

Educational Preferences on Farmland Leasing, Conservation Practices, and Transition Plans: Voices of Iowa Women Farmland Owners

Jingyi Tong, Wendong Zhang

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Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa 50011-1070
www.card.iastate.edu**

*Jingyi Tong is PhD Student, Department of Economics, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50014.
E-mail: jitong@iastate.edu.*

Wendong Zhang is Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50014. E-mail: wdzhang@iastate.edu.

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For questions or comments about the contents of this paper, please contact Wendong Zhang, wdzhang@iastate.edu.

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Educational Preferences on Farmland Leasing, Conservation Practices, and Transition Plans: Voices of Iowa Women Farmland Owners

Jingyi Tong and Wendong Zhang

Ph.D. Student, and Associate Professor

Department of Economics and Center for Agricultural and Rural Development (CARD)

Iowa State University

jitong@iastate.edu, wzhang@iastate.edu

Abstract:

The 2017 Iowa Farmland Ownership and Tenure survey finds that women own nearly half of all acres in Iowa, thus they are an essential group in agriculture and natural resources. However, the significance of this group is overlooked and many women landowners have limited farming experience. The purpose of this study is to improve the knowledge and confidence of women landowners on the use of more equitable farmland leases and access, the adoption of soil and water conservation practices, and the implementation of efficient plans to transition farmland to next-generation owners. Using a sample of 358 responses from women landowners of Iowa farmland, this study provides a timely and informational update on the interests and concerns of women landowners in farmland leasing, conservation practices, and farmland transition plans. The study also summarizes respondents' preferred ways to receive educational programming on these issues, which can be a critical reference for developing educational material for women landowners.

Keywords:

Farmland, Land Ownership, Land Tenure, Farmland Leasing, Estate Planning, Farm Succession, Women Landowners, Women Empowerment, Conservation

JEL Codes:

Q15, Q24, J16, Q16, Q18

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Executive Summary

Owning nearly half of the farmland in Iowa, women landowners play an influential role in decisions that impact agriculture and natural resources. To better understand this demographic, a team of specialists with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is beginning a three-year project to study the needs, challenges, and opportunities of women landowners. Our goal is to bring women landowners together to help answer their questions and empower them to make well-informed decisions on the land they own. Specific goals include the use of equitable leases and other economic incentives to increase conservation and land access for beginning farmers, the adoption of soil and water conservation practices, and the implementation of efficient plans to transition farmland to the next generation of Iowa farm owners. We hope that the research and extension work will develop better farm management materials for women.

We received a total of 358 completed surveys from an eligible sample of 688 landowner respondents during our data collection period from July 30 through October 20, 2021—a response rate of 52%. Of respondents, 92% have some decision-making power and 6.7% are not in a decision-making role (three respondents did not answer). Ninety-two percent of respondents own less than 1,000 acres and the mean farm size is 409 acres. Nearly half of respondents' own farmland in the Northeast, West Central, and Central crop reporting districts and the overall distribution of respondents' farmland is fairly even across crop reporting districts. Ninety percent of respondents are involved in row crop farming and around half exclusively grow row crops. Respondents' ages range from 21 to 98, with a mean age of 63 and 83% of respondents above 50. Ninety-eight percent have married at least once and 23% report being a widow or separated from their partner. Most landowners in the sample own small farms—81.7% had an approximate gross cash farm income in 2020 below \$350,000. The average percentage of off-farm income accounting for the total income is 55.24% for the sample respondents.

As for farm ownership types, 23.5% of respondents are sole owners and most co-owners are joint tenants with the right of survivorship. A spouse is the most common co-owner type among all types of ownership. Fifty-five percent of landowners are involved in farming while 45% are not. Among operating landowners, 32.6% farm part time and 22.3% farm full time. Among the 77.8% of owners with farmland located in the county they live in, 61.4% are operating landowners. However, 22.3% of owners are absentee owners who either live out of the county or out of state, among those 65.3% are non-operating landowners.

The three most common ways owners acquired farmland are: purchasing from non-family, inheritance, and purchasing from family members. More operating owners purchased their land (either from non-family or family members), whereas more non-operating owners inherited their land—farmland is seldom gifted. Overall, landowners own farmland as a source of current or retirement income or for family or sentimental reasons. The majority of operating owners own farmland as a source of current income while non-operating landowners tend to own the land as a source of retirement income or for sentimental reasons.

Fifty-one percent of owners rent at least some of their farmland to farm operators, among those 92% only lease to one or two tenants. Sixty-six percent of operating owners do not lease out their land and farm it themselves; however, 85% of non-operating owners lease their land and let

tenants manage it. A relative is the most common choice for tenants. Thirty-eight percent of owners lease all the farmland they own. Discounted rental rates and market rental rates are almost equally popular among owners. The majority of respondents use a written lease agreement rather than a verbal or mixed agreement, and most owners welcome a fixed cash rental lease over a flexible cash rental lease or crop share agreement. The landowners overall are fairly interested in receiving information on farmland leasing and farm economics. The top three topics that owners are interested in are landowners' responsibilities, production costs and expenses, and economic information of ownership (e.g., return on assets).

For conservation practices, grass waterways, no-till or strip-till, and low till or other conservation tillage are the most commonly practices on owners' farmland. Cover crops and livestock manure management are also common for operating owners. More operating owners use conservation practices than non-operating owners, and more non-operating owners are unsure of the practices used on their land. Few owners do not apply any conservation practices. Over 80% of owners who lease their land out primarily have tenants make decisions on crop varieties (e.g., seed and rotations) and crop inputs (e.g., fertilizer and chemicals). Many more non-operating owners let tenants decide on conservation management than do operating owners. A prime concern for landowners is too many requirements and restrictions and too much paperwork associated with government conservation programs. Agricultural carbon credit programs, government conservation programs, and soil erosion control are the three most popular topics.

For farmland transition, 88% of respondents indicate having a will to transfer ownership now or in the future, among whom half use a written transition plan and half do not. Most owners have at least a potential successor for either farmland management or ownership, and 67.8% have a successor for both farmland management and ownership. Sixty-three percent of owners have consulted an attorney on a transition plan or farm business plan and 20% have not discussed it with anyone. Sons and daughters are the top choices for successors; however, twice as many respondents plan to choose a son as successor even though the respondents are all women landowners. The ages of the potential successors range from 1 to 96 with the mean age of 41. Owners expect around equal possibilities that family will farm the land or rent it out. Most respondents expect their farmland to be inherited by family members with ownership kept but land farmed by tenants or family members. Lack of understanding about different farmland ownership structures and tax implications are the main concerns for respondents, and respondents are most likely to seek information on tax consequences of different transition options, estate and gift tax matters, and farmland and management succession options.

Respondents are indifferent between evenings or mornings for online or in-person information and educational programming, both of which are slightly preferred to afternoons. Operators prefer evenings and non-operators prefer mornings. Overall, respondents prefer virtual information delivery over in-person—the top three information delivery methods are periodic newsletters or e-newsletters, webinars, and two-page fact sheets or infographics. Respondents ranked half-day in-person educational meetings as the fourth-best choice. Operating owners are overall younger and more willing to receive virtual educational information than are non-operating owners. Generally, older respondents prefer printed papers and younger owners prefer virtual or in-person methods.

Over half of the owners are the first or second generation for the farmland parcel they have owned for the longest period. Ninety-two percent of the owners do not feel burdened by the farmland they own or co-own.

Overall, the data show women landowners are more interested in receiving information on farmland leasing and farm management than conservation practices and transition planning. Over 80% of respondents show at least some interest in conservation practices and farmland transition, and operating owners are more interested in these issues than non-operating owners. In addition, owners' comments are mostly about their concerns on taxes and future transitions. Most comments show a positive attitude towards conservation practices and indicate a desire to keep taking care of the land through conservation practices.

I. Introduction

In spring 2021, we contracted Iowa State University's Center for Survey Statistics & Methodology Survey Research Services (CSSM-SRS) to conduct a web/mail survey with female Iowa farmland owners, as women own or co-own almost half of Iowa's agricultural land. The purpose of the survey was to understand the needs of women landowners regarding topics that are both timely and challenging, such as farmland ownership, leasing, conservation practices, and transition plans, so that we can better design educational programming to empower women landowners with long-term agricultural sustainability.

II. Data Collection

We selected a sample of 404 women landowners from recent participants in the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Women in Ag programs, which we supplemented with 324 female Iowa farmland owners from the quinquennial Iowa Farmland Ownership and Tenure Study sample (Zhang, Plastina, and Sawadgo, 2018). The total sample was 728 contacts.

CSSM-SRS staff drafted an invitation letter to the online survey, survey cover letter, and reminder postcard in collaboration with the principal investigators. On July 28, 2021, we sent the invitation letter to the 728 women in the sample with a \$2 bill as an incentive to complete the survey. On August 2, 2021, we sent an email invitation to 268 women in the sample who had not yet completed the online survey for whom there was an email address. On August 10, 2021, we sent a survey packet to 541 non-responders with deliverable addresses. On August 11, 2021, we sent an email reminder to 179 women in the sample with deliverable email addresses who had not completed the online survey. On August 25, 2021, we mailed a reminder postcard to 391 non-responders. On September 2, 2021, we sent a second complete mailing of the survey to 364 non-responders. There were no incentives included in mailings after the initial invitation letter.

III. Survey Outcomes

III. i. Response Rate

The sample consists of 728 women landowners. We classify 40 cases (5.5% of 728) as "Not Eligible" because the sampled person is deceased, not female, or did not own land in Iowa. This resulted in an eligible sample of 688 Iowans.

USPS returned 37 surveys as not deliverable (5.4% of 688). Refusals were received from eight people (1.2% of the eligible sample), either by phone calls or blank surveys returned with notes. We received no response from 286 (41.6% of 688) women landowners.

We received a total of 358 completed surveys, a response rate of 52.0% (358/688). A slightly larger percentage of the sample from the Women in Ag programs responded [58.6% (222/379)] than did the sample from the Iowa Farmland Ownership and Tenure study [43.7% (135/309)].

III. ii. Farmland and Ownership Information

Out of the 358 respondents, around 92% are in a decision-making role, among whom 51% have a great deal of decision-making power and 41% have at least some power. With three respondents not answering, we have 24 (6.7%) participants not in a decision-making role.

Respondents' farmland ownership interest ranges from 3 to 3,000 acres (see Figure 1). The left-skewed distribution shows that 92% of the respondents own a farmland fewer than 1,000 acres with a median size of 300 acres and a mean size of 409.1 acres.

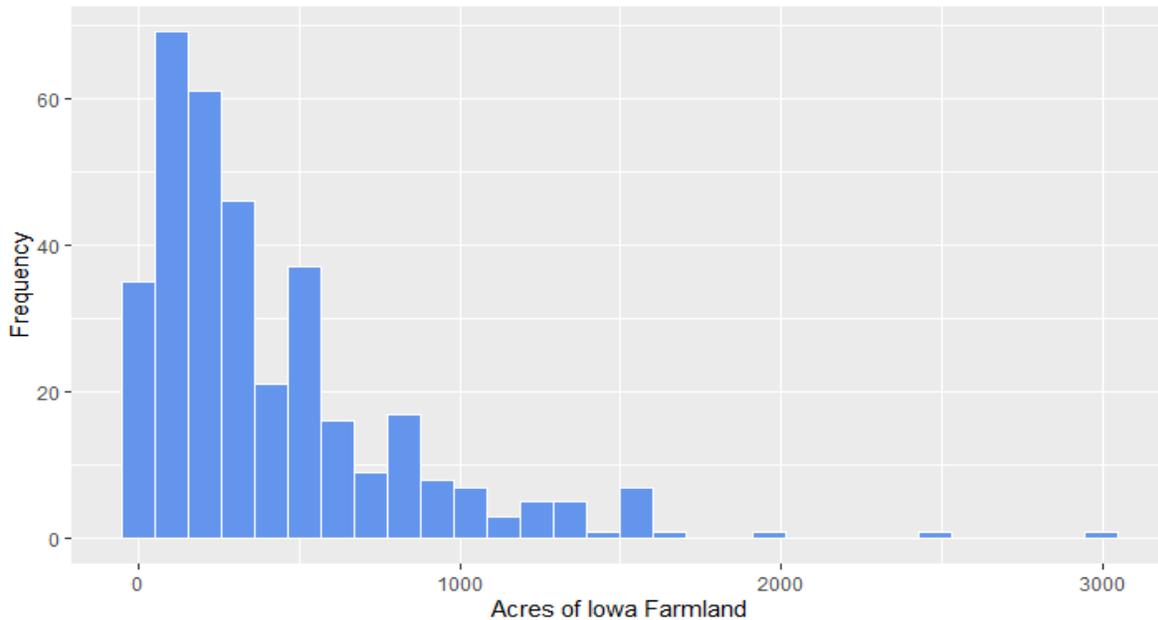


Figure 1. Size of respondents' farms.

