

## INTRODUCTION

This approximately 20-minute survey is to be completed by the person in your household who has the primary responsibility for decisions about farm/land management. An online version of the survey is available to take at:

<https://cropland.wufoo.com/forms/farm-survey/>

The survey focus is on your opinions and perspectives about agriculture-related topics. **Your input will help shape planning and management tools that will benefit farm operators and land owners such as you.** The survey also requests information about your farm, the crops you grow, and their yields. The format is similar to that of the USDA Census of Agriculture Survey, so we can compare our results to the general trends in the broader agricultural community.

**To enter the drawing to win one of three \$50 Visa gift cards,** be one of the first 300 surveys completed and returned by February 16, 2015. Survey responses will remain anonymous and separate from contact information used in the drawing, and prize winners will be notified by the end of February.

At the end of the survey you will have the opportunity to leave any additional comments for the researchers. Your name will not be connected to any of your responses to survey questions. You may choose not to answer any question. Participation is voluntary and not participating will have no effect on your relationship or status with any organization that forwarded you information about this survey or with the University of Illinois. If at any time you decide that you do not wish to complete the survey, you can stop. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study or any concerns or complaints, please contact the University of Illinois Institutional Review Board at 217-333-2670 or via email at [irb@illinois.edu](mailto:irb@illinois.edu). You may also contact Sarah Lovell, Principal Investigator for the MPCs Project, at [stlovel@illinois.edu](mailto:stlovel@illinois.edu).

***Please confirm that your participation in this survey is voluntary by checking the box:***

*Helpful Definitions:*

**Marginal land** is land where crop yield is reduced (not productive) due to high soil erosion, poor drainage, steep slopes, or low soil fertility. Riparian zones (the land leading up to streams/rivers), wetlands, weedy areas, and highly disturbed land (quarry, brownfield) are also included.

**Ecosystem Services** are benefits received *by people* from the land and natural resources. They can range from services provided by insects (pollination), wetlands (water filtration), and plants (food). Conventional agriculture focuses on growing plants for food, but we believe the land can provide additional services that will benefit the farmer, the community, and the environment.

We will find out the needs and opportunities for local foods (restaurants, grocers, farmers markets) or local biomass (heat, hay, bedding) We plan to determine marketing routes and needs for farm's products. A helpful resource for farmers is Market Maker at [il.foodmarketmaker.com](http://il.foodmarketmaker.com)

**Multifunctional Perennial Cropping Systems (MPCs)** offer the opportunity to integrate several ecosystem services into the landscape. We want to equip farmers with the tools to design, plan and use these systems to optimize the benefits. **MPCs** make use of **perennial** crops that can be grown on marginal land, but also provide a harvestable product such as fruit/nuts, **biomass** for energy, or materials for livestock.

**Perennial crops** live multiple years (>3), only require tillage at planting, and have shown the capacity to perform multiple ecosystem services in the Midwest. Perennial crops may take 2+ years to establish, and woody fruit and nut trees often take 3-5 years before significant harvests begin.

Bioenergy crops are crops whose **biomass** is used to derive energy either directly as a fuel or by their conversion to liquid or gas fuels. Biomass includes agricultural crops, grasses (miscanthus, switch grass, and prairie), and woody (poplars and willows) energy crops.

**Land conservation government programs:** Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP), Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP).

**PART ONE:** *Please use your most current farm information (2014).*

**1.** Do you have areas on your farm that are often less productive than the typical agricultural land in your area (marginal land)? *Check appropriate box.*

- YES  $\implies$  How many acres? \_\_\_\_\_ acres  
 NO  $\implies$  Skip to question 2.

**1a.** Are these areas less productive because they are: *check all that apply*

- Along tree line  
 Low areas in field  
 Shaded areas  
 Along the river/creek  
 Sloped areas  
 On poor soils

**1b.** Have you enrolled these areas in government programs such as CRP?

- YES  $\implies$  How many acres? \_\_\_\_\_ acres  
 NO

**1c.** Would you convert the less productive areas to another system such as MPCs (defined above)?

- YES  $\implies$  How many acres? \_\_\_\_\_ acres  
 NO

**1d.** What costs would you be willing to expend to establish a new crop system in these areas?

1	2	3	4	5
None	Some	Moderate	Much	Substantial

2. Assuming there is a market for the specified crops, rate your level of interest in transitioning portions of your farm into the following types of Multifunctional Perennial Cropping Systems:

	Not Applicable	Definitely Would Not Participate	Maybe Would Not participate	Maybe Would Participate	Definitely Would Participate
Hay/forage crop	1	2	3	4	5
Bioenergy crops such as switch grass	1	2	3	4	5
Orchards	1	2	3	4	5
Woody Floral Crops	1	2	3	4	5
Tree/shrub nut crop such as hazelnut	1	2	3	4	5
Tree/shrub fruit crop such as currants	1	2	3	4	5
Forestry for timber	1	2	3	4	5
Other _____	1	2	3	4	5

**PART TWO: A. Ecosystem Services** *Ecosystem Services defined on pg 1.*

1. Rate each of the following **services** on their importance to you. Then for each service choose which level **decisions** about managing this service should be made at.

