supporting local government services. A clear majority (57.5%) agreed or strongly agreed with this, while only 13.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed. One-fifth of respondents (19.9%) were neutral.

Related policy issues: program expansion to fruits, vegetables, & other specialty crops

The second optional question included on the Idaho survey involved expansion of government commodity programs to fruits, vegetables, and other specialty crops. Farmers were asked to state their opinions on the importance of six programs on a scale of 1 = least important to 5 = most important (table 14). Interestingly, nearly one-fifth of those responding were neutral on every program (16.1-21.8%), and anywhere from one-fifth to one-third didn't express an opinion.

Disaster assistance—Extending disaster assistance programs to non-program crops (e) appeared to be the most popular with over one-half (53.5%) indicating that this was important or most important and only 11.1% indicating it was less or least important.

Direct payments—Part (a) dealt with fixed, decoupled (direct) payments. Only 18.8% felt that these were important or most important, while 29% said less important or least important, 19.4% were neutral, and nearly one-third (32.8%) indicated no opinion or don't know.

Counter-cyclical payments—Part (b) dealt with counter-cyclical payments. Just over one-third (34.1%) said these would be important or most important, while one-fifth (20.3%) said they were less important or least important, and 45.7% indicated that they were neutral or had no opinion.

Commodity loans and LDPs—Part (c) dealt with commodity loans and LDPs (loan deficiency payments). Again, about one-third (34.8%) said these would be important or most important, while 17% indicated they would be less important or least important, and nearly one-half (48.3%) were neutral or had no opinion.

Subsidized crop insurance—Part (d) covered the extension of subsidized crop insurance to non-program crops. Forty-one percent indicated that this would be important or most important, while one-fifth (19.3%) indicated that this would be less or least important.

Block grants—Part (f) dealt with the concept of extending block grants to states to develop their own programs. There was no consensus. While a higher percentage of respondents indicated that this would be important or most important than indicated less or least important, 34.6% vs. 20.9%, over one-fifth were neutral (21.8%) or had no opinion (22.7%).

Table 14. Idaho farmers' preferences on what should be included if commodity programs are expanded to non-program crops.

Related policy issues: Program expansion to fruits, vegetables, and other specialty crops	Least important	Less important	Neutral	Important	Most important	Don't know/ No opinion
Q31. If fruits, vegetables, and other specialty crops were included in government commodity programs and provided funding, which programs would be most preferred?						
(a) Fixed, decoupled crop commodity payments (direct payments)	20.2%	8.8%	19.4%	9.7%	9.1%	32.8%
(b) Crop commodity payments tied to price (counter-cyclical payments)	15.0%	5.3%	17.3%	23.8%	10.3%	28.4%
(c) Crop commodity payments tied to price and production (commodity loans, LDPs, etc.)	12.6%	4.4%	20.8%	21.6%	13.2%	27.5%
(d) Risk management programs (subsidized crop insurance)	14.7%	4.6%	17.1%	25.1%	15.9%	22.5%
(e) Disaster assistance programs	8.8%	2.3%	16.1%	31.9%	21.6%	19.3%
(f) Federal funding for block grants to states to develop state-level programs for fruits, vegetables, and other specialty crops.	14.0%	6.9%	21.8%	19.4%	15.2%	22.7%

Related policy issues: expenditure of research funds

The third optional question involved farmers' opinions on the relative importance of research funding in 12 specified areas. Farmers were asked to state their opinion as to the importance of research funding in each area, with 1 = least important to 5 = most important (table 15).

Using the percentage of respondents who rated the area as important or most important as a ranking indicator, research in (a) biofuels and renewable energy was clearly the top choice with 85.2% of respondents indicating that it was important or very important and only 3.7% indicating that it was less or least important.

Food safety and water quality ranked second and third, respectively. Over 70% of respondents marked them important or most important. Food security, production agriculture, and soil quality ranked fourth, fifth, and sixth, respectively, with over 60% of respondents indicating that they are important or most important research areas.

The lowest-ranking areas were nutrition and obesity, private forestland management, and community and economic development, ranking tenth through twelfth, respectively.

Related policy issues: labor

The final question in this section asked farmers to indicate their opinion regarding the importance of four labor issues facing agriculture and whether federal policy should address them (table 16). As with the previous question, respondents used a scale of 1 = least important to 5 = most important. Don't know or no opinion was also an option.