As Table 1 shows, nearly half of respondents own farmland in the Northeast, West Central, and Central crop reporting districts. Figure 2 maps the county-level ownership distribution in detail. The number of farms respondents own ranges from 0 to 13 across Iowa counties. Greene County has 13 farmland owner respondents, which is a large outlier; and, except for Greene County, the largest number of farmland owners at the county level is nine. Sixty-four respondents own farmland in two different counties and 23 respondents own farmland in three different counties. There are eight counties where no farmland ownership is reported.

Table 1 also reports the average acres owned by respondents in each crop reporting district. Consistent with the distribution of the number of ownerships, the Northeast, West Central, and Central crop reporting districts still account for nearly half of the total acres. Howard County has the most acres owned by respondents — 4,597 — while Van Buren County has the largest average size — 1,033 acres. Since the respondents only report the total acres they own but did not report the acres separately in each county where they have ownership, we assume all owned acres are located in the primary county where an owner has her largest parcel (most owners have the land located only in one county).

Table 1. Number of Owners and Acres in Crop Reporting Districts

Crop reporting district	Location of Ownership		Mean Acres	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Northwest	46	10.4%	896.08	6.96%
North Central	42	9.5%	1167.82	9.07%
Northeast	58	13.1%	2167.91	16.85%
West Central	73	16.4%	2299.67	17.87%
Central	76	17.1%	1901.92	14.78%
East Central	47	10.6%	1093.80	8.50%
Southwest	32	7.2%	1158.78	9.00%
South Central	31	7.0%	798.91	6.21%
Southeast	39	8.8%	1384.82	10.76%
Total	444		12869.71	

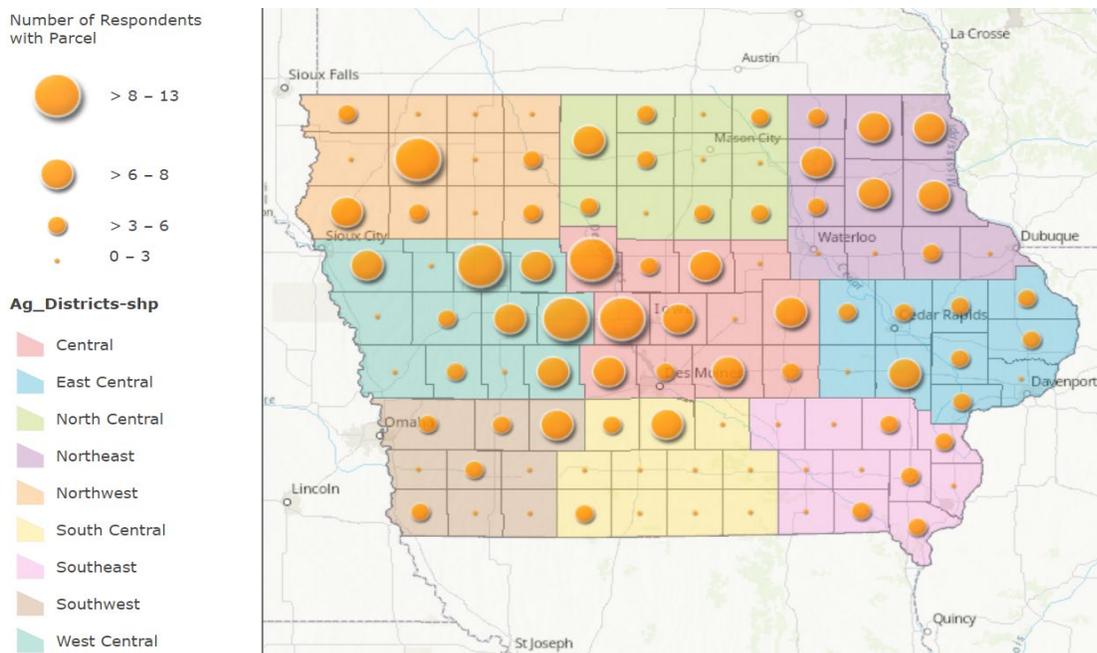


Figure 2. Distribution of respondents' ownership across counties.

Table 2 summarizes the 336 responses on the types of ownership, among which 79 (23.51%) respondents are sole owners and most co-owners are joint tenants with the right of survivorship (respondents can report multiple co-owners but only one type of ownership). Most of these joint tenants are spouses or partners. Spouse is also the most common co-owner type (59.5%) among all types of ownership, followed by sibling (12%).

Table 3 summarizes the 329 responses on the distribution of farmland acres across different types of ownership. The percentage of acres owned by sole owners is 16.93%, which is smaller than the percentage of the number of sole owners (23.51%) in Table 2. Similar to Table 2, joint tenancy with right of survivorship is still the main co-ownership type, accounting for about half of the total acres, and spouses own 70% of all acres among all types of ownership.

Table 2. Number of Respondents across Types of Ownership and Co-owner

Co-owner Ownership	Spouse/ partner	Parents	Children	Sibling	Other relatives	Non- relative	Total
Sole Owner							23.51%
Joint Tenancy	44.35%	0.89%	1.79%	2.08%	0.30%	0%	49.41%
Tenancy in Common	1.19%	0%	0%	1.19%	0%	0%	2.23%
(Limited) Partnership	1.49%	0.89%	0.30%	1.79%	0.89%	0.30%	3.63%
Corporation	3.27%	1.49%	0.60%	1.49%	0.89%	0%	4.47%
LLC	2.98%	0.30%	0.60%	3.27%	0.30%	0%	6.98%
Living Trust	7.14%	0%	0.30%	1.49%	0.60%	0.30%	9.78%
Irrevocable Trust	1.19%	0.30%	1.19%	0.60%	0%	0.30%	3.63%
Other	0%	0%	0.30%	0.60%	0.60%	0%	1.40%
Total	59.50%	3.63%	5.03%	12.01%	3.63%	0.84%	

Table 3. Distribution of Acres across Types of Ownership and Co-owner

Co-owner Ownership	Spouse/ partner	Parents	Children	Sibling	Other relatives	Non- relative	Total
Sole Owner							16.93%
Joint Tenancy	44.57%	0.90%	3.15%	3.18%	0.37%	0.00%	52.17%
Tenancy in Common	2.37%	0.00%	0.00%	0.32%	0.00%	0.00%	2.69%
(Limited) Partnership	1.68%	0.88%	0.88%	1.12%	0.60%	0.06%	5.23%
Corporation	6.37%	4.20%	1.42%	3.77%	2.30%	0.00%	18.06%
LLC	3.97%	0.18%	0.95%	2.61%	0.37%	0.00%	8.08%
Living Trust	7.75%	0.00%	0.00%	1.48%	0.21%	0.52%	9.96%
Irrevocable Trust	3.31%	0.13%	3.26%	1.24%	0.00%	1.10%	9.05%
Other	0.00%	0.00%	0.22%	0.25%	0.20%	0.00%	0.67%
Total	70.03%	6.30%	9.89%	13.96%	4.05%	1.68%	

The majority of respondents (53.3%) farm only row crops and 90% (322) of respondents plant some row crops. Thirteen respondents (3.7%) mentioned at least some of their farmland is enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

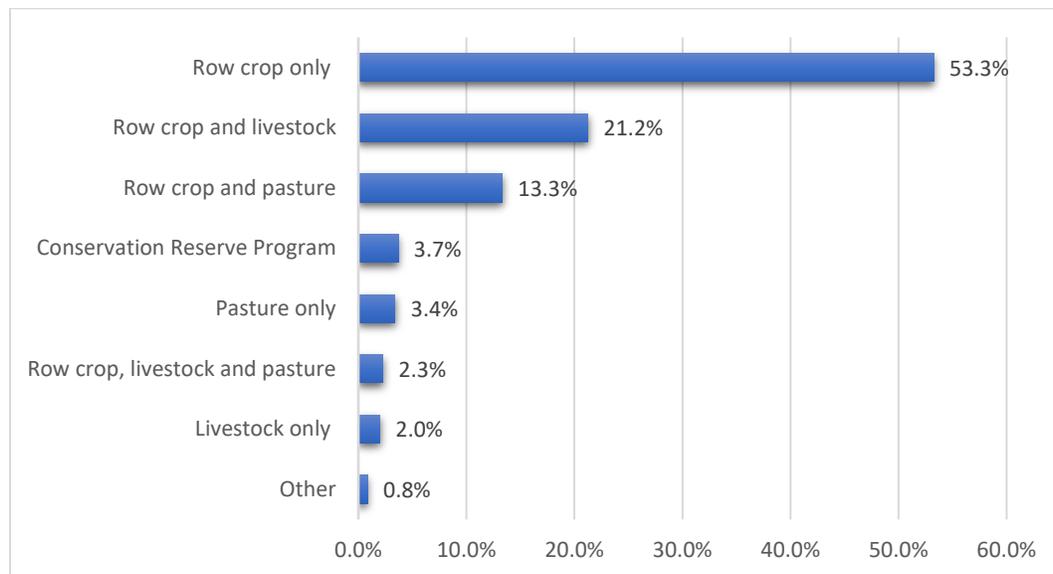


Figure 3. Characteristics of respondents' farms.

Note: We asked respondents to select only one description for their farms.

The number of respondents who farm (55%) their land is higher than those who do not actively farm (45%) their land, and 32.6% of respondents farm part time, whereas only 22.3% farm full time, as shown in Table 4. Nearly half of owners (47.77%) live in the same county they farm in. Only 7.12% of absentee owners farm their land either full time or part time. For non-farming owners, the portion of absentees (15.14%) is slightly higher than owners who farm their lands (7.12%). Of non-operating owners, 22.55% are experienced and 15.43% are inexperienced. Overall, 7.12% of absentees live outside of Iowa, and 15.13% of absentees live in a different county from their farmland.

Table 4. Landowners' Farming Type by Residence

Residence	Total	Full-time farming	Part-time farming	Non-farming		
				Retired	Experienced non-operating owner	Inexperienced non-operating owner
Total	100.00%	22.26%	32.64%	7.12%	22.55%	15.43%
In-county	77.74%	18.99%	28.78%	6.53%	14.24%	9.20%
Out-of-county but in-state	15.13%	2.37%	2.67%	0.30%	6.53%	3.26%
Out-of-state	7.12%	0.89%	1.19%	0.30%	1.78%	2.97%

From the 355 responses shown in Figure 4, the three most common ways owners acquired farmland are: purchased from non-family (57.5%); inherited after someone passed away (42.5%); and, purchased from family members (36.6%). More operating owners purchased their land either from non-family (68.5%) or family members (40.8%) than non-operating owners (47.4% and 33%), whereas fewer operators inherited their land (30.4%) than did non-operators (53.3%). Farmland is seldom a gift (6.2%).

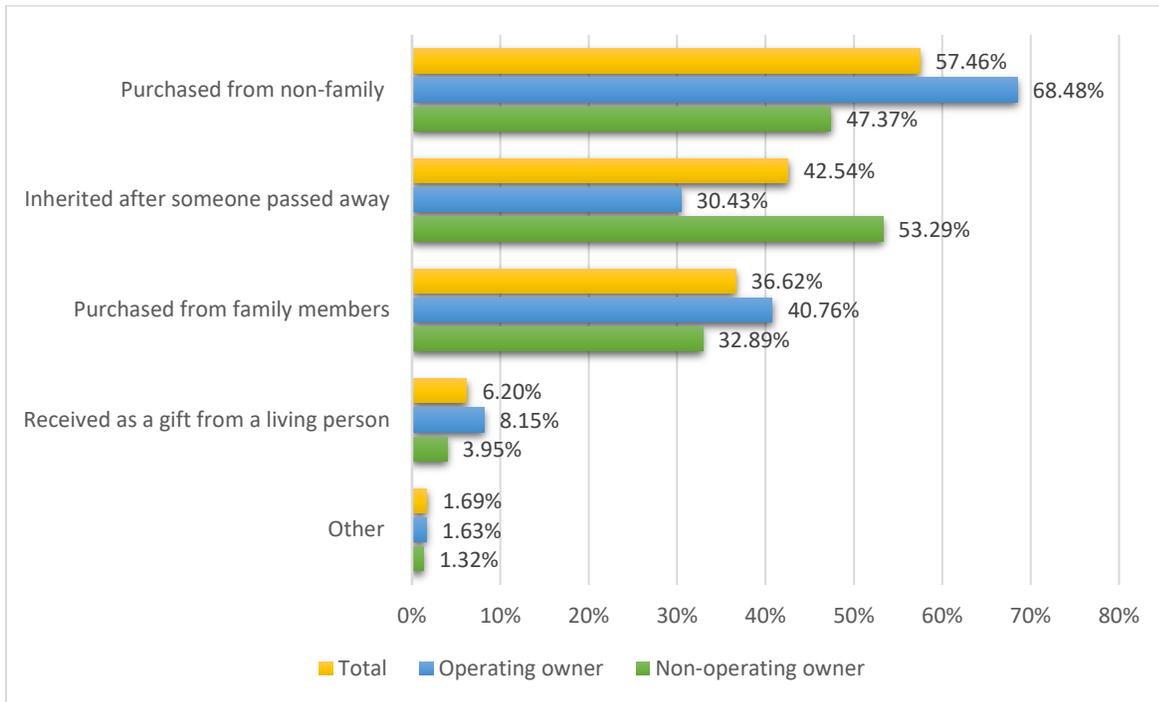


Figure 4. Ways respondents acquired their farmland.

