



***ISSUE ANALYSIS***  
North Carolina Farmers

prepared for  
The Nature Conservancy

November 2003

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Methodology	1
Group Ratings	1
Farmer Profile	2
Communication Sources	4
Attitudes toward Conservation Practices	5
Property Rights Issue	6
Future of Farming	6
North Carolina Farmland Preservation Trust	6
Attitudes toward PDR	7
Contact with State Legislators	10
Participation in Agricultural District Program	10
Attitudes toward Agricultural Policies	11
Conclusions	13
Strategy Considerations	14
Questionnaire	<i>Appendix A</i>
Cross Tabulations	<i>Appendix B</i>

## Methodology

Four hundred farmers in Statewide North Carolina were interviewed in a random sample taken November 19-22, 2003. Respondents were screened for owning farm land in North Carolina. The sample was balanced according to all known demographic factors. All interviews were conducted by telephone. The margin of error for this survey is  $\pm 4.9\%$ , with a 95% confidence level.

**\*\* NOTE: ALL COLUMNS MAY NOT EQUAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING OF DECIMALS.**

## Group Ratings

Favorability ratings were measured for The North Carolina Department of the Environment and Natural Resources, The Farm Bureau, The Nature Conservancy, Your local Conservation District, North Carolina Department of Agriculture, Trust for Public Land, American Farmland Trust, Cooperative Extension, and your local land trust. Possible responses included very favorable, favorable, unfavorable, very unfavorable, recognize the name but can't rate, and don't recognize the name.

	<b>POS/NEG</b>	<b>VF</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>UNF</b>	<b>VUNF</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>DR</b>
<b>NC DOE &amp; NResources</b>	<b>50:18</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>08%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Farm Bureau</b>	<b>87:05</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>03%</b>	<b>02%</b>	<b>07%</b>	<b>02%</b>
<b>TNC</b>	<b>22:11</b>	<b>07%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>05%</b>	<b>06%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Local Conservation</b>	<b>76:04</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>03%</b>	<b>01%</b>	<b>09%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>NC Dep of Agriculture</b>	<b>85:07</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>05%</b>	<b>03%</b>	<b>07%</b>	<b>02%</b>
<b>TPL</b>	<b>17:08</b>	<b>04%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>03%</b>	<b>04%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>65%</b>
<b>Amer Farmland Trust Coop</b>	<b>12:03</b>	<b>04%</b>	<b>08%</b>	<b>01%</b>	<b>02%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Cooperative Extension</b>	<b>83:03</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>02%</b>	<b>01%</b>	<b>06%</b>	<b>08%</b>
<b>local land trust</b>	<b>18:04</b>	<b>05%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>03%</b>	<b>01%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>67%</b>

By combining the "very favorable" and "favorable" responses into a single positive category, and by combining the "very unfavorable" and "unfavorable" into a single negative category, a positive-to-negative ratio can be computed for the ratings of each of the individuals tested in this survey. Using this approach, several points become apparent.

Fifty percent of North Carolina farmers give the Department of Environment and Natural Resources a positive rating. Those who farm between 250-500 acres and 35-49 year old farmers give this agency higher positive ratings. Farmers over the age of 65 are less familiar with this agency.

The Farm Bureau receives a positive rating from 87% of the farmers and a negative rating from only 5% in this survey. Their ratings are high among all subgroups.

The Nature Conservancy receives a 22:11 rating from the farmers. Sixty-seven percent lack sufficient information to be able to rate them. This finding is consistent across all subgroups.

Farmers give their local conservation district a 76:4 rating. The ratings tend to be even more positive among those who farm between 250-500 acres and 500-1500, those who earn most of their income from farming, 35-49 year old farmers, and men.

The Department of Agriculture receives an 85:7 rating with higher marks coming from those farming fewer than 40 acres, those farming between 500-1500 acres, and 35-49 year old farmers.

Trust for Public Land receives a 17:8 rating from the farmers. This finding is consistent across all subgroups.

American Farmland Trust receives a 12:3 rating. This finding is consistent across all subgroups.

Cooperative Extension receives an 83:3 rating from farmers. Those farming between 250-500 acres and 500-1500 acres and 35-49 year old farmers give them even higher positive ratings.

Farmers are not familiar with their local land trusts. They only give them an 18:4 rating. This finding is consistent across all subgroups.