Labor availability—The availability of seasonal laborers had the highest percentage of important or most important responses, 55.1%. Availability of full-time ag laborers ranked second, with 47.9% of respondents rating it as important or most important.

Guest worker program—While 39.4% rated a foreign guest worker program as important or most important for federal policy to address, 31.1% indicated it was less important or least important and a fourth (24.8%) were neutral.

Table 15. Idaho farmers' preferences on research funding priorities.

Related policy issues: Expenditures of research funds	Least important	Less important	Neutral	Important	Most important	Don't know/No opinion
Q32. If research funds were available to certain areas, which ones are most important?						
(a) Biofuels and renewable energy	1.1%	2.6%	8.8%	24.8%	60.4%	2.3%
(b) Biotechnology	5.5%	6.6%	27.3%	30.5%	24.4%	5.7%
(c) Production agriculture	4.6%	4.0%	24.6%	33.8%	29.5%	3.5%
(d) Biosecurity (plant, animal, and food systems)	4.1%	9.3%	31.6%	27.8%	22.6%	4.6%
(e) Food security	3.2%	4.6%	21.2%	37.5%	31.2%	2.3%
(f) Food safety	2.0%	4.3%	18.9%	38.1%	34.4%	2.3%
(g) Nutrition and obesity	13.5%	13.5%	31.5%	22.6%	14.9%	4.0%
(h) Air quality	5.5%	8.6%	31.0%	32.2%	19.5%	3.2%
(i) Soil quality	3.5%	6.3%	26.2%	36.6%	24.5%	2.9%
(j) Water quality	2.6%	3.7%	19.9%	37.2%	34.3%	2.3%
(k) Private forestland management	10.1%	14.1%	30.7%	25.0%	15.8%	4.3%
(l) Community and economic development	9.2%	11.6%	32.1%	28.6%	13.9%	4.6%

Table 16. Idaho farmers' opinions on the importance of using federal policy to address labor issues facing agriculture.

Related policy issues: Labor	Least important	Less important	Neutral	Important	Most important	Don't know/No opinion
Q33. From the following list of labor issues affecting agriculture, indicate how important it is to address the issue with federal policy.						
(a) Availability of full-time agricultural laborers	12.5%	10.0%	24.5%	27.1%	20.8%	5.1%
(b) Availability of seasonal agricultural laborers	10.5%	9.4%	20.7%	27.0%	28.1%	4.3%
(c) Foreign guest worker program	21.7%	9.4%	24.8%	17.7%	21.7%	4.8%
(d) Public services and needs in communities of immigrant agricultural workers	20.6%	12.9%	26.1%	23.2%	11.2%	6.0%

Public services for immigrant workers—On the issue of public services and needs in communities of immigrant ag workers, nearly as many respondents indicated that this was less important or least important (33.5%) as indicated it was important or most important (34.4%).

Personal data: age, gender, education, and ethnicity

Age—As with previous policy surveys, this one shows an aging Idaho farmer (figure 1). Over one-fifth of the respondents (22.2%) were over age 65 and only 13.6% were under age 45. Roughly one-third of the respondents were in two age cohorts: 45-54 (30.7%) and 55-64 (33.5%).

Gender—Figure 2 shows the gender of respondents, 91% male and 9% female.

Education—Figure 3 shows the education level completed by respondents. Well over a third of respondents (37.7%) had a bachelor's degree or advanced degree.

Ethnicity and race—Only 1% of respondents indicated that they were of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin (figure 4). Almost all respondents (98.8%) were white (figure 5). The next largest racial group was Asian with 0.6%.

Figure 3. Education level completed by Idaho survey respondents.

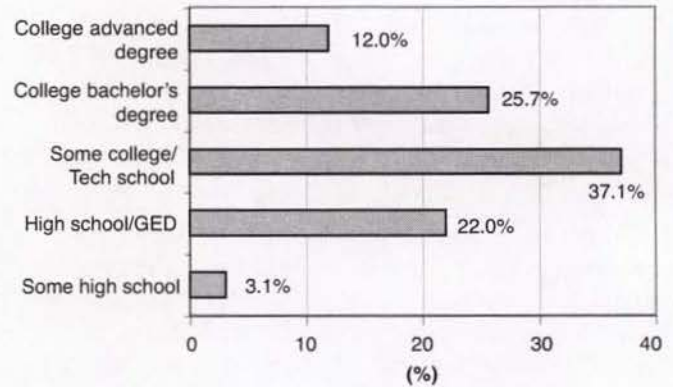


Figure 4. Idaho survey respondents who are Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin or ethnic background.