Note: We asked respondents to select all ways in which they acquired farmland.

Figure 5 shows the reasons respondents own farmland. The top three most popular reasons are: using it as a source of current income (58%); using it as a source of retirement income (49%); and, owning it for family or sentimental reasons (44%). Furthermore, 39% said they use farmland as a long-term investment return (39%). The majority of operating owners own farmland as a source of current income (71.4%), while less than half of non-operating owners own land for that reason (43.3%). Non-operating landowners tend to use the land as a source of retirement income (50.7%) or for sentimental reasons (46.7%). Also, more operating owners preserve the land for agriculture (34%) than non-operating owners (20.7%). A larger portion of non-operating owners acquired land by inheritance (36.7%) than did operating owners (17.3%).

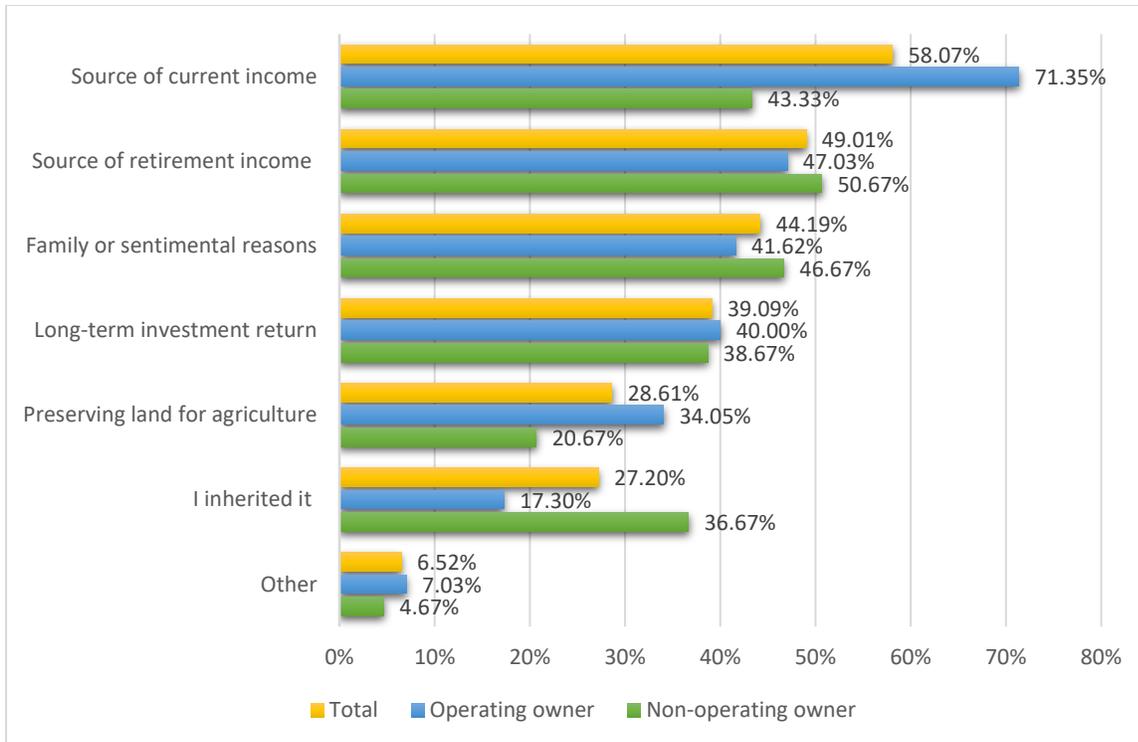


Figure 5. Reasons respondents own farmland.

Note: We asked respondents to select the top three reasons for owning farmland.

III. iii. Farmland Leasing

There are 183 (51%) owners that lease at least some of their farmland to farm operators and 168 (48%) owners that do not. Among owners who lease out farmland, about 92% only lease to one (73.22%) or two (18.58%) tenants (see Figure 6).

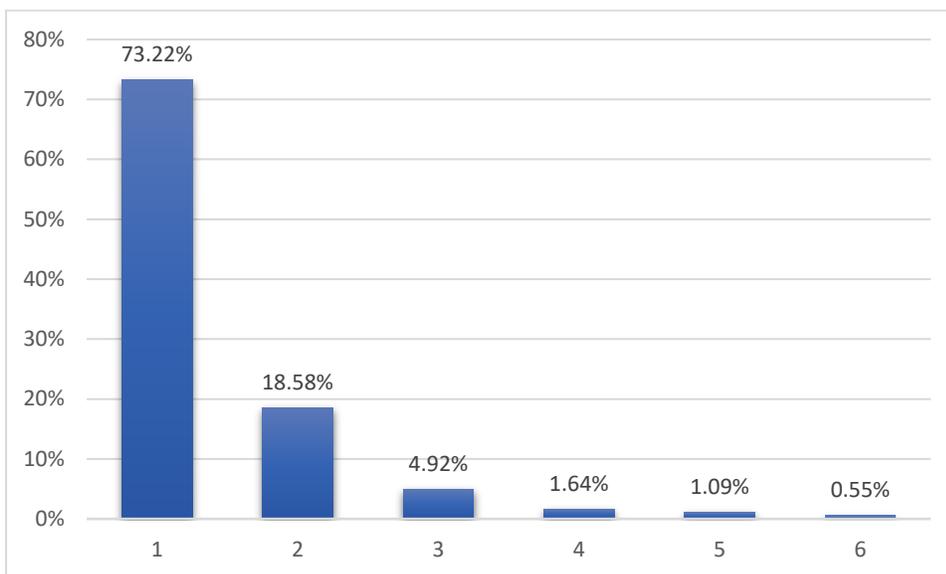


Figure 6. Number of tenants that respondents lease farmland to.

Table 5 summarizes the distribution of land leasing across operating owners and non-operating owners—284 owners report both ownerships and land leasing. Among operating owners, about 66% do not lease out their land and farm alone, and 34% lease some of their land and farm with tenants. For non-operating owners, about 15% neither lease out land nor farm by themselves, and 85% lease the land out and let tenants control it.

Table 5. Type of Ownership and Land Leasing

Land Leasing	Type of Ownership		
	Total	Operating Owner	Non-operating Owner
Total	100%	50.00%	50.00%
Lease out	59.51%	16.90%	42.61%
Not lease out	40.49%	33.10%	7.39%

As Figure 7 shows, the distribution of the acres rented out is similar to the distribution of the total acres owned by respondents. Sixty-nine owners (40%) lease all the farmland they own; and, on average, respondents rent out 76.8% of their farmland. The distributions for operating owners and non-operating owners are quite different. For operating owners, 12.8% lease all the farmland, and, on average, 48.6% of farmland acres are rented out. For non-operating owners, 48.7% lease all the farmland, and on average 86.85% of farmland acres are rented out.

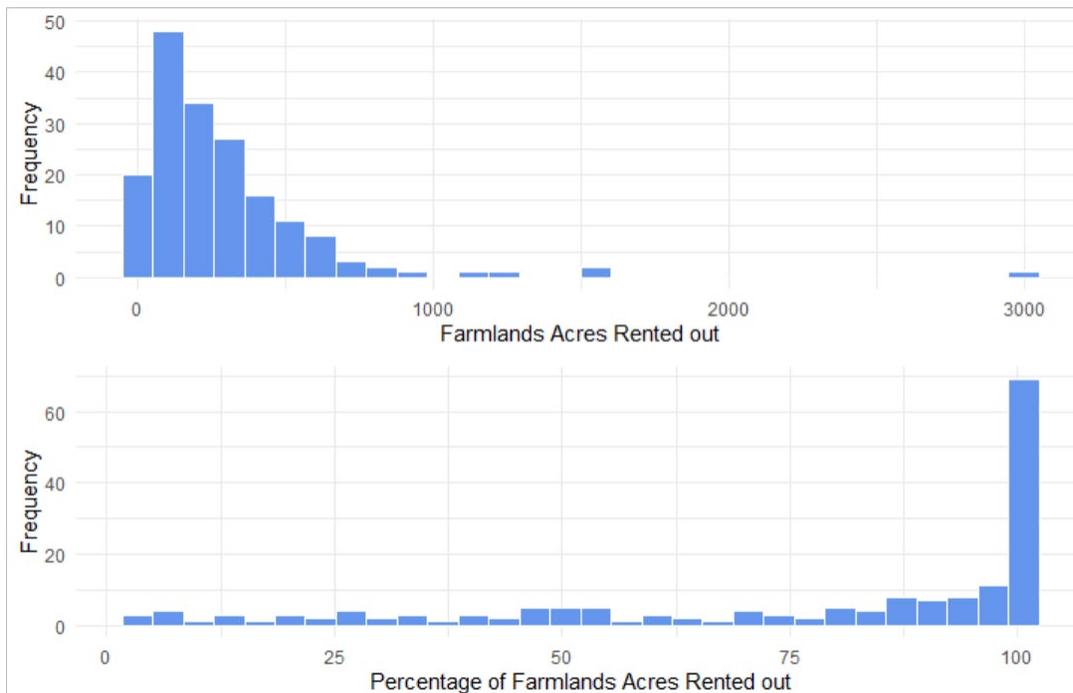


Figure 7. Acres of farmland that respondents rent out.

The portion of owners charging a discounted rental rate and those charging a market rental rate is almost the same (see Figure 8). More owners have written lease agreements with their tenants (60%) than verbal lease agreements (35%). Few respondents have mixed verbal/written agreements.

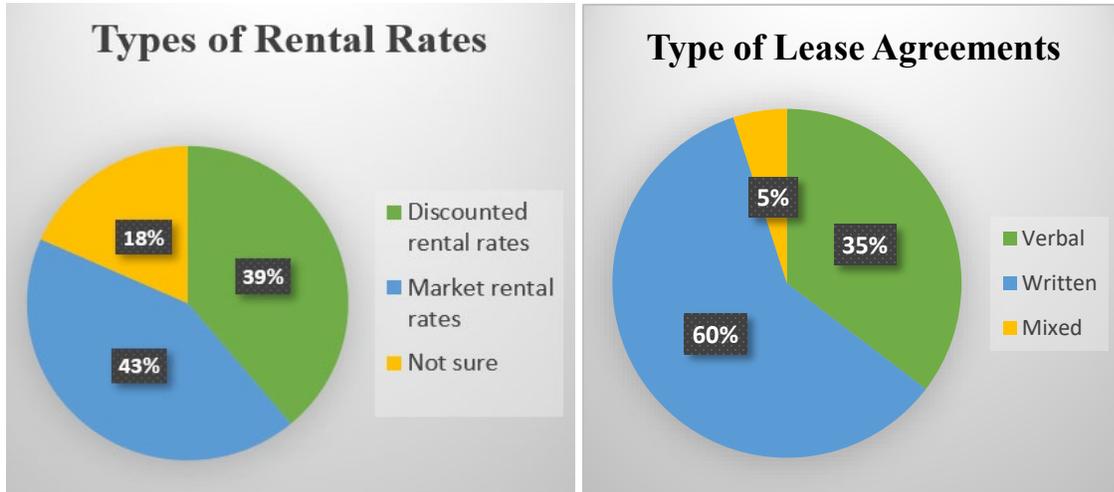


Figure 8. Types of rental rates and lease agreements.

The majority of owners (64.6%) use fixed cash rental leases and 19.1% use flexible cash rental leases, which may depend on market prices or other factors such as using a crop share agreement where owners and tenants share input costs (Figure 9). For tenants, 36% of respondents rent to relatives, 27% rent to someone else, 21% rent to neighbors, and 16% rent to friends (Figure 9).

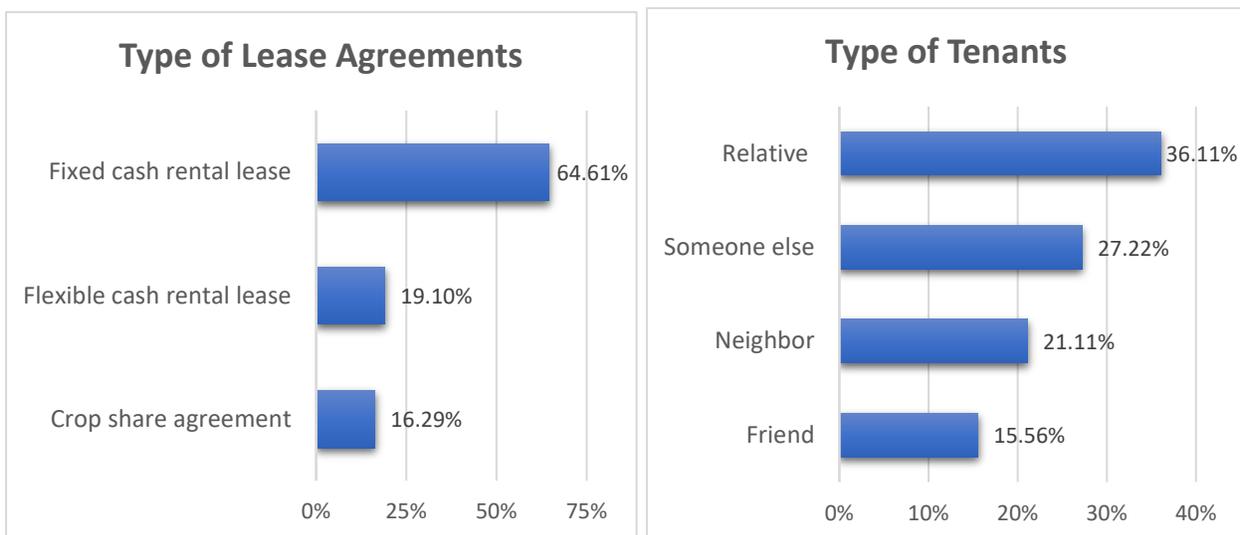


Figure 9. Types of lease agreements and tenants.