### **Farmer Profile**

#### ***Do you...***

<b><i>farm the land yourself</i></b>	<b>47%</b>
<b><i>rent it to someone else to farm</i></b>	<b>37%</b>
<b><i>both</i></b>	<b>16%</b>
<b><i>refused</i></b>	<b>1%</b>

Virtually half of the farmers farm the land themselves. This response is even higher among those farming between 250-500 and 500-1500 acres, those earning most of their income from farming, and 35-49 and 50-64 year old farmers. Those farming fewer than 40 acres and between 40-250, those earning less than half their income from farming, farmers over the age of 65, and women tend to rent the land to someone else.

#### ***Do you tend someone else's land?***

<b><i>yes</i></b>	<b>47%</b>
<b><i>no</i></b>	<b>53%</b>

Forty-seven percent of farmers say they tend to someone else's land. This response tends to be higher among those farming between 250-500 acres and 500-1500, those earning most of their income from farming, 35-49 year old farmers and 50-64 year old farmers, and men. Farmers over the age of 65, women, those farming fewer than 40 acres and between 40-250 acres and those earning less than half their income from farming say they do not tend someone else's land.

**Do you live on the land that you farm?**

<b>yes</b>	<b>81%</b>
<b>no</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>refused</b>	<b>0%</b>

A strong majority of farmers say they live on the land they farm. This is particularly true among men.

**What crops do you grow?**

<b>corn</b>	<b>58%</b>
<b>soybeans</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>tobacco</b>	<b>63%</b>
<b>vegetables like cucumbers and peppers</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>timber</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>livestock like pigs, cattle, dairy cattle, or poultry</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>cotton</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>hay</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>other</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>don't know/refused</b>	<b>1%</b>
<b>all</b>	<b>1%</b>

Soybeans, tobacco and corn are the leading crops grown by farmers in North Carolina. Cotton is also grown by a quarter of the state's farmers. A higher percentage of farmers in the east say they grow corn (64%), soybeans (78%), tobacco (64%), and cotton (43%). The overall findings are consistent in the central part of the state; although 21% of the farmers in this region say they grow hay and only 13% say cotton.

**Communication Sources**

**When you want information about conservation techniques, including information about technical and financial assistance, where are you most likely to look for it? At the . . .**

<b>Conservation District</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Natural Resource Conservation Service</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Cooperative Extension</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>a land trust</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>a neighbor</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>never seek info</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>other</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>unsure</b>	<b>9%</b>

The Cooperative Extension is cited by 42% of the farmers as the source of information about conservation techniques. An even higher percentage of those farming between 250-500 acres and 500-1500 acres and those earning most of their income from farming say they receive their information from Cooperative Extension.

***If you want information about a new farming practice, which of the following would be the best for you:***

<b><i>having a one-on-one conversation with someone who knows about it</i></b>	<b>39%</b>
<b><i>getting written information about it through the mail or in a local store</i></b>	<b>9%</b>
<b><i>attending a conference with other farmers to learn about it</i></b>	<b>12%</b>
<b><i>touring demonstration sites where the technique is being used</i></b>	<b>17%</b>
<b><i>all the above (do not read)</i></b>	<b>11%</b>
<b><i>none</i></b>	<b>8%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>6%</b>

Having a one-on-one conversation with someone who understands farming practices is the preferred form of communication by North Carolina farmers. This finding is consistent across all subgroups.

### **Attitudes toward Conservation Practices**

***To improve the quality of North Carolina’s rivers and streams, there are a number of possible actions which can be taken. I am going to read you a list of these. Please tell me if you would support or oppose each one.***

***buffer zones of plants and trees to keep farming and development from going all the way to the edge of the rivers and streams***

<b><i>strongly support</i></b>	<b>42%</b>
<b><i>somewhat support</i></b>	<b>33%</b>
<b><i>somewhat oppose</i></b>	<b>6%</b>
<b><i>strongly oppose</i></b>	<b>5%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>14%</b>

Seventy-five percent of farmers support the idea of buffer zones with 42% in strong support. Support tends to be even higher among those farming between 250-500 acres and 35-49 and 50-64 year old farmers.

***a program for the restoration of wetlands***

<b><i>strongly support</i></b>	<b>28%</b>
<b><i>somewhat support</i></b>	<b>33%</b>
<b><i>somewhat oppose</i></b>	<b>10%</b>
<b><i>strongly oppose</i></b>	<b>10%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>19%</b>

Sixty-one percent support a program for the restoration of wetlands with 35-49 year old farmers in stronger support.