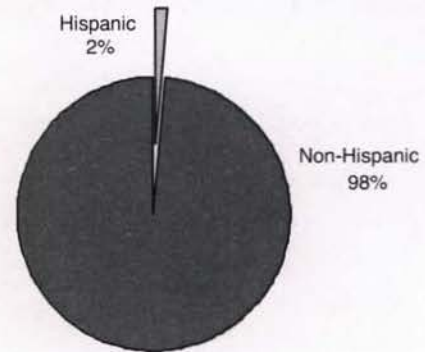


Figure 1. Age of Idaho survey respondents.

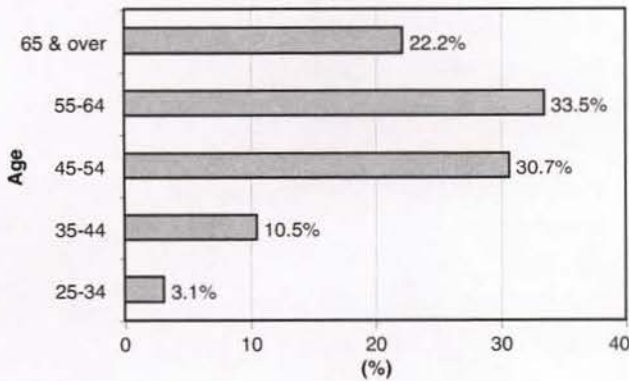


Figure 2. Gender of Idaho survey respondents.

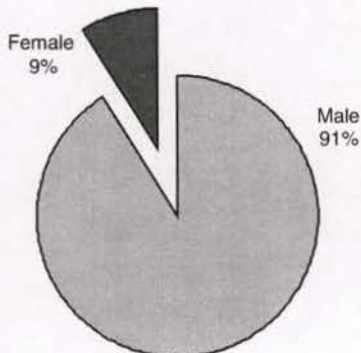
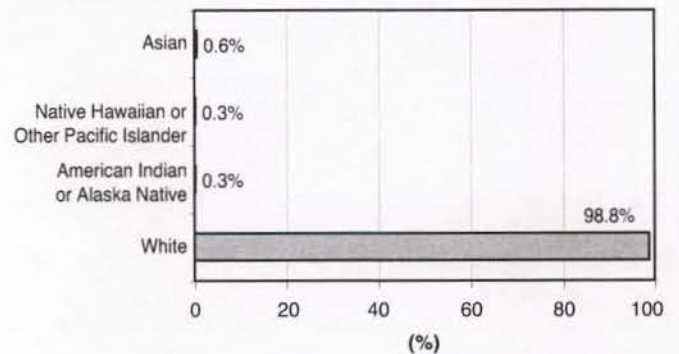


Figure 5. Race of Idaho survey respondents.



Personal data: farm size, organic sales, farm income by commodity, and program participation

Farm size—Figure 6 shows the breakdown of respondents by value of ag products sold, an indicator of size. Respondents in the small farm size with less than \$100,000 in sales comprised 46.5% of respondents. Medium-sized farms with sales greater than \$100,000 and less than \$250,000 made up 22% of respondents, and large-sized farms, those with sales greater than \$250,000, were 31.5% of respondents. As mentioned earlier, the sample was stratified with one-third drawn from each of these farm sizes.

Income from various commodities—Farmers were also asked to indicate their income sources by specifying the percentage derived from a list of 19 commodities or commodity categories (table 17). To simplify the presentation of data, responses were put in one of three categories: 0% of sales, greater than 0% and less than 100%, and 100%. Food and feed grains, cattle and calves, and forages were the most prevalent, with 50.8%, 46.6%, and 33.7% of respondents indicating some income from these commodities, respectively.

Organic sales—The survey also asked for the percentage of sales from organic products in recent years, table 18. While 92.4% indicated no organic sales, 4.8% indicated 100% of sales from organic products and another 2.8% indicated some organic sales.

Family income from farming—The survey asked respondents to indicate the percentage of family income derived from farming or ranching, figure 7. Just under 61% indicated farming or ranching as the source of at least 50% of family income.