Figure 10 shows how respondents rank their interest in receiving information about issues related to farmland leasing and farm economics. The farmland issues are ranked by the percentages of total respondents who are at least slightly interested in receiving information about the issues (scores of interest ≥ 2). The top three valued topics are information about landowner responsibilities (75%), the economics of farmland ownership (e.g., return on assets) (72.5%), and information about crop production costs and other expenses (70.6%). Around 30% of respondents show interest in the first and fourth ranked topics, showing an overall interest in all topics.

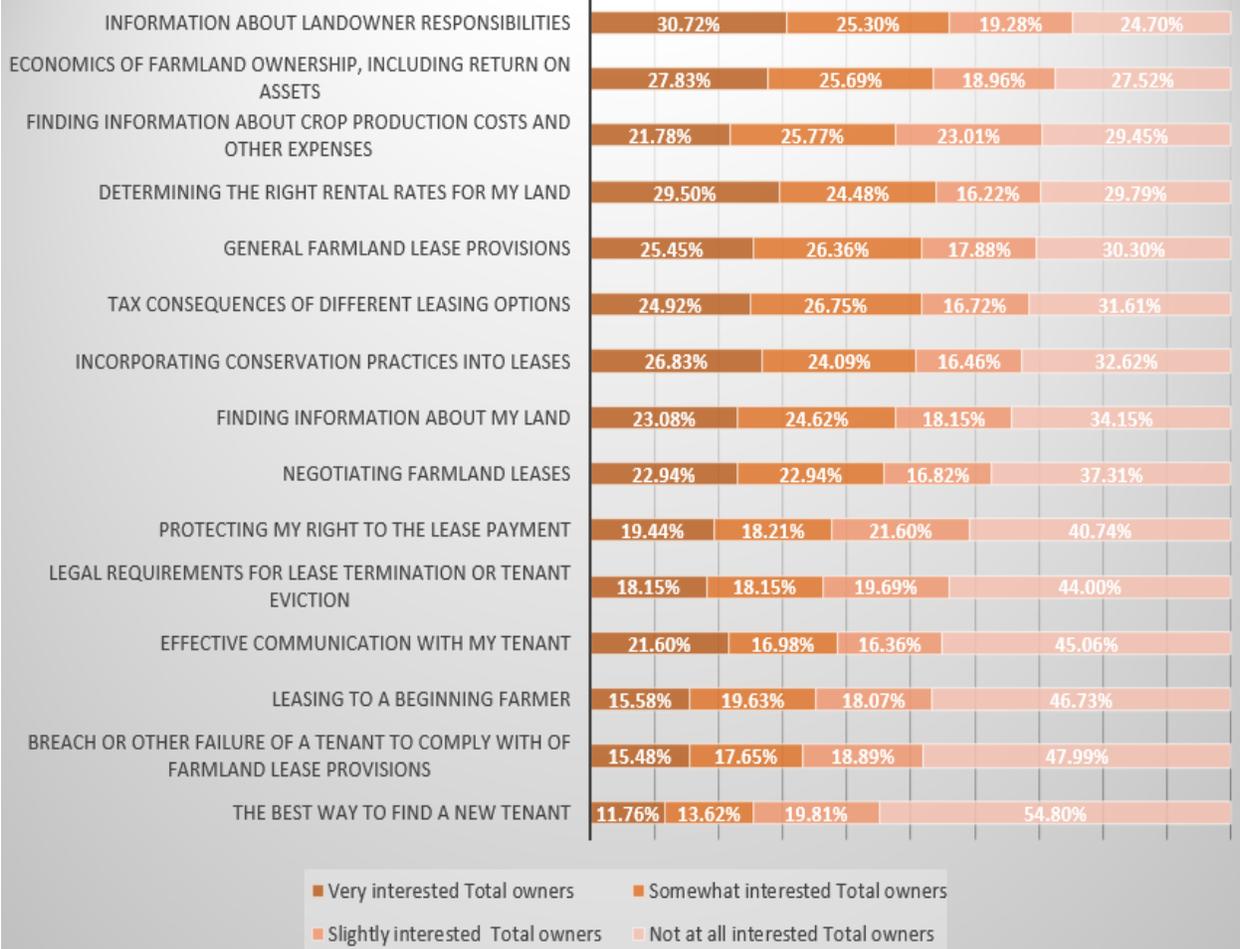


Figure 10. Farmland issues respondents are interested in receiving information about.

Figure 11 compares respondents' interest in receiving information about farmland issues shown in Figure 10 grouped by operators' (indicated by blue), non-operators' (indicated by green), and total owners' (indicated by yellow). Operating owners most value information on landowners' responsibilities (80%), production costs and expenses (75%), and economic information of ownership (75%), while non-operating owners care more about determining the right rental rates (69%) than production costs and expenses (65%). Operating owners are generally more interested in farmland issues than non-operating owners except for the issues of determining the correct rental rates and effective communication with tenants. The largest gap of interest between operating and non-operating owners lies in leasing to a beginner farmer, about which 63% of operators care while only 42% of non-operators care.

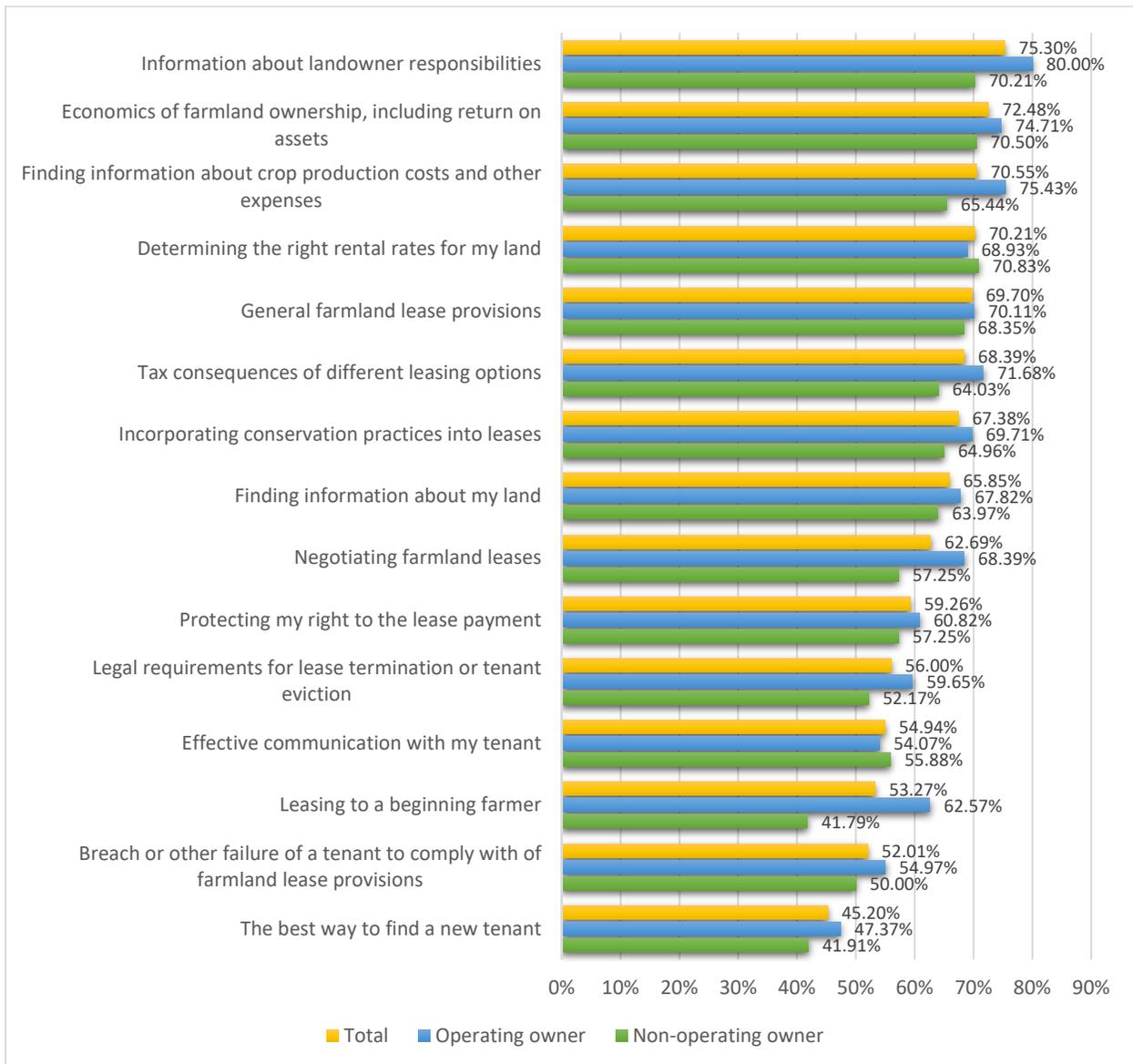


Figure 11. Farmland issues respondents are interested in receiving information about (operators vs. non-operators).

III. iv. Conservation Practice

As Figure 12 shows, the top three conservation practices used by women landowners are grass waterways (70%), no-till or strip-till (50.6%), and low till or other conservation tillage (41%). In addition to these three practices, cover crops (40.5%) and livestock manure management (40%) are also common on operating owners' farmland. More non-operating owners use terracing (37%) than low till or other conservation tillage (34%). Generally speaking, more operating owners use conservation practices than non-operating owners, and more non-operating owners (16%) are not sure about practices used on their land than are operating owners (1.6%). The two largest gaps in conservation practice usage between operating and non-operating owners lie in livestock manure management and cover crop implementation. Few owners (2%) do not apply any conservation practices and even fewer owners (0.6%) use bioreactors.

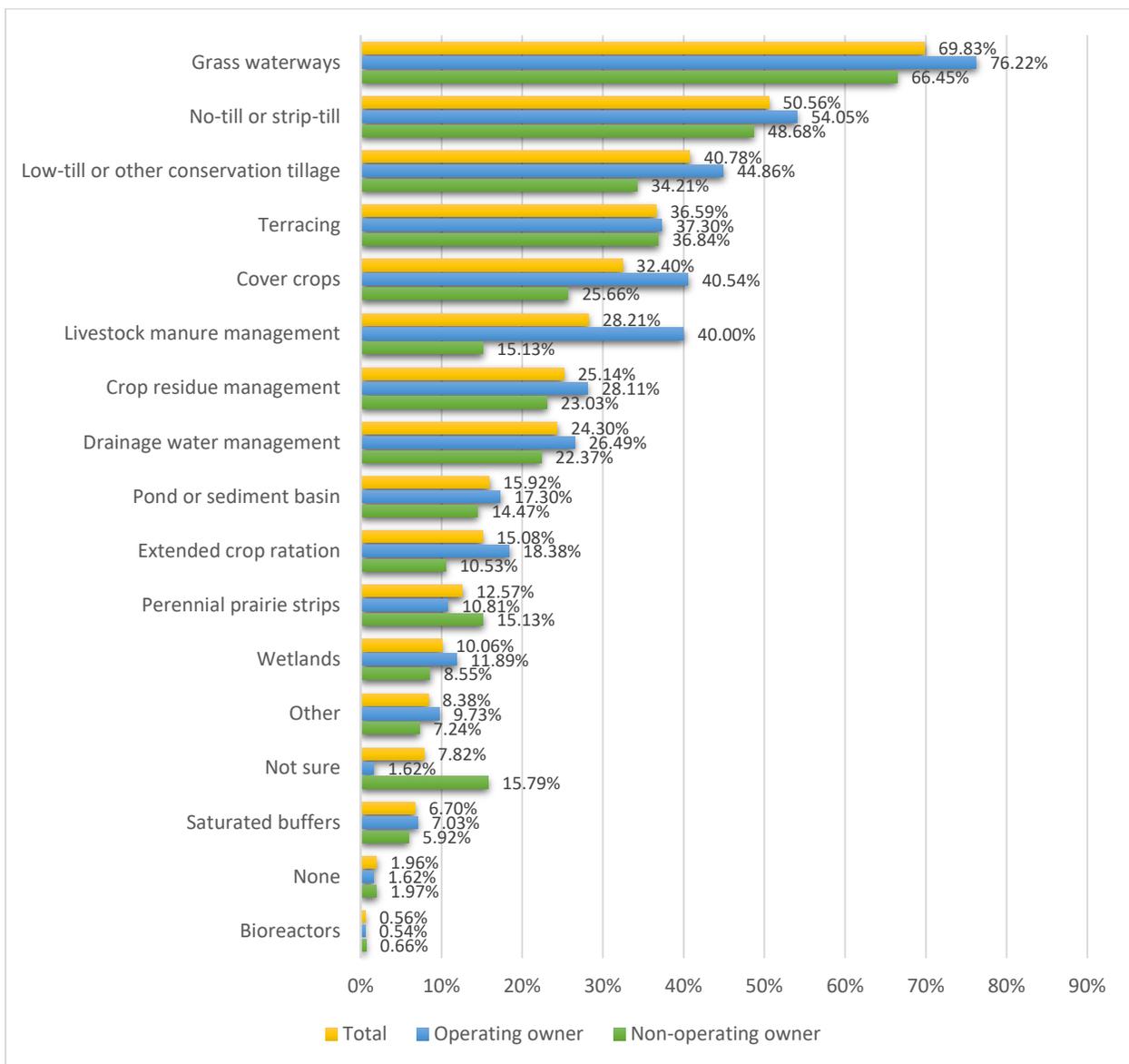


Figure 12. Conservation practices respondents currently use.