***better planning by state and local governments to manage development near waterways***

<b><i>strongly support</i></b>	<b>43%</b>
<b><i>somewhat support</i></b>	<b>34%</b>
<b><i>somewhat oppose</i></b>	<b>5%</b>
<b><i>strongly oppose</i></b>	<b>7%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>11%</b>

Seventy-seven percent support better planning to manage development near waterways. Farmers between the ages of 35-49 and those farming between 500-1500 acres are even more supportive.

**Property Rights Issue**

***Some people say there are too many government regulations on how the land can be used, and the government is taking away too many private property rights from individuals. Do you feel this is a . . .***

<b><i>serious problem for you</i></b>	<b>31%</b>
<b><i>somewhat of a problem for you</i></b>	<b>39%</b>
<b><i>is not really a problem for you</i></b>	<b>29%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>2%</b>

Seventy percent of farmers say governmental regulations are at least somewhat of a problem for them with 31% saying too many regulations is a serious problem. This response is even higher among those farming between 500-1500 acres.

## **Future of Farming**

***Would you say that your children will probably continue farming the land that you now farm?***

<b><i>yes</i></b>	<b><i>43%</i></b>
<b><i>no</i></b>	<b><i>48%</i></b>
<b><i>refused</i></b>	<b><i>9%</i></b>

Forty-eight percent of farmers say their children will probably not continue farming the land they now farm. This response is higher among those farming between 40-250 acres, men, farmers in the eastern part of the state, and those earning half their income from farming. A majority of women, those farming between 250-500 and between 500-1500 acres, and those earning most of their income from farming say they expect their children to continue farming their land.

## **North Carolina Farmland Preservation Trust**

***The state of North Carolina has a fund which helps pay for the preservation of farmland called the North Carolina Farmland Preservation Trust. Regarding this program have you heard . . .***

<b><i>a lot</i></b>	<b><i>6%</i></b>
<b><i>a little</i></b>	<b><i>33%</i></b>
<b><i>not really anything</i></b>	<b><i>60%</i></b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b><i>1%</i></b>

Sixty percent of farmers have heard virtually nothing about this fund and 33% have only heard a little. A higher percentage of women, those farming less than 40 acres, and farmers over the age of 65 say they have not heard anything about this trust. Awareness is somewhat greater among men and farmers between the ages of 35-49.

***How much information have you gotten about the Farm and Ranch land Protection Program, which is re-authorized and expanded in the 2002 Farm Bill -***

<b><i>a lot</i></b>	<b><i>2%</i></b>
<b><i>a little</i></b>	<b><i>22%</i></b>
<b><i>not really anything</i></b>	<b><i>71%</i></b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b><i>5%</i></b>

Once again, a strong majority of farmers say they have not really heard anything about this program. This is particularly true for those farming less than 40 acres.



**Attitudes toward PDR**

***Some states use a Purchase of Development Rights program to protect farmland. The program pays willing landowners for conservation easements to their property. The landowner could still farm the land, pass it along to their heirs, or sell the land for agricultural uses, but this land could not be developed with subdivisions or industrial plants. The land would remain private property and does not have to be open to the public. Do you . . .***

<b><i>strongly favor</i></b>	<b>33%</b>
<b><i>somewhat favor</i></b>	<b>31%</b>
<b><i>somewhat oppose</i></b>	<b>13%</b>
<b><i>strongly oppose this idea</i></b>	<b>9%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>15%</b>

A strong majority of farmers support this idea (64:22). Those farming between 500-1500 acres, those earning most of their income from farming, and 35-49 year old farmers are in stronger support.

***I am going to read you some statements. Do you agree or disagree?***

***I would be afraid to sell my development rights because I don't think I'd get what the land is really worth.***

<b><i>strongly agree</i></b>	<b>42%</b>
<b><i>somewhat agree</i></b>	<b>25%</b>
<b><i>somewhat disagree</i></b>	<b>12%</b>
<b><i>strongly disagree</i></b>	<b>8%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>13%</b>

Sixty-seven percent of North Carolina farmers are in agreement with this statement with 42% strongly agreeing. Agreement tends to be even higher among farmers between the ages of 35-49 and over the age of 65.