Service	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important	Very Important	Scale		
						Local	Regional	National
Soil fertility	1	2	3	4	5	Local	Regional	National
Insect Control	1	2	3	4	5	Local	Regional	National
Insect Pollination	1	2	3	4	5	Local	Regional	National
Water Quality	1	2	3	4	5	Local	Regional	National
Food Provisioning	1	2	3	4	5	Local	Regional	National
Fuel Provisioning	1	2	3	4	5	Local	Regional	National
Building Materials	1	2	3	4	5	Local	Regional	National
Biodiversity	1	2	3	4	5	Local	Regional	National
Climate Regulation	1	2	3	4	5	Local	Regional	National
Recreational Use of Land	1	2	3	4	5	Local	Regional	National

**2. How important is the conservation of a variety of different plants on the farm (biodiversity)?**  
Such as native prairie species, wetland species, etc.

1	2	3	4	5
Not Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important	Very Important

**3. How important is it to provide habitat for wildlife? Such as wild game, quail/pheasant, amphibian populations.**

1	2	3	4	5
Not Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important	Very Important

**4. How concerned are you about agricultural run-off and soil loss into riparian zones/waterways?**

1	2	3	4	5
Not Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Neutral	Concerned	Very Concerned

## **B. Motivators**

**1. If your neighbors were using a perennial system on their marginal land, would you be more or less willing to use a perennial system?**

1	2	3	4	5
Less Willing	Somewhat Less Willing	Neither	Somewhat Willing	More Willing

**2. In some agricultural areas, neighboring farmers have worked together to develop a cooperative agreement for managing land to improve environmental health (e.g., water quality). Would you join a cooperative agreement that creates a connected network of perennial cover of forage, trees, etc.?**

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not	Probably Not	Not Sure	Probably	Definitely

**3. Would you be interested in a custom landscape design for a Multifunctional Perennial Cropping System for your land?**

- YES  
 NO  $\implies$  Skip to question 2.

**3a.** If yes, which material would be **most** useful in designing the system? *Select one.*

- a. Maps of the farm to identify opportunity lands
- b. Planting plans of appropriate crop species
- c. Economic projections of future profitability
- d. Description of labor needed to maintain system
- e. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**3b.** Would you want to be involved in the design and planning activities for a new cropping system?

- YES
- NO

**4.** What is your anticipated level of involvement with the Multifunctional Perennial Cropping System program, if it is shown to be as profitable (or more) than CRP rental payments?

1	2	3	4	5
No involvement	Some Involvement	Moderately Involved	Much Involved	Very involved

**5.** In which way do you consider farming an occupation?: *select one*

- a. Primary Occupation
- b. Secondary Occupation

**6.** How involved are you in making decisions about your farm’s management **currently** and **in the future (e.g. in the next 20 years)**?

	No Involvement	Some Involvement	Moderately Involved	Involved	Very Involved
Current	1	2	3	4	5
Future	1	2	3	4	5

**7.** How important is it to have a well-established market for your goods?

1	2	3	4	5
Not Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Important	Very Important

**8.** How long would you be willing to wait for a cropping system to become productive (as with woody fruits/nuts)? *perennial crops defined on pg 1*

1 year or less	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 or more years
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**9.** Land currently under the Conservation Reserve Program does not allow harvesting of a product, and has a contract period. Once a contract period is over, would you plant trees or shrubs that could be harvested for fruits, nuts, timber, etc.?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not	Probably Not	Not Sure	Probably	Definitely

**10.** Would you be more likely to do a program like the Conservation Reserve Program if you could actually harvest products from it, like hay/nuts/berries, etc.?

1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not	Probably Not	Not Sure	Probably	Definitely

**11.** How much projected **income per acre** would be needed for you to attempt growing perennial systems? \$\_\_\_\_\_

**12.** What type of incentive would be needed **most** for you to attempt growing perennial systems?

*Select one*

- Very Willing, no incentive needed
- Free plant material
- More information
- Tax exemption
- Existing Market

**13.** Other than economics, what would motivate you to try a multifunctional perennial system?

*Check all that apply*

- Recreational/ Cultural benefits
- Biodiversity Benefits
- Water Quality
- Soil Management
- Reduced inputs and tractor use

**C. Alternative Lease Arrangements** For the next two questions select a, b, c, d, or e from the options below.

- a. **Cash lease/fixed cash lease:** tenant pays the landlord a cash sum (per acre or lump sum) for the rights to use the land and farm resources.
- b. **Flexible cash rent lease/flex lease:** flexible with the yield and market value of crops.
- c. **Crop share lease:** tenant pays landowner a percentage of harvested crops and landowner pays portion of costs.
- d. **Custom farming contract:** landowner contracts with a custom operator to perform all the machine operations on the land.

1. Which type of leasing agreement would you prefer if renting land from a landowner? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which type of leasing agreement would you prefer if leasing your land to a tenant? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How willing would you be to sub-lease a portion of your marginal land to a small farmer to grow and harvest Multifunctional Perennial Crops?