Note: We asked respondents to select all practices currently used on their farmland.

Figure 13 shows that over 80% of the owners have their tenants primarily make decisions on crop varieties (e.g., seed and rotations) (82.6%) and crop inputs (e.g., fertilizer and chemicals) (82.6%), which excludes the 168 (14.5%) respondents who do not have a tenant. Sixty-five percent of owners also report that their tenants manage the tillage practices. Table 5 shows that 34% of operating owners and 85% of non-operating owners lease some of their land. Figure 13 shows the percentages of operators and non-operators that have their tenants do the conservation management on leased land. Generally, more non-operators let the tenants decide on conservation management than do operating owners. The difference between the percentages of operators and non-operators that have their tenants control conservation management is over 20% for crop varieties, crop inputs, tillage practices, and whether or not conservation practices are used.

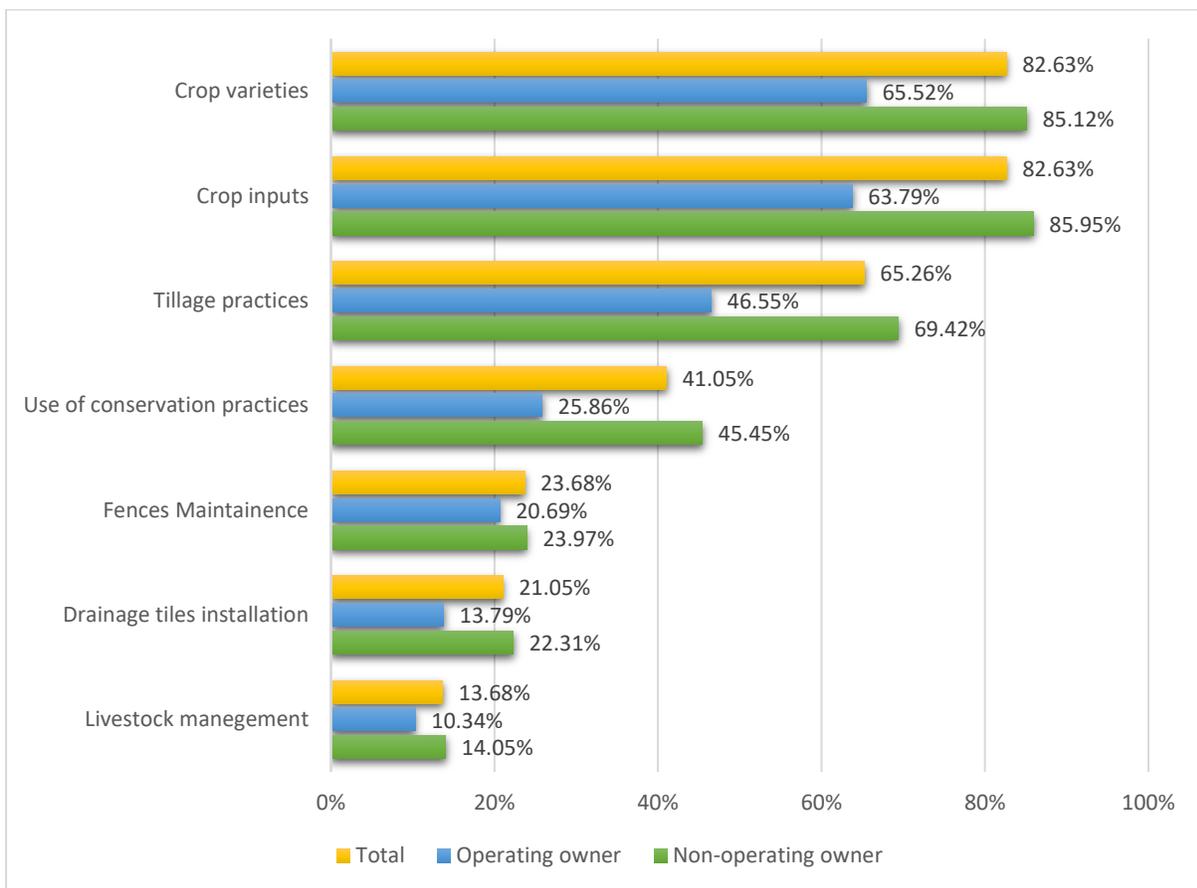


Figure 13. Conservation management decisions primarily made by tenants.

Note: We asked respondents to select all practices applied by tenants.

Figure 14 ranks the conservation issues that women landowners worry about. Most respondents (69%) say they are concerned there are too many requirements and restrictions and too much paperwork associated with government conservation programs. Interference with the ability to change land management practices (57.6%), low cost-share payments (54.4%), and limited environmental value of the practices (51.5%) are also important concerns. It appears many respondents think conservation practices are effort-consuming and of low value. Furthermore, 33% of respondents said they were “Not familiar with practices” and 26% said they “Don’t know anyone implementing the practices,” which means they are familiar with conservation practices and the conservation network is strong. Women owners do not worry much about neighbors (14%) or family members and co-owners (18.4%) disapproving of conservation practices, which suggests that communications with tenants, family, or neighbors are least important. Overall, respondents are less interested in conservation than leasing practices. The low interest in conservation information may partially be explained by the sample from Women in Ag programs, which are almost exclusively farm business management focused. Past participants from Women in Ag programs were interested in financial-related information but not necessarily conservation.

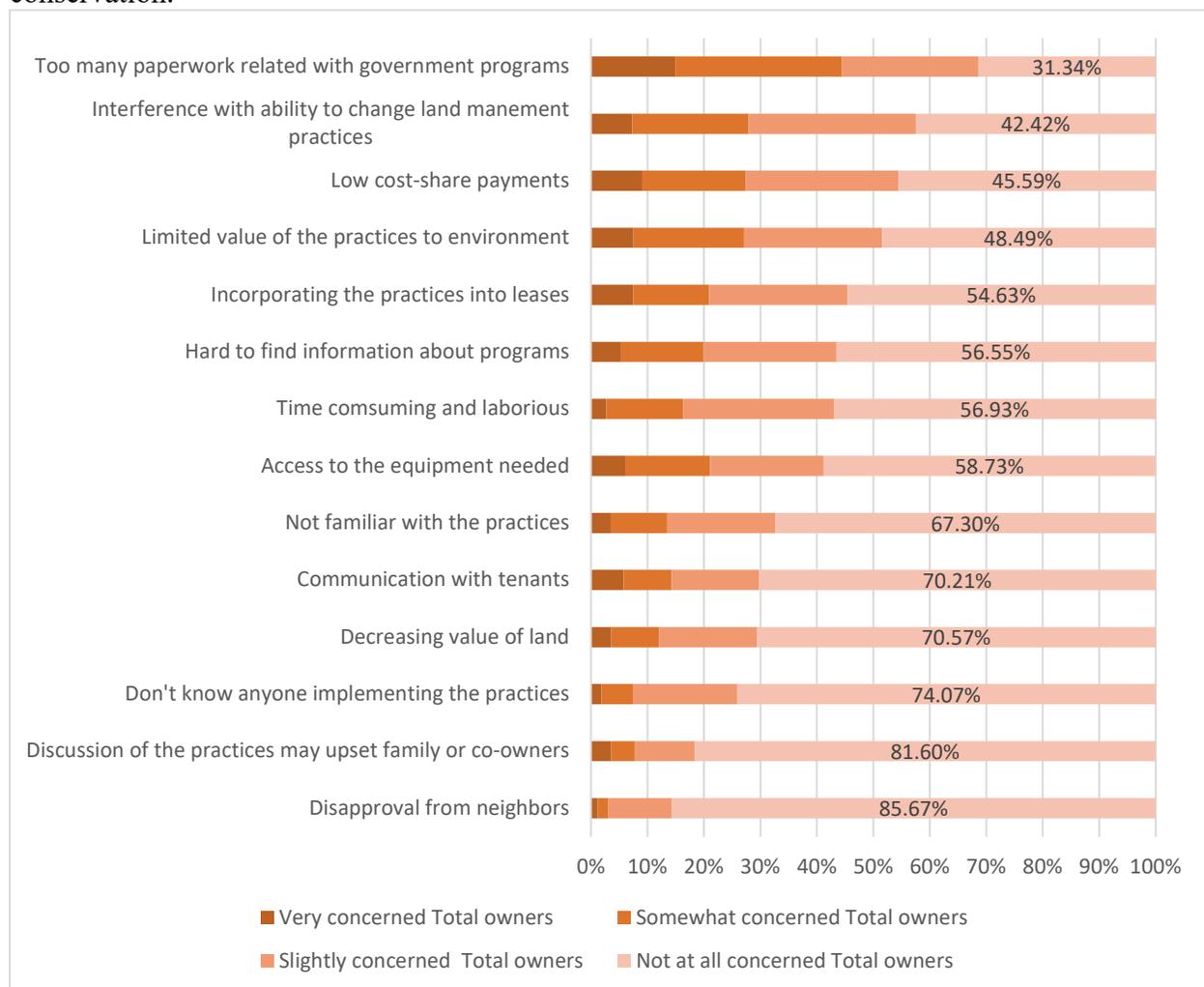


Figure 14. Conservation-related issues respondents are concerned about.

Note: We asked respondents to rank their level of concern from 1 (not concerned at all) to 4 (very concerned).

As Figure 15 shows, operating owners and non-operating owners share some similarities in their concerns about conservation practices. However, operating owners have a higher level of concern for conservation issues than do non-operating owners. Operating owners put more weight on governmental red tape and low value of conservation practices while non-operating owners show less interest in conservation issues, which means non-operating owners are more unfamiliar with practices, know fewer people implementing the practices, and worry more about decreasing the value of the land. Operators and non-operators have similar responses on incorporating conservation practices into leases, the difficulty finding information about programs, and communication with tenants and neighbors.

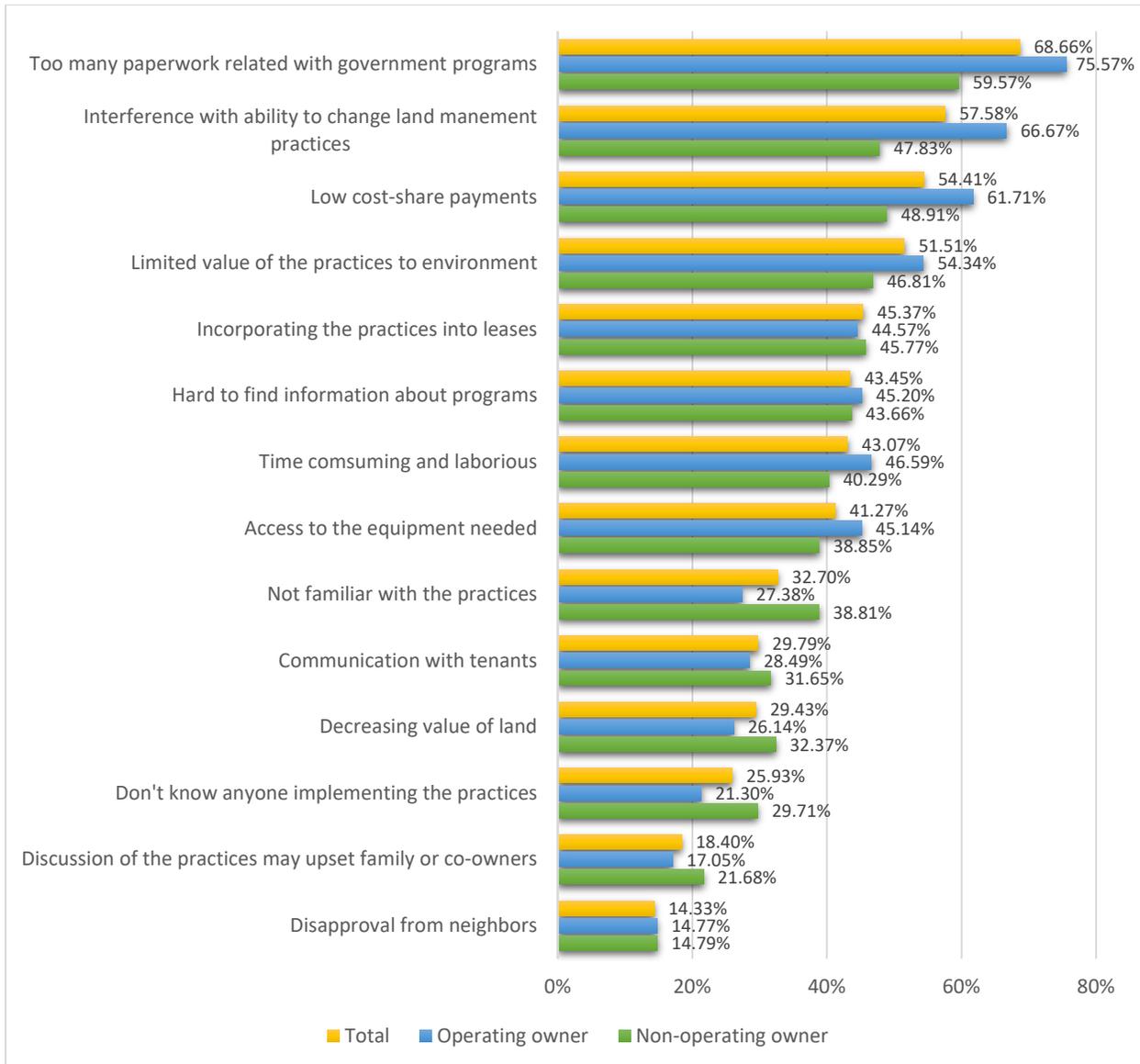


Figure 15. Conservation-related issues respondents are concerned about (operators vs. non-operators).