Participation in government programs—Figure 8 shows respondents' participation in eight government programs. By far the largest participation was in com-

Table 17. Idaho survey respondents' percentage of total farm or ranch cash receipts from various sources.

Personal data: Income from various commodities	0%	Greater than zero & less than 100%	100%
Q39. Source of farm/ranch cash receipts:			
(a) Food and feed grains	49.1%	45.1%	5.7%
(b) Soybeans and other oil seeds	97.4%	2.6%	0.0%
(c) Cotton	99.7%	0.3%	0.0%
(d) Dry beans, dry peas, lentils, and chickpeas	87.4%	12.6%	0.0%
(e) Peanuts	99.4%	0.6%	0.0%
(f) Sugarbeets and sugar cane	90.6%	9.1%	0.3%
(g) Tobacco	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
(h) Fruits, tree nuts, and berries	98.6%	1.4%	0.0%
(i) Vegetables, melons, and potatoes	84.6%	14.3%	1.1%
(j) Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod	94.9%	4.6%	0.6%
(k) Forages	66.3%	30.3%	3.4%
(l) All other crops	84.3%	14.9%	0.9%
(m) Aquaculture	98.6%	0.9%	0.6%
(n) Cattle & calves	53.4%	32.9%	13.7%
(o) Dairy cattle and dairy products	92.0%	5.7%	2.3%
(p) Hogs & pigs	99.1%	0.9%	0.0%
(q) Sheep, goats, and their products	96.3%	2.6%	1.1%
(r) Poultry and poultry products	97.1%	2.0%	0.9%
(s) All other livestock and livestock products	92.6%	5.7%	1.7%

Table 18. Idaho survey respondents with organic product sales.

Personal data: Organic sales	Respondents
0% of total sales	92.4%
> 0% and < 100% of total sales	2.8%
100% of total sales	4.8%

Figure 6. Farm size of Idaho survey respondents by value of ag products sold.

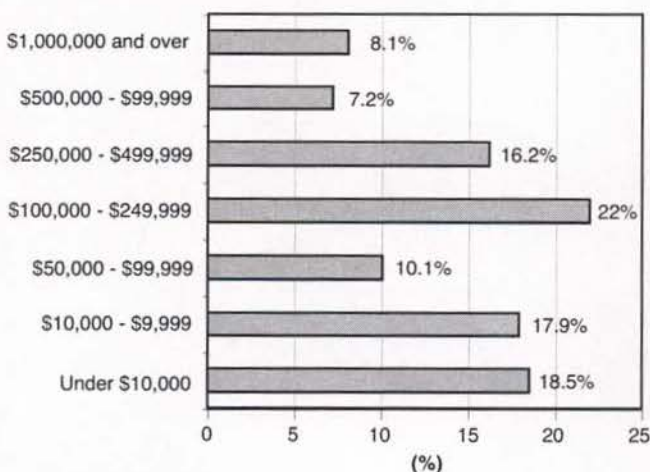
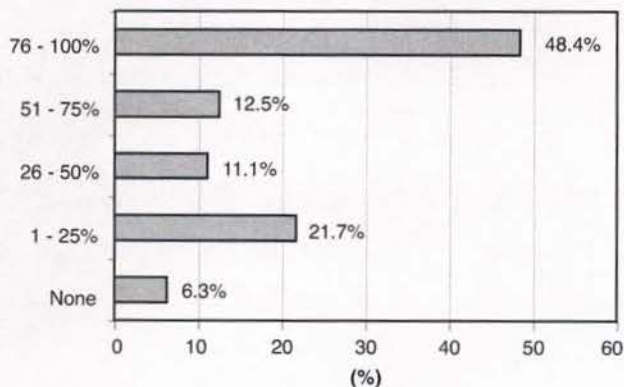


Figure 7. Percentage of family income earned from farming or ranching by Idaho survey respondents.



modity programs, with 62.2% of respondents having participated. Disaster assistance programs had the second highest participation with 26.8%.

Personal data: land tenure, farm succession, and small farm definition

Land tenure—Figure 9 shows the percentage of land farmed by respondents that they owned. The largest percentage (57.2%) owned over 75% of the land, while 6.2% owned none of the land.