***The problem with selling the development rights is they require farmers to tie up their land indefinitely.***

<b><i>strongly agree</i></b>	<b>36%</b>
<b><i>somewhat agree</i></b>	<b>24%</b>
<b><i>somewhat disagree</i></b>	<b>11%</b>
<b><i>strongly disagree</i></b>	<b>12%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>18%</b>

Sixty percent of North Carolina farmers are in agreement with this statement with 36% strongly agreeing. Agreement tends to be even higher among farmers between the ages of 35-49 and 50-64 and those farming between 250-500 acres. The agreement margin narrows among voters over the age of 65.

***It is not worth selling development rights because a farmer can make so much more money if a developer wants to buy the land.***

<b><i>strongly agree</i></b>	<b>37%</b>
<b><i>somewhat agree</i></b>	<b>27%</b>
<b><i>somewhat disagree</i></b>	<b>9%</b>
<b><i>strongly disagree</i></b>	<b>11%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>16%</b>

Sixty-four percent of North Carolina farmers are in agreement with this statement, with 37% strongly agreeing. Agreement tends to be even higher among farmers between the ages of 35-49, those farming between 500-1500 acres, and men.

***Almost no one is buying land in my area in order to farm it.***

<b><i>strongly agree</i></b>	<b>54%</b>
<b><i>somewhat agree</i></b>	<b>17%</b>
<b><i>somewhat disagree</i></b>	<b>12%</b>
<b><i>strongly disagree</i></b>	<b>12%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>6%</b>

Seventy-one percent of North Carolina farmers are in agreement with this statement, with 54% strongly agreeing. Agreement tends to be even higher among farmers in the central part of the state.

***No one but developers are buying tracts of land as big as my farm.***

<b><i>strongly agree</i></b>	<b>36%</b>
<b><i>somewhat agree</i></b>	<b>20%</b>
<b><i>somewhat disagree</i></b>	<b>16%</b>
<b><i>strongly disagree</i></b>	<b>16%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>13%</b>

Fifty-six percent of North Carolina farmers are in agreement with this statement, with 36% strongly agreeing. Agreement tends to be even higher among farmers between the ages of 50-64, those farming between 250-500 acres, and those in the central part of the state. A plurality of 35-49 year old farmers and farmers in the eastern part of the state disagree.

***I would be more willing to sell development rights easements to my farm if it was for a specific time period, such as for twenty-five years rather than forever.***

<b><i>strongly agree</i></b>	<b>17%</b>
<b><i>somewhat agree</i></b>	<b>25%</b>
<b><i>somewhat disagree</i></b>	<b>11%</b>
<b><i>strongly disagree</i></b>	<b>32%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>16%</b>

Farmers are virtually divided in their agreement with this statement (42:43). Agreement tends to come from those farming between 500-1500 acres, farmers between the ages of 35-49 and 50-64, and men. Disagreement comes from women and those farming fewer than 40 acres and between 250-500 acres.

***I would be more willing to sell development rights on my land if I still had the right to build homes for family members on the land.***

<b><i>strongly agree</i></b>	<b>31%</b>
<b><i>somewhat agree</i></b>	<b>29%</b>
<b><i>somewhat disagree</i></b>	<b>9%</b>
<b><i>strongly disagree</i></b>	<b>20%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>12%</b>

Sixty percent of North Carolina farmers are in agreement with this statement with 31% strongly agreeing. Agreement tends to be even higher among men.

***I would be more willing to sell development rights to my farm if I could retain some acreage to sell off for development.***

<b><i>strongly agree</i></b>	<b>15%</b>
<b><i>somewhat agree</i></b>	<b>26%</b>
<b><i>somewhat disagree</i></b>	<b>13%</b>
<b><i>strongly disagree</i></b>	<b>33%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>13%</b>

A plurality of farmers disagree with this statement (41:46). Disagreement is higher among farmers earning most of their income from farming, those in the central part of the state, those farming fewer than 40 acres, and farmers over the age of 65. A plurality of farmers between the ages of 35-50 and 50-64 and men tend to agree.