When asked about topics related to farmland conservation that landowners were most interested in and would like to receive more information on, the agricultural carbon credits program, government conservation programs, and soil erosion control were the three most popular topics overall (See Figure 16), followed by soil fertilizer improvement and cover crops, which nearly one-third of owners indicated interest in receiving more information about. Operating owners are particularly interested in more information on agricultural carbon credit programs (41%), cover crops (33%), and soil fertilizer improvement (32%). Non-operating owners indicate an interest in more information on soil erosion control (31%) and government conservation programs (30%). Seventeen percent of all respondents indicate no interest in receiving more information about farmland conservation issues, among whom more non-operating owners (24.3%) lack interest than do operating owners (9.7%).

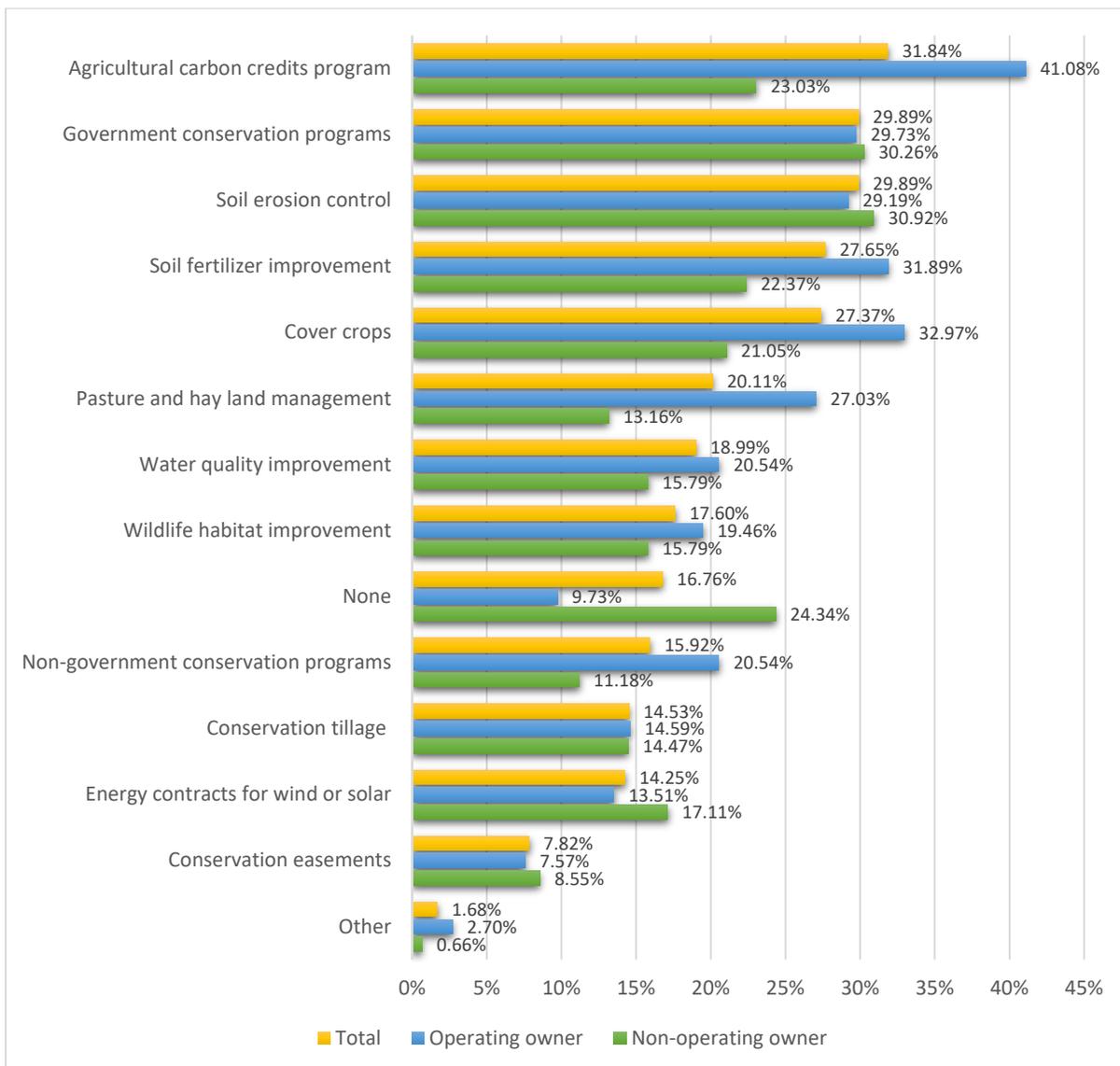


Figure 16. Farmland conservation issues respondents are interested in receiving information about.

Note: We asked respondents to select the three topics they were most interested in receiving information about.

III. v. Farmland Transition Plan

For farm transition plans, most respondents (88%) indicate they have a will to transfer ownership now or in the future; however, 40 respondents (11.6%) do not, as Table 6 shows. Among the owners with a transition will, there is similarity in the number of owners who have a written transition plan (44.8%) and those who do not (43.6%). Most owners who do not have a transition will also not have a written plan (10.7%). Only three respondents (1%) that do not have a transition will have a written transition plan.

Table 6. Number of Owners with/without Transition Will or Written Transition Plan

Will with transition plan	Written transition plan		
	Total	Have	Do not have
Total	100%	45.67%	54.33%
Have	88.44%	44.80%	43.64%
Do not have	11.56%	0.87%	10.69%

As Table 7 shows, most respondents have at least a potential successor for either farmland management (70%) or ownership (85%), and 67.8% of owners have a potential successor for both farmland management and ownership. Few owners have a potential successor for farmland management but not for ownership (2.3%), and 12.5% of owners have not considered potential successors for their farmland.

Table 7. Number of Owners with/without Potential Successors for Farmland Management or Farmland Ownership

Management of farmland	Ownership of farmland		
	Total	Have a potential successor	Do not have a potential successor
Total	100%	85.18%	14.82%
Have a potential successor	70.08%	67.80%	2.28%
Do not have a potential successor	29.92%	17.38%	12.54%

As shown in Figure 17, the majority of owners (63%) have consulted an attorney on a transition plan or farm business plan. Around one-third of owners have also consulted an accountant or certified public accountant. Furthermore, about one-fourth have chosen a financial advisor. Around 20% of respondents have not discussed a transition plan with anyone. Removing the respondents who have no will or successor for farm transition reveals that about 10% of respondents developed a transition plan without consulting anyone. Though some respondents mention family in the ‘Other’ response, few farmers consult with family or neighbors (< 8.1%) and most consult with professionals. Few respondents seek help from extension professionals, suggesting that Extension and Outreach has room to strengthen its connections with women landowners.

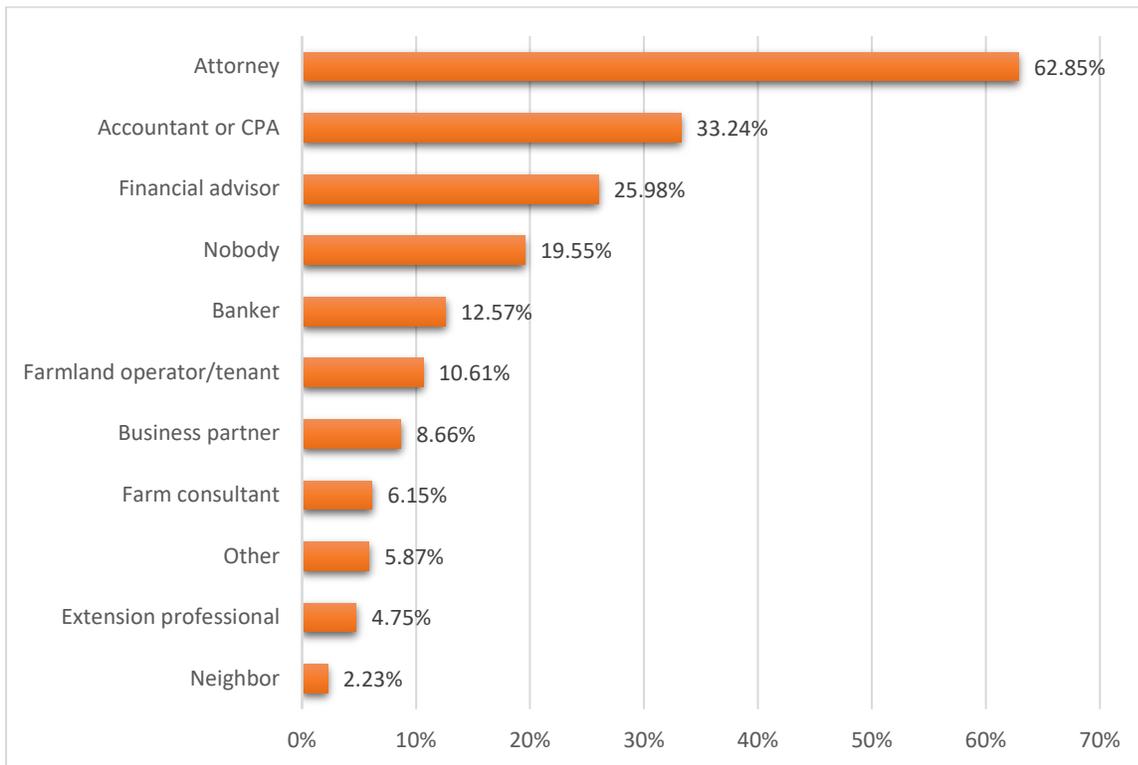


Figure 17. People respondents consulted about transition plans or farm business.

Note: We asked respondents to select all people they consulted about a transition plan for their farmland or farm business.

Among the 302 respondents who have potential successors for ownership, sons and daughters are the top choices for successor (Figure 18). Responses in the “Other” category are mostly also sons and daughters with several respondents mentioning siblings, cousins, nieces, and nephews. Among those choosing sons and daughters, twice as many are choosing sons rather than daughters.

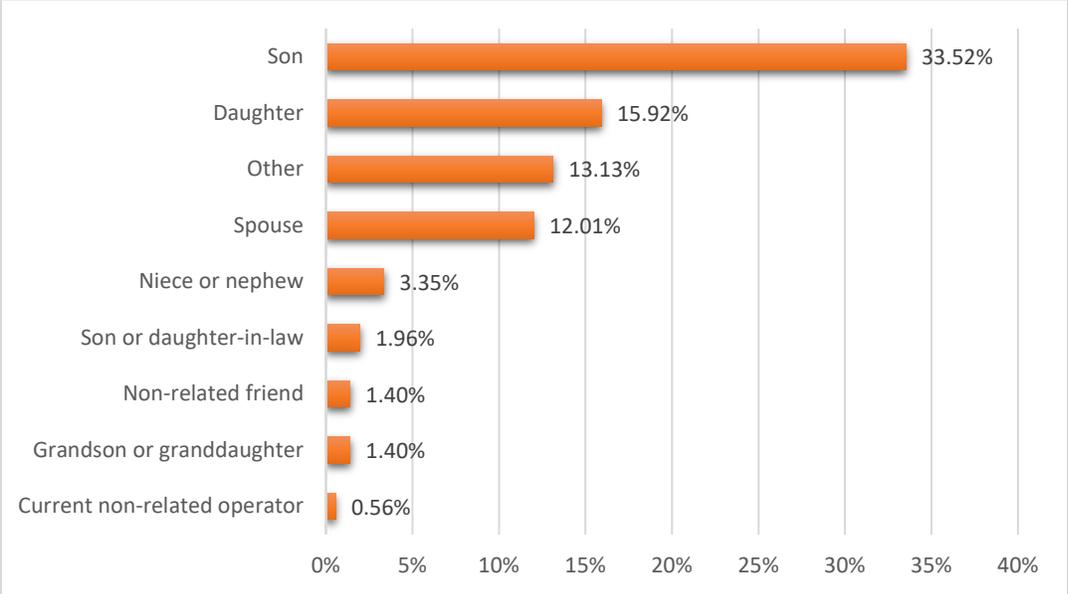


Figure 18. Most likely relationship of respondents' successors.