Farm succession—What will happen to the farm/ranch operation when the respondent retires was another question on the survey, with six alternative responses (table 19). The largest percentage of respondents (40.7%) indicated that their children would operate the farm. Over one-fourth (27.9%) indicated that someone outside the family would take over, and a somewhat surprising 20.3% indicated that the farm would be converted to non-farm use.

Definition of small farm—The final question asked farmers to indicate what level of ag product sales defines a small farm (figure 10). Just over one-fifth (20.8%) indicated that a small farm could not be easily defined by sales. Sales of less than \$100,000 had the next highest percentage, 17.8%.

Table 19. Idaho farmers' expectations on who will operate their farm/ranch when they retire.

Personal data: Farm succession	Respondents
Q40. When you are no longer operating your farm or ranch, what do you expect will happen to the operation?	
(a) Spouse will operate	2.9%
(b) Children will operate	40.7%
(c) Other relatives will operate	4.4%
(d) Non-relative currently involved in the operation will operate	3.8%
(e) Individuals not involved in the current operation will operate	27.9%
(f) Farm converted to a non-farm use	20.3%

Figure 9. Percentage of land farmed by Idaho respondents that is owned.

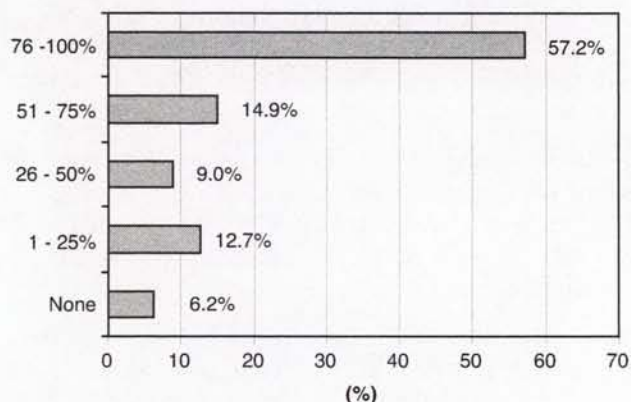


Figure 8. Level of participation in government programs by Idaho survey respondents.