1	2	3	4	5
Not Willing		Some-what willing		Very Willing

4. **As a renter**, do you prefer short (monthly, 1 year) or long (1+ years) lease agreements?
  - a. Short
  - b. Long
5. **As a landowner**, do you prefer short (monthly, 1 year) or long (1+ years) lease agreements?
  - a. Short
  - b. Long

6. When leasing land from a landowner, **how much freedom do you have** in management decisions?

1	2	3	4	5
Not applicable	None	Some	Most	All

7. When leasing land to others, what management methods do you prefer to see your tenants use?  
 Describe \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**8. Contact Information** *You are not required to provide your contact information. Your responses can remain anonymous. Filling out the contact information will give us the chance to work further with you if you indicated high interest in Multifunctional Perennial Cropping Systems.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART THREE:** *Please provide the most recent information (2014). Answers are not used for contact or identification purposes; they are used to help classify responses.*

**A. Demographic Information**

1. In what year you were born? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your gender? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the highest grade of school you have completed or highest degree you have received?
  - a. Some High School
  - b. High school graduate (or equivalent)
  - c. Trade or Vocational Degree
  - d. Some college (1-4 years, no degree)
  - e. Associate’s degree (including occupational or academic degrees)
  - f. Bachelor’s degree (BA, BS, AB, etc)
  - g. Master’s Degree (MA, MS, MENG, MSW)
  - h. Graduate or Professional degree (MD, DDC, JD)
  - i. Doctorate degree (PhD, EdD)

**B. Farm size and land use type** *Use farm information from 2014. Enter zero if not applicable.*

1. What is the number of acres you own? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the number of acres you RENTED or LEASED FROM OTHERS? \_\_\_\_\_

<u>INCLUDE</u>	<u>EXCLUDE</u>
Land worked by you on shares	Land used on per-head or animal unit month (AUM) basis
Land used rent free in exchange for services, payment of taxes, etc	
Federal, State, and railroad land leased on a per acre basis	
Land rented or leased by you for cash	

**3. What is the number of acres you RENTED or LEASED TO OTHERS? \_\_\_\_\_**

<u>INCLUDE</u>	<u>EXCLUDE</u>
Land worked on shares by others	Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)
Subleased	Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
Land rented or leased to others for cash	Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP)
Land used rent free in exchange for services, payment of taxes, etc.	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

**4. In what Illinois County was the largest value of your agricultural products raised or produced?**

Principal County Name	State	Number of Acres
_____	_____	_____

**4a. If you also had agricultural activity in any other Illinois county, enter the information:**

Principal County Name	State	Number of Acres
_____	_____	_____

**C. Land-Use** *Of the acres you own (question B1), report for each land type or land-use, the number of acres that apply to each. Report land only once in this section.*

**1. What number of acres do you have in each land-use type?**

<i>Land-Use</i>	<i>Number of Acres</i>
<b>Harvested</b> Include land from which crops were harvested or hay was cut, nursery and greenhouse crops, orchards, vineyards, short rotation woody crops, berries, citrus groves, Christmas trees	
<b>Crops failed or were abandoned</b> Exclude land in orchards and vineyards	
<b>Cultivated summer fallow</b>	
<b>Left idle or used for cover crops/soil improvement</b> Exclude harvested, pastured, or grazed cropland	
<b>Permanent pasture or rangeland</b>	
<b>Woodland pasture</b>	
<b>Woodland</b> Include woodlots, timber tracts, sugar bush	
<b>All other land</b> Exclude land with residences or buildings	
<b>Total acres owned</b>	

2. What is the **number of acres** you have enrolled in Federal and State Agricultural Programs?

<i>Program</i>	<i>Number of Acres</i>
<b>Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)</b>	
<b>Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)</b>	
<b>Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP)</b>	
<b>Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)</b>	
<b>Other _____</b>	
<b>Total number of acres in land conservation programs</b>	

3. What planting system best describes the current use of the land in conservation? *check all that apply*:

- Grasses only
- Grasses and forbs (flowering plants)
- Trees
- Trees and shrubs
- Wetland
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many acres do you have covered under a crop insurance policy? \_\_\_\_\_ acres

4a. Amount received in past year for participation: \_\_\_\_\_ dollars

**Free Response**

5. In what ways do you try to maximize the profits from your land?

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6. When looking for solutions to problems on your farm, where do you seek help or more information?

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7. What policies for government support of crops or land management are most important to you? Explain why.

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8. How willing would you be to sell locally to CSAs, farmer’s markets, or a local specialty crop aggregator? Who do you want to sell your products to?

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9. How do you feel about your current farming practices?

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10. Does the natural world or the environment have an influence on your farming decisions? Explain why.

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**D. Additional Questions**

**1. Farm Finances**

<b>Portion of Income from corn and/or soybean</b>		%
<b>Portion of income from other crops</b>		%
<b>Portion of income from livestock/animals</b>		%
<b>Other Income and portion(s) _____</b>		%
Total Farm Income for 2013 in dollars	\$	

**2. Comments** *Please use this space and the back to leave feedback or comments on this survey and its content.*