Note: We asked respondents to select the one person most likely to succeed them.

The ages of respondents’ successors range from 1 to 96, with an average age of 41. The mass choices of the successors’ ages range from 26 to 57, which accounts for 72.6% of the 285 respondents (see Figure 19). Most successors are adults (93.3%).

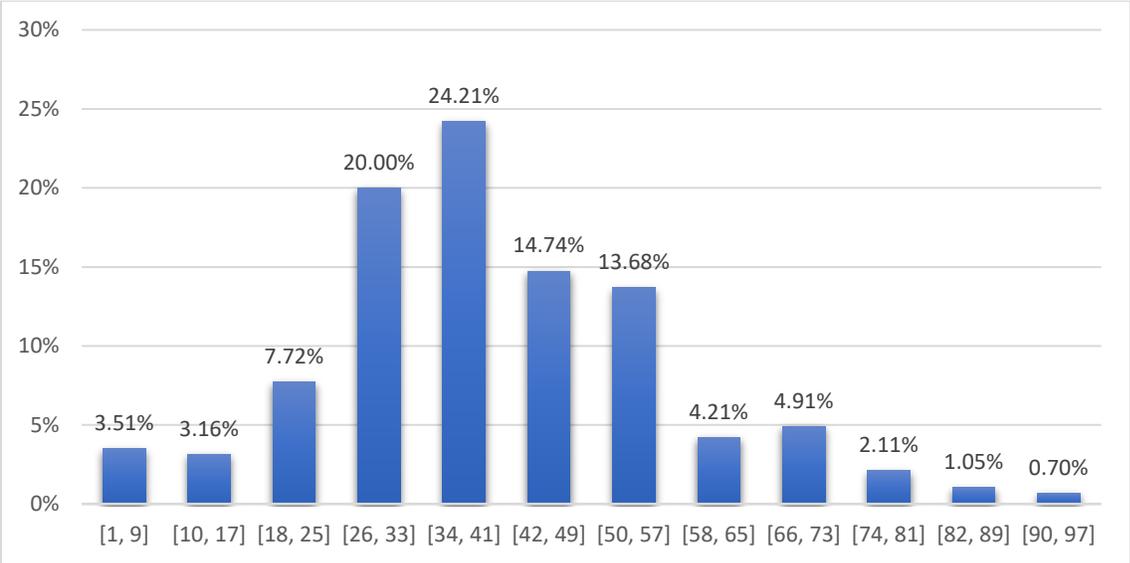


Figure 19. Distribution of successors' ages.

Respondents expect roughly equal possibilities (38%) that family will farm the land or rent it out, as shown in Figure 20. Interestingly, there are more operating owners that expect family members to rent out the land and have a tenant farm it (50%) than there are that expect a family member to do so (31.5%); however, the opposite is true for non-operating owners. Slightly more non-operating owners expect the farmland will be sold (18%) than do operating owners (13%). More non-operating owners (8.2%) are uncertain about the future of their farmland compared with operating owners (3%). Overall, few respondents think their farmland will be sold for non-agricultural development purposes either during lifetime or that family members will inherit and sell the land.

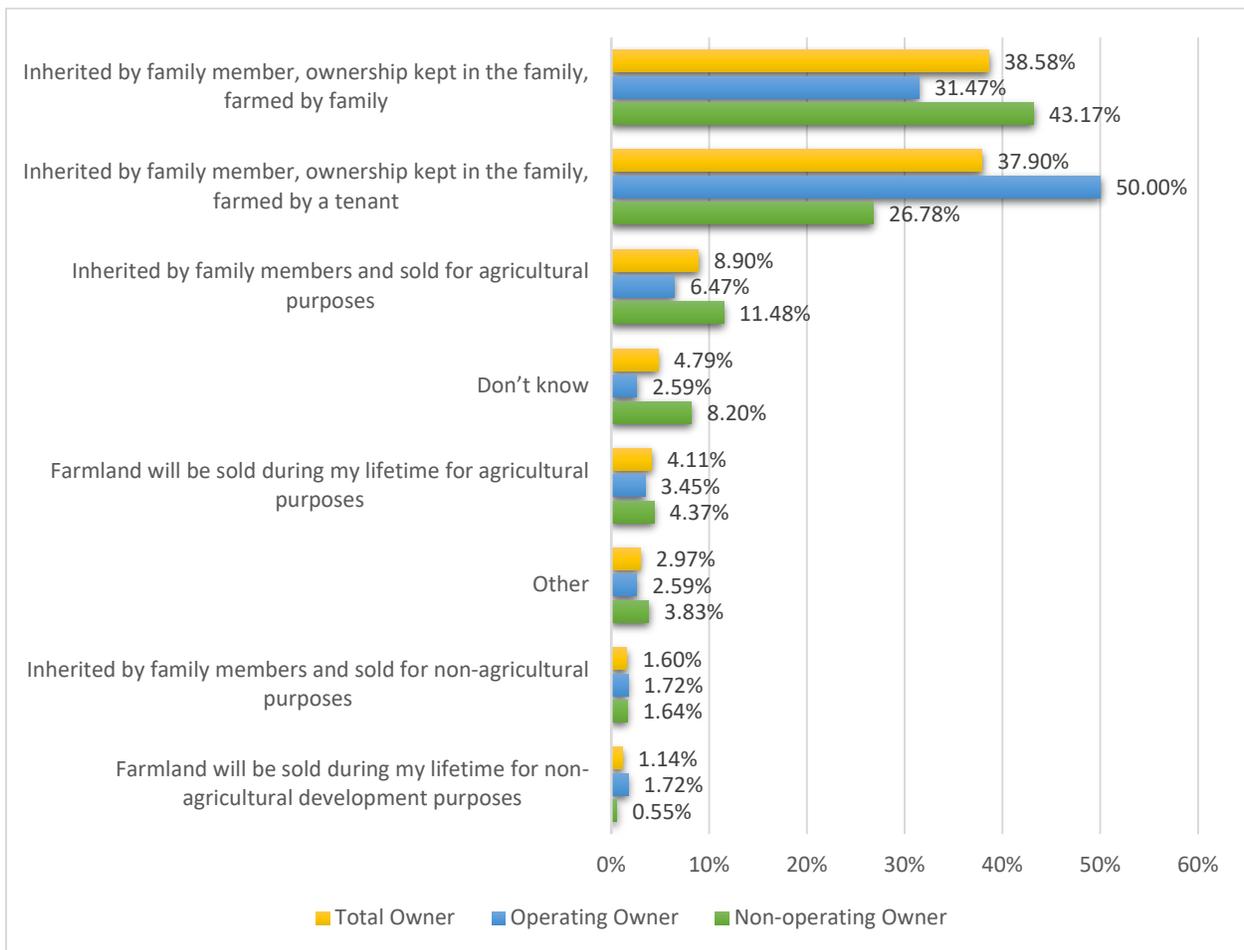


Figure 20. Owners' expectations for the future of their farmland.

Note: We asked respondents to select all situations they expect for their farms.

Figure 21 shows the percentages of people who show at least slight concern about typical farmland transition issues. Most respondents (64.6%) are concerned about a lack of understanding of different farmland ownership structures and tax implications. Around half of all respondents (50.5%) are not familiar with the different options for transitioning a farm to future generations, and about 45% of respondents find it hard to figure out a plan that treats all members of the next generation fairly. Forty-one percent of respondents noted a lack of information about business entities useful to a farm. It seems lack of transition plan knowledge is of greatest concern while conflicts with family or communications are of least concern. Several respondents additionally mention that they worry that the next generations are not familiar with farming or lack relevant knowledge such that they will not manage the farm well; however, few respondents are very interested in these issues. Overall, respondents are even less interested in transition plans than conservation practices.

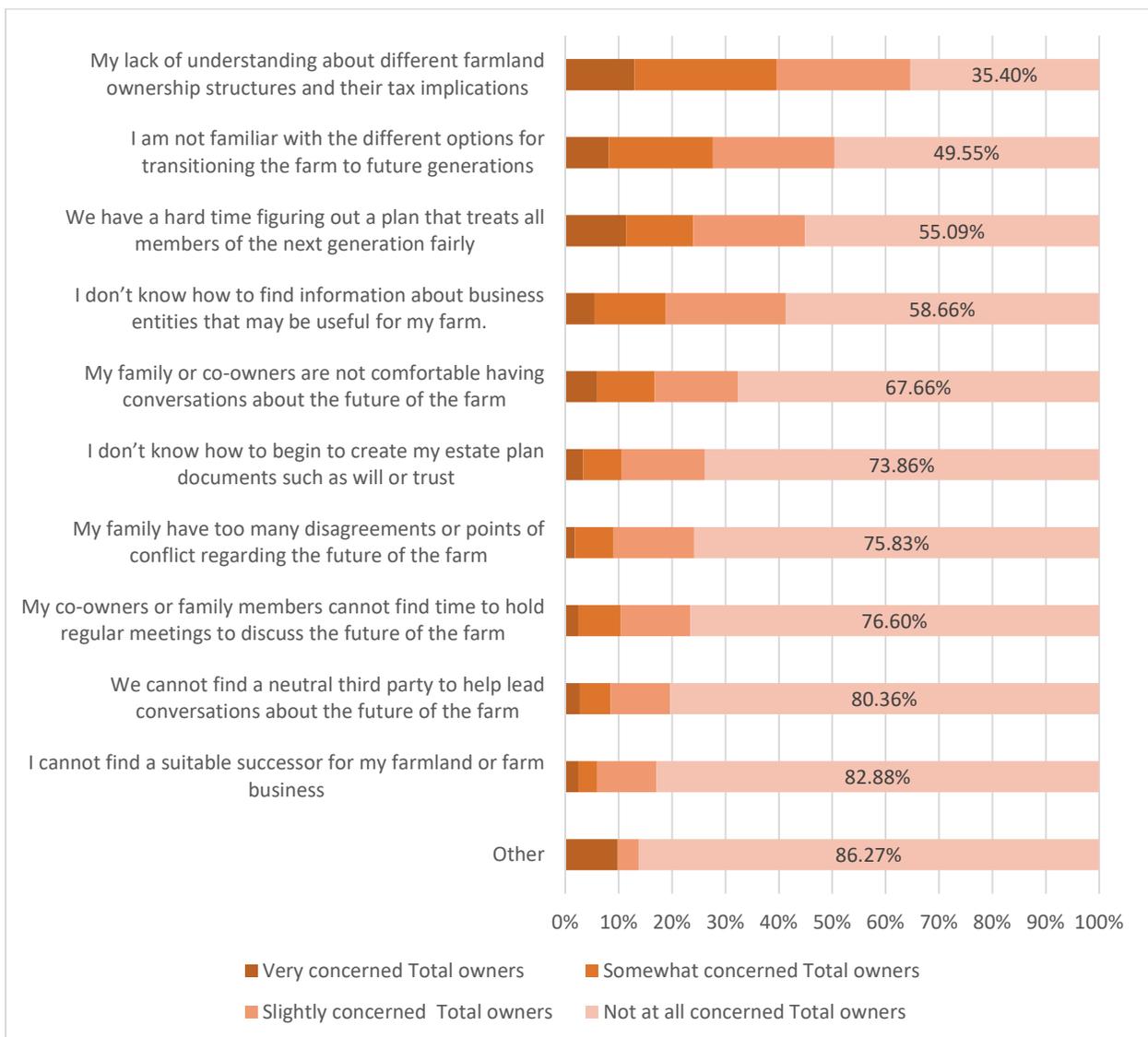


Figure 21. Issues about farmland transition that concern respondents.

Note: We asked respondents to rank their concerns from 1 (not concerned at all) to 4 (very concerned) for each farmland transition issue.

As Figure 22 shows, operators and non-operators share the top four concerns about farmland transition. The second- and third-most frequently mentioned issues, not being familiar with different options for transitioning the farm to future generations and difficulty figuring out a plan that treats all members of the next generation fairly, respectively, have the two largest gaps (about 11%) between operators and non-operators. Operating owners express more concern on most transition issues than do non-operating owners, except for the issues regarding a lack of opportunity to have discussions with family and having trouble finding a neutral party to help lead discussions.