## **Contact with State Legislators**

***How often do you communicate with your state legislator about issues that concern you -***

<b><i>very often</i></b>	<b>5%</b>
<b><i>sometimes</i></b>	<b>21%</b>
<b><i>seldom</i></b>	<b>31%</b>
<b><i>never</i></b>	<b>42%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>01%</b>

Seventy-three percent of farmers seldom or never are in contact with their state legislators. A higher percentage of those who farm fewer than 40 acres and farmers over the age of 65 say they never contact their state legislators. A slightly higher percentage of those farming between 500-1500 acres and 35-49 year old farmers say they sometimes contact their legislators.

## **Participation in Agricultural District Program**

***Does your county currently have a voluntary Agricultural District Program***

<b><i>yes</i></b>	<b>26%</b>
<b><i>no</i></b>	<b>18%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>57%</b>

Fifty-seven percent of farmers are unsure as to whether their county has such a program. Women and farmers in the eastern portion of the state are even less sure while 32% of those who farm between 500-1500 acres and 35-49 year old farmers say their counties do have such a program.

***Is your farm enrolled in this program?***

<b><i>yes</i></b>	<b>49%</b>
<b><i>no</i></b>	<b>38%</b>
<b><i>unsure/refused</i></b>	<b>13%</b>

Forty-nine percent of those who say their counties do have an agricultural district program say their farms are enrolled in the program. This response is more prevalent among those who make most of their income from farming, 50-64 year old farmers, and those in the central part of the state. Those who make less than half their income from farming and farmers over the age of 65 are more likely to say their farm is not enrolled.

**Would you be willing to restrict development on your land for a longer period if you could get additional benefits?**

<b>yes</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>no</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>unsure</b>	<b>30%</b>

**Attitudes toward Agricultural Policies**

***I am going to read you a number of policies being considered by counties in North Carolina. Please tell me if you feel each one would be helpful or not helpful in terms of helping agriculture in North Carolina.***

***creating a transferable development rights program***

<b>very helpful</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>somewhat helpful</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>not very helpful</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>not helpful at all</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>unsure</b>	<b>37%</b>

Thirty-seven percent of farmers are unsure whether creating a transferable development rights program would be helpful or not. Of those who have an opinion, 34% believe it would be helpful, while 29% think it would not be helpful. Men and farmers between the ages of 35-49 think it would be helpful, while a plurality of farmers over the age of 65, those farming fewer than 40 acres and between 500-1500, say this program would not be helpful. Women and farmers in the eastern part of the state are divided in their opinions.

***providing additional use-value tax incentives for agreeing to short-term land protection***

<b>very helpful</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>somewhat helpful</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>not very helpful</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>not helpful at all</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>unsure</b>	<b>28%</b>

This policy is perceived more positively by the farmers (58:15). An even higher percentage of 35-49 and 50-64 year old farmers, men and those farming between 500-1500 acres say this policy would be helpful.

***hiring local agricultural economic development specialists***

<b><i>very helpful</i></b>	<b>17%</b>
<b><i>somewhat helpful</i></b>	<b>35%</b>
<b><i>not very helpful</i></b>	<b>14%</b>
<b><i>not helpful at all</i></b>	<b>16%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>19%</b>

A majority (52:30) say hiring economic development specialists would be helpful. This response is stronger among 35-49 year old farmers.

***providing business planning assistance and grants from farmers agreeing to short-term land protection***

<b><i>very helpful</i></b>	<b>24%</b>
<b><i>somewhat helpful</i></b>	<b>41%</b>
<b><i>not very helpful</i></b>	<b>7%</b>
<b><i>not helpful at all</i></b>	<b>7%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>21%</b>

Sixty-five percent of farmers say offering business planning assistance and grants would be helpful. This response is stronger among those farming between 500-1500 acres, 35-49 year old farmers, and men.

***creating an agricultural zoning classification***

<b><i>very helpful</i></b>	<b>19%</b>
<b><i>somewhat helpful</i></b>	<b>30%</b>
<b><i>not very helpful</i></b>	<b>12%</b>
<b><i>not helpful at all</i></b>	<b>13%</b>
<b><i>unsure</i></b>	<b>27%</b>

Forty-nine percent of farmers say creating an agricultural zoning classification would be helpful, while 25% say it would not be very helpful. A higher percentage of those farming between 250-500 and 500-1500 acres, those earning half their income from farming, 35-49 and 50-64 year old farmers and men say this would be helpful to farmers. Responses weaken among those farming fewer than 40 acres and farmers over the age of 65.