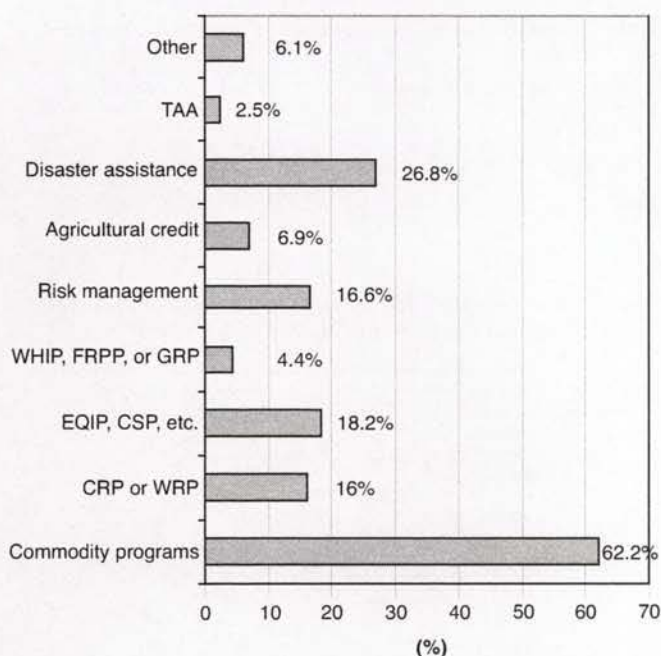
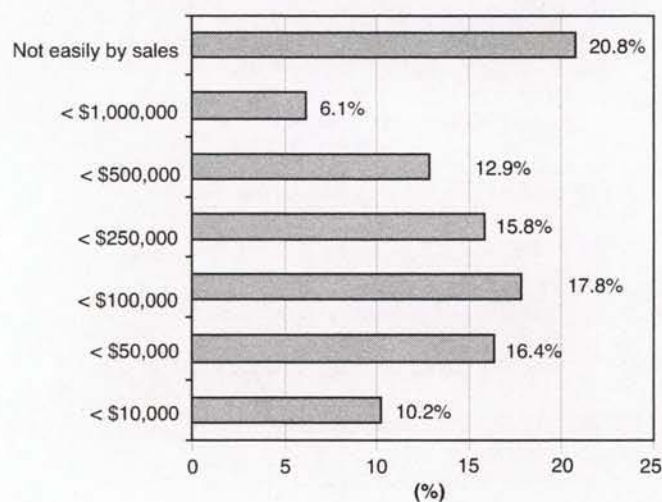
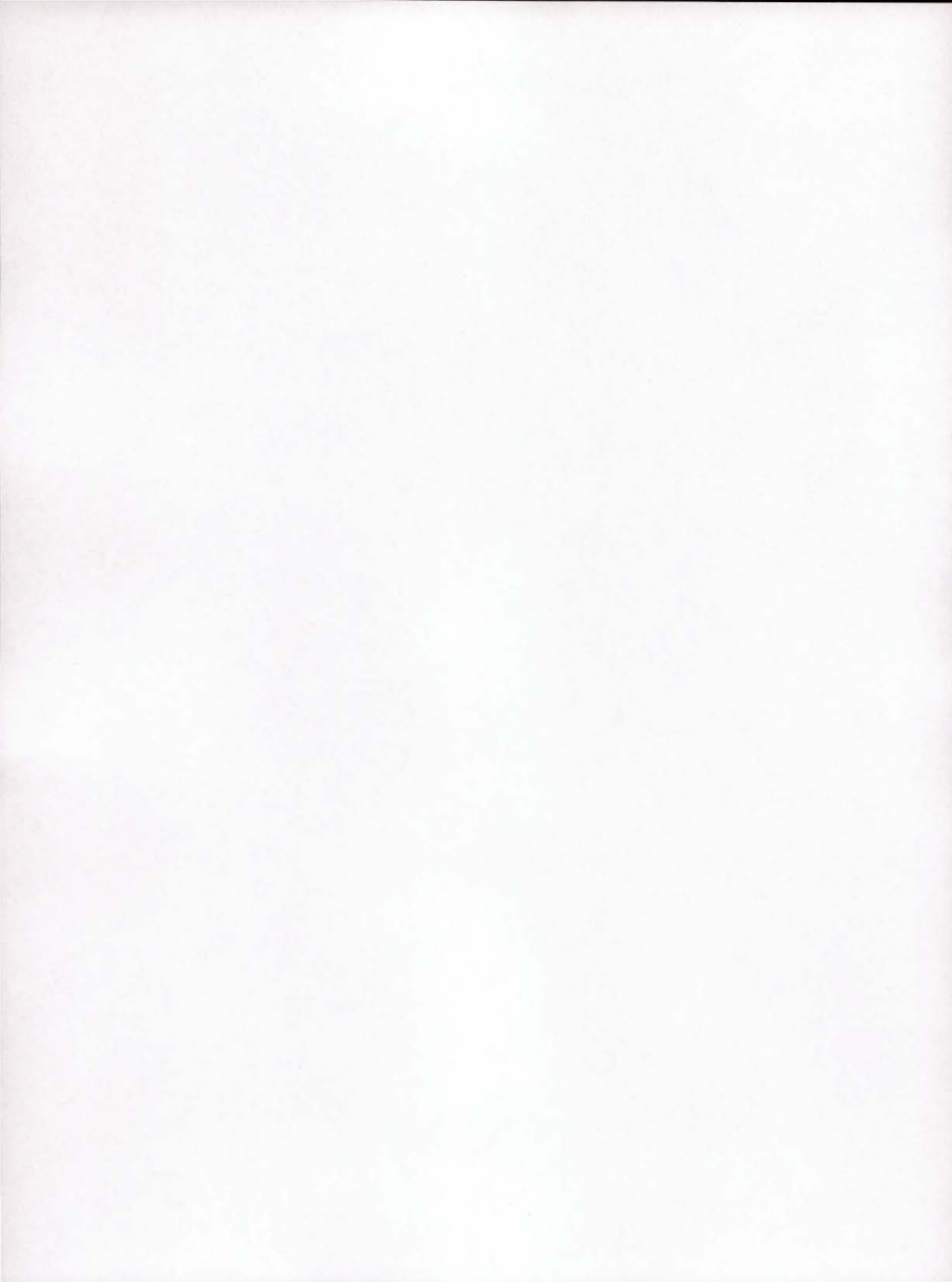


Figure 10. Idaho survey respondents' views on the level of sales that should be used to define a small farm.









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