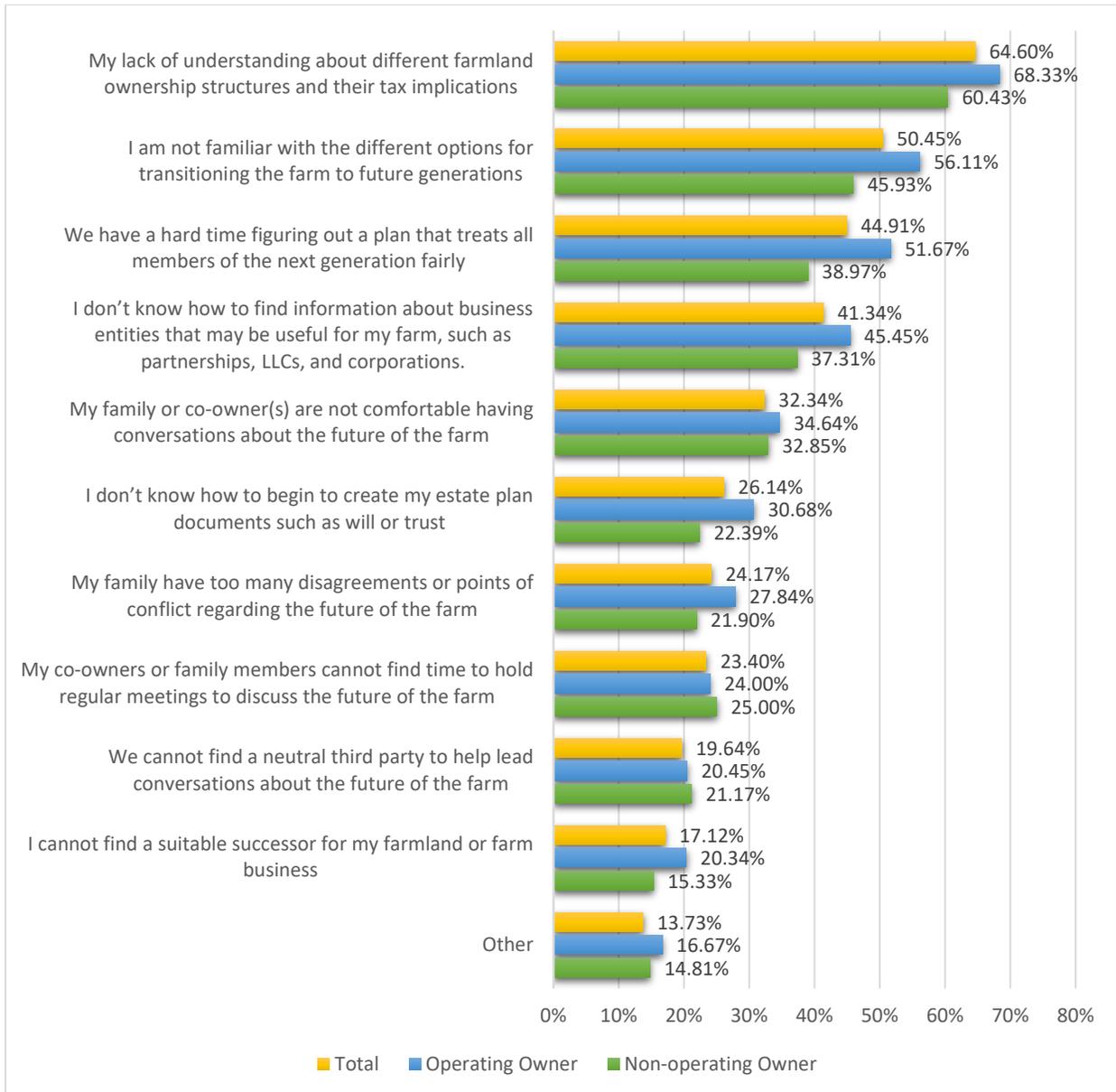


Figure 22. Issues about farmland transition that concern respondents (operators vs. non-operators).

As Figure 23 shows, most respondents (43.3%) said the tax consequences of different transition options are most concerning, which matches the top two concerns shown in Figures 21 and 22. Around one-third of respondents also care about estate and gift tax issues (36.6%) and farmland and management succession options (31.3%). Still, operators are more interested in receiving information on farmland transition issues than are non-operators. The two groups only have similar degrees of interest on the issues of estate and gift tax, lifetime gifting, family communication, human resources management, and transfer by sale outside of family. One respondent expressed her confusion on how to keep making decisions about the farm if her spouse becomes incapacitated, which is not addressed by the trust. Of all respondents, 16.2% show no interest in receiving information on farmland transition issues, among whom more non-operating owners (23%) show no interest than do operating owners (10.8%).

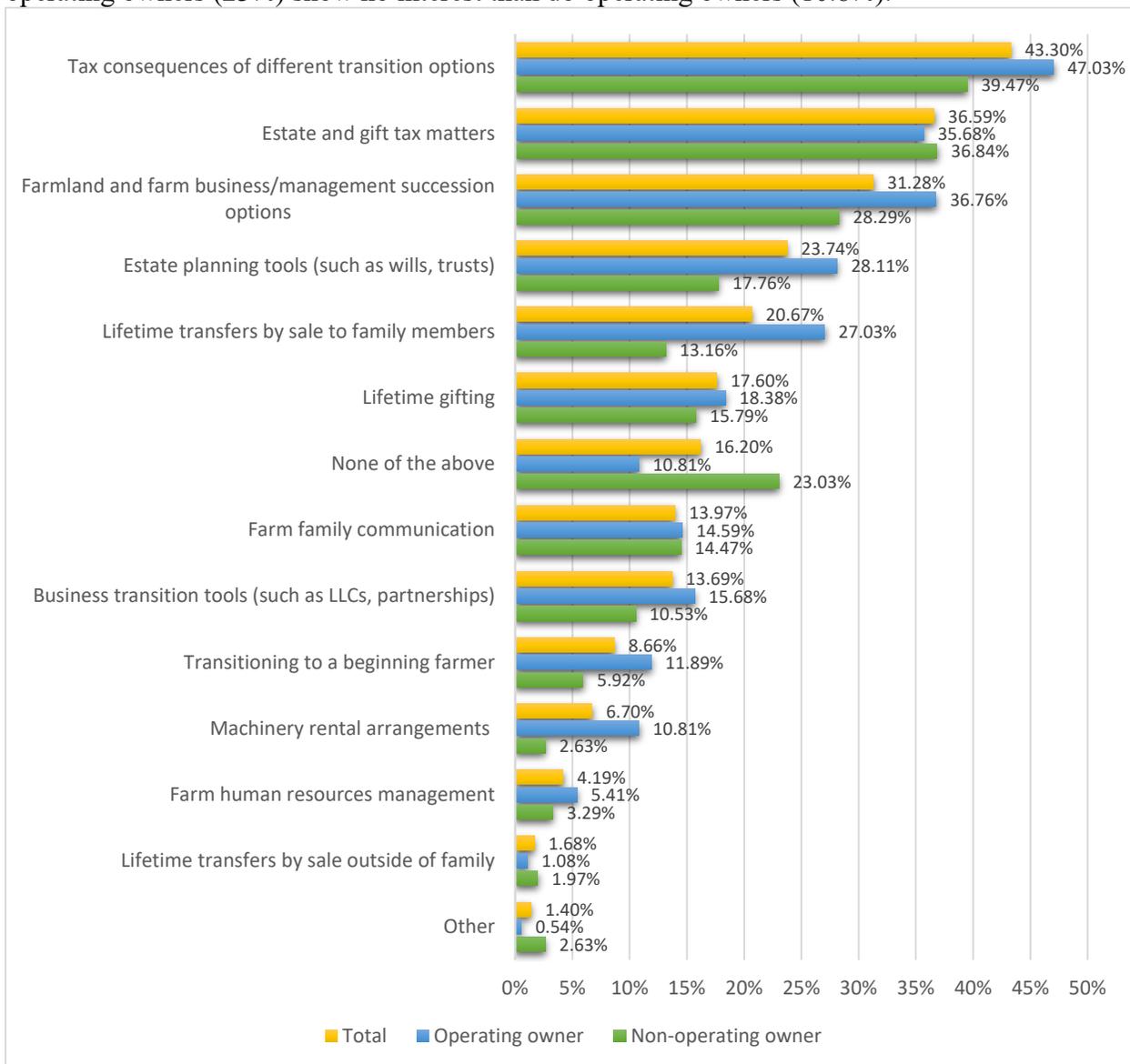


Figure 23. Farmland transition topics respondents are interested in receiving information about.

Note: We asked respondents to select their three top topics they are interested in receiving information about.

III. vi. Educational Preference

When asked about preferred times for educational programming, respondents preferred evenings (38%) and mornings (36%) for online or in-person programming, both of which are slightly preferred to afternoons (26%), as shown in Figure 24. Operators (43%) prefer evenings more than non-operators (30%), and non-operators (43%) prefer mornings more than operators (31%). Eighty respondents did not provide an answer to this question, which may be due to indifference or being uninterested in educational programming.

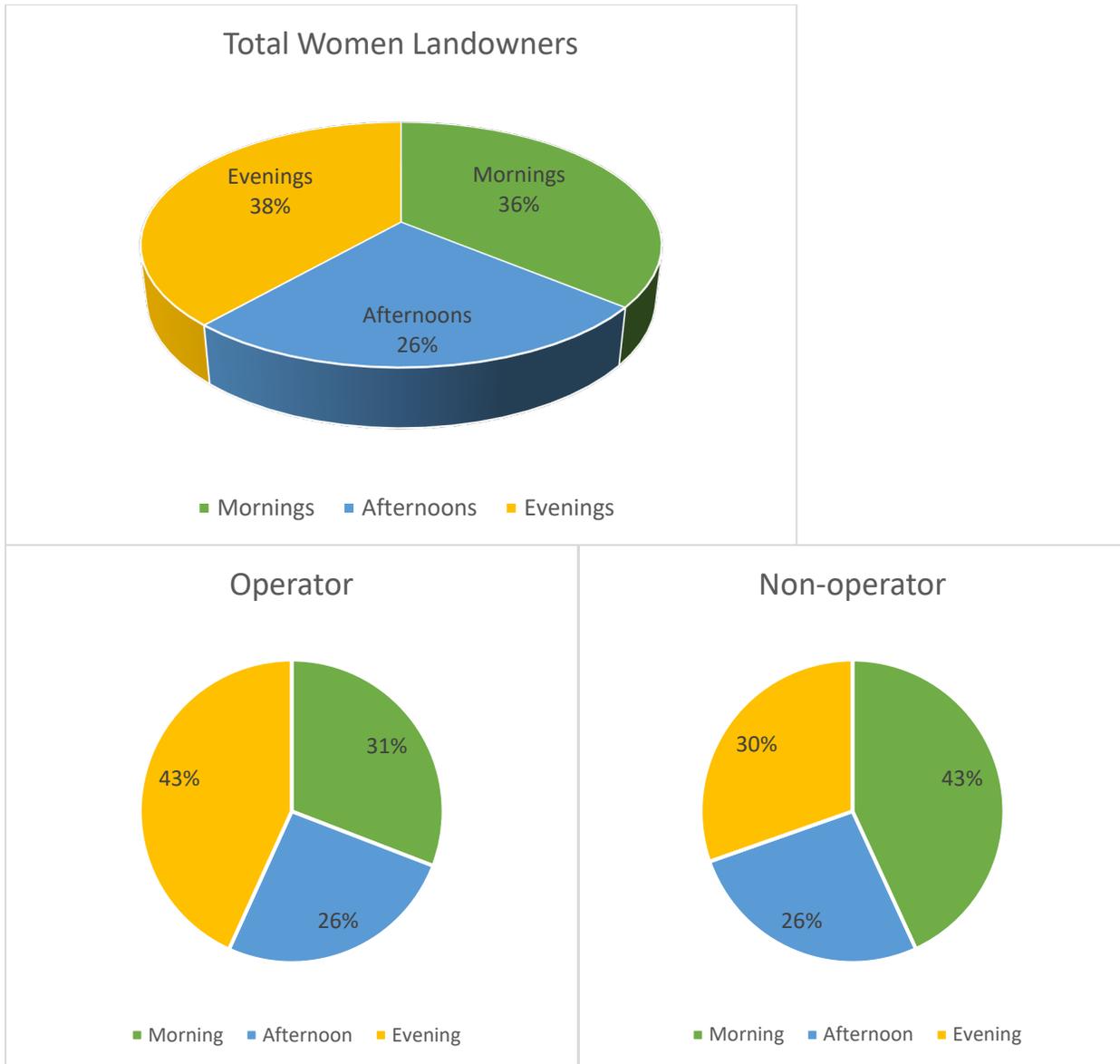


Figure 24. Respondents preferred times to participate in educational programming.

Note: We asked respondents to select one preferred time to participate in educational programming.

Nearly half of respondents prefer a periodic newsletter or e-newsletter for receiving information, and one-third of respondents prefer receiving information through webinars and two-page fact sheets or infographics (see Figure 25). Overall, respondents prefer virtual delivery methods to in-person formats, while half-day in-person educational meetings are also welcome, ranking third for operating owners and fourth for non-operating owners. Operating owners are more willing to receive educational information than are non-operating owners, and interest gaps between the two groups are especially large for webinars, half-day in-person educational meetings, women landowner learning circles, and multi-part series of educational meetings. Fifteen percent of respondents show no interest in educational programming.