## Conclusions

- **Farmers are not hostile toward the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.**

One theory was farmers would be hostile toward the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. However, 50% of the farmers rated them positively and only 18% negatively. The farmers are very positive toward both state and private agencies and groups who work with farmers, such as the Department of Agriculture and the Farm Bureau. Generally, the farmers have little knowledge of any of the conservation groups which were tested.

- **Thirty-seven percent of the farmers say they rent their land to someone else to farm.**

While more than one-third of the farm land owners say someone else farms their land, only 19% of those interviewed do not live on the land. Therefore, nearly one-in-five farm land owners live on the land but do not personally farm the land.

- **Conservation techniques are generally acceptable to the farmers.**

Ideas such as buffer zones along the rivers and streams and restoration of wetlands is acceptable to the farmers. However, there is also some concern for property rights. Seventy percent of the farmers interviewed said they consider the loss of property rights a problem.

- **The farmers express serious doubts about the future of farming in the state.**

Nearly half the farmers (48%) say their children will not farm the land they own in the future. Seventy-one percent expressed the opinion that no one is buying land for farming, and 56% say the only people who will buy the land are developers.

- **While the Purchase of Development Rights is an acceptable idea, the farmers see pragmatic problems.**

Sixty-four percent of the farmers say they favor a PDR program. However, two-thirds of them also say they feel that by selling the development rights, they would not get what the land is really worth. And, 64% of the farmers say it is not worth selling the development rights because developers pay so much more money for the land. Sixty percent of the farmers agree with the statement that the problem with selling development rights is it requires a farmer to tie up the land indefinitely.

## **Strategy Considerations**

While the farmers do not appear to be a group who would object to a state land conservation effort, they might not be strong advocates of the program. It is obvious that the farmers have a "conservation ethic" and are open to considering conservation techniques. As a group, farmers have never been a group who express optimism about the future of farming. However, this generation of farmers has been presented with a somewhat attractive alternative. They believe the most profitable course of action is to sell land to developers.

To engage the farm community as a true ally of this effort, there is a need for an education program aimed at this group. It would be helpful if these farmers could be shown a PDR program in another state which has been successful. In addition, there is a strong need for the farmers to be introduced to some land conservation groups in order to create some relationships. If the farmers are totally unfamiliar with the groups advocating a state conservation program, it will be much easier for opponents to sow seeds of doubt and mistrust of the groups.

As part of the overall education process about land conservation, it will be essential that some resources are directly used to increase the knowledge of the programs and the potential benefits of the programs for farmers. At this point, they are not an enemy, but they are not strong supporters. Their help and input must be sought out and they must become part of a coalition. If this effort is not made, opponents can play upon the farmers concerns for property rights and their future to create a powerful enemy of the conservation effort.



## ***Appendix A***

Area: North Carolina (Agriculture survey)

---

**Good evening. We are taking a survey of people in North Carolina who either own farm land or operate farms. Do you or your spouse own or operate at least 40 acres of farmland in North Carolina?**

**(If “yes” continue. If “no,” terminate the interview.)**

**Would you be willing to take about fifteen minutes to share your views about farming and its future in North Carolina. We are not selling anything. We simply want your opinion about some issues.**

**(If “yes” continue. If “no,” terminate the interview.)**

---

1. Do you or your family own farm land? (1) yes (2) no (3) refused

(1) 98% (2) 02% (3) 0%

**If yes ask Question 2. Otherwise, skip to question 3.**

2. Do you (1) farm the land yourself or do you (2) rent it to someone else to farm? (3) both (4) refused

(1) 47% (2) 37% (3) 16% (4) 01%

3. Do you tend someone else's land? (1) yes (2) no

(1) 47% (2) 53%

4. Do you farm (1) less than 40, (2) 40 to 250 acres, (3) 250 to 500 acres, or (4) 500 to 1500 acres (5) more than 1500 acres? (6) unsure/refused

(1) 12% (2) 55% (3) 17% (4) 10% (5) 04% (6) 03%

5. Do you live on the land that you farm? (1) yes (2) no (3) refused

(1) 81% (2) 19% (3) 0%

6. Would you say (1) most of your income is from farming, or (2) only half or less of your income is from farming? (3) refused

(1) 37% (2) 61% (3) 02%

7. What crops do you grow?

- 58% (1) corn
- 71% (2) soybeans
- 63% (3) tobacco
- 09% (4) vegetables like cucumbers and peppers
- 08% (5) timber
- 19% (6) livestock like pigs, cattle, dairy cattle, or poultry
- 26% (7) cotton
- 15% (8) hay
- 38% (9) other
- 01% (10) don't know/refused
- 01% (11) all

8. When you want information about conservation techniques, including information about technical and financial assistance, where are you most likely to look for it? At the . . .

- 16% (1) Conservation District
- 10% (2) Natural Resource Conservation Service
- 42% (3) Cooperative Extension
- 0% (4) a land trust
- 06% (5) a neighbor
- 06% (6) never seek info
- 13% (7) other
- 09% (8) unsure

9. If you want information about a new farming practice, which of the following would be the best for you:

- 39% (1) having a one-on-one conversation with someone who knows about it;
- 09% (2) getting written information about it through the mail or in a local store;
- 12% (3) attending a conference with other farmers to learn about it;
- 17% (4) touring demonstration sites where the technique is being used.
- 11% (5) all the above **(do not read)**
- 08% (6) none
- 06% (7) unsure

To improve the quality of North Carolina's rivers and streams, there are a number of possible actions which can be taken. I am going to read you a list of these. Please tell me if you would (1) strongly support, (2) somewhat support, (3) somewhat oppose, or (4) strongly oppose each one. (5) unsure

10. buffer zones of plants and trees to keep farming and development from going all the way to the edge of the rivers and streams

75:11

(1) 42% (2) 33% (3) 06% (4) 05% (5) 14%

11. a program for the restoration of wetlands

61:20

(1) 28% (2) 33% (3) 10% (4) 10% (5) 19%

12. better planning by state and local governments to manage development near waterways

77:12

(1) 43% (2) 34% (3) 05% (4) 07% (5) 11%

13. Some people say there are too many government regulations on how the land can be used, and the government is taking away too many private property rights from individuals. Do you feel this is a (1) serious problem for you (2) somewhat of a problem for you, or (3) is not really a problem for you? (4) unsure

(1) 31% (2) 39% (3) 29% (4) 02%

14. Would you say that your children will probably continue farming the land that you now farm? (1) yes (2) no (3) unsure

(1) 43% (2) 48% (3) 09%

15. The state of North Carolina has a fund which helps pay for the preservation of farmland called the North Carolina Farmland Preservation Trust. Have you heard (1) a lot, (2) a little, or (3) not really anything about this program? (4) unsure

(1) 06% (2) 33% (3) 60% (4) 01%

16. How much information have you gotten about the Farm and Ranch land Protection Program, which is re-authorized and expanded in the 2002 Farm Bill - (1) a lot, (2) a little, or (3) not really anything? (4) unsure

(1) 02% (2) 22% (3) 71% (4) 05%

17. Some states use a Purchase of Development Rights program to protect farmland. The program pays willing landowners for conservation easements to their property. The landowner could still farm the land, pass it along to their heirs, or sell the land for agricultural uses, but this land could not be developed with subdivisions or industrial plants. The land would remain private property and does not have to be open to the public. Do you (1) strongly favor, (2) somewhat favor, (3) somewhat oppose, or (4) strongly oppose this idea? (5) unsure

64:22

(1) 33% (2) 31% (3) 13% (4) 09% (5) 15%

I am going to read you some statements. Please tell me if you (1) strongly agree, (2) somewhat agree, (3) somewhat disagree, or (4) strongly disagree. (5) unsure

### Rotate order of Presentation

18. I would be afraid to sell my development rights because I don't think I'd get what the land is really worth.

67:20

(1) 42% (2) 25% (3) 12% (4) 08% (5) 13%

19. The problem with selling the development rights is they require farmers to tie up their land indefinitely.

60:23

(1) 36% (2) 24% (3) 11% (4) 12% (5) 18%

20. It is not worth selling development rights because a farmer can make so much more money if a developer wants to buy the land.

64:20

(1) 37% (2) 27% (3) 09% (4) 11% (5) 16%

21. Almost no one is buying land in my area in order to farm it.

71:24

(1) 54% (2) 17% (3) 12% (4) 12% (5) 06%

22. No one but developers are buying tracts of land as big as my farm.

56:32

(1) 36% (2) 20% (3) 16% (4) 16% (5) 13%

23. I would be more willing to sell development rights easements to my farm if it was for a specific time period, such as for twenty five years rather than forever.

42:43

(1) 17% (2) 25% (3) 11% (4) 32% (5) 16%

24. I would be more willing to sell development rights on my land if I still had the right to build homes for family member on the land.

60:28

(1) 31% (2) 29% (3) 09% (4) 20% (5) 12%

25. I would be more willing to sell development rights to my farm if I could retain some acreage to sell off for development.

41:46

(1) 15% (2) 26% (3) 13% (4) 33% (5) 13%

I am going to read you the names of some groups in North Carolina. As I read each one, please tell me if you have a (1) very positive, (2) somewhat positive, (3) somewhat negative, or (4) very negative opinion of each group. If you do not know the group, just say so. (5) just recognize/can't rate, or (6) don't recognize/refused

26. The North Carolina Department of the Environment and Natural Resources

50:18

(1) 12% (2) 38% (3) 10% (4) 08% (5) 20% (6) 13%

27. The Farm Bureau

87:5

(1) 46% (2) 41% (3) 03% (4) 02% (5) 07% (6) 02%

28. The Nature Conservancy

22:11

(1) 07% (2) 16% (3) 05% (4) 06% (5) 13% (6) 54%

29. Your local Conservation District

76:4

(1) 36% (2) 40% (3) 03% (4) 01% (5) 09% (6) 12%

30. North Carolina Department of Agriculture

85:7

(1) 43% (2) 42% (3) 05% (4) 03% (5) 07% (6) 02%

31. Trust for Public Land

17: 8

(1) 04% (2) 13% (3) 03% (4) 04% (5) 10% (6) 65%

32. American Farmland Trust

12:3

(1) 04% (2) 08% (3) 01% (4) 02% (5) 12% (6) 74%

33. Cooperative Extension

83:3

(1) 49% (2) 35% (3) 02% (4) 01% (5) 06% (6) 08%

34. your local land trust

18:4

(1) 05% (2) 13% (3) 03% (4) 01% (5) 12% (6) 67%

35. How often do you communicate with your state legislator about issues that concern you - (1) very often (2) sometimes, (3) seldom, or (4) never? (5) unsure

(1) 05% (2) 21% (3) 31% (4) 42% (5) 01%

36. Does your county currently have a voluntary Agricultural District program? (1) yes (2) no (3) unsure

(1) 26% (2) 18% (3) 57%

**If (1) yes, ask question 37. Otherwise, skip to question 39.**

37. Is your farm enrolled in this program? (1) yes (2) no (3) unsure/refused

(1) 49% (2) 38% (3) 13%

**If (1) yes, ask question 38. Otherwise, skip to question 39.**

38. Would you be willing to restrict development on your land for a longer period if you could get additional benefits? (1) yes (2) no (3) unsure

(1) 54% (2) 16% (3) 30%

I am going to read you a number of policies being considered by counties in North Carolina. Please tell me if you feel each one would be (1) very helpful, (2) somewhat helpful, (3) not very helpful, or (4) not helpful at all in terms of helping agriculture in North Carolina. (5) unsure

39. creating a transferable development rights program

34:29

(1) 05% (2) 29% (3) 16% (4) 13% (5) 37%

40. providing additional use-value tax incentives for agreeing to short-term land protection

58:15

(1) 18% (2) 40% (3) 06% (4) 09% (5) 28%

41. hiring local agricultural economic development specialists

52:30

(1) 17% (2) 35% (3) 14% (4) 16% (5) 19%

42. providing business planning assistance and grants from farmers agreeing to short-term land protection

65:15

(1) 24% (2) 41% (3) 07% (4) 07% (5) 21%

43. creating an agricultural zoning classification

49:25

(1) 19% (2) 30% (3) 12% (4) 13% (5) 27%

**I NEED TO KNOW A COUPLE OF THINGS, JUST FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES**

44. Please tell me which of the following age category you are in: (1) 18-34, (2) 35-49, (3) 50-64, (4) 65 or older? (5) refused

(1) 02% (2) 14% (3) 40% (4) 44% (5) 0%

**THAT'S ALL THE QUESTIONS. THANK YOU AND HAVE A NICE EVENING.**

45. Sex: (1) male, (2) female

(1) 50% (2) 50%

46. Geography : (1) West (2) Central (3) East

county name: \_\_\_\_\_



## ***Appendix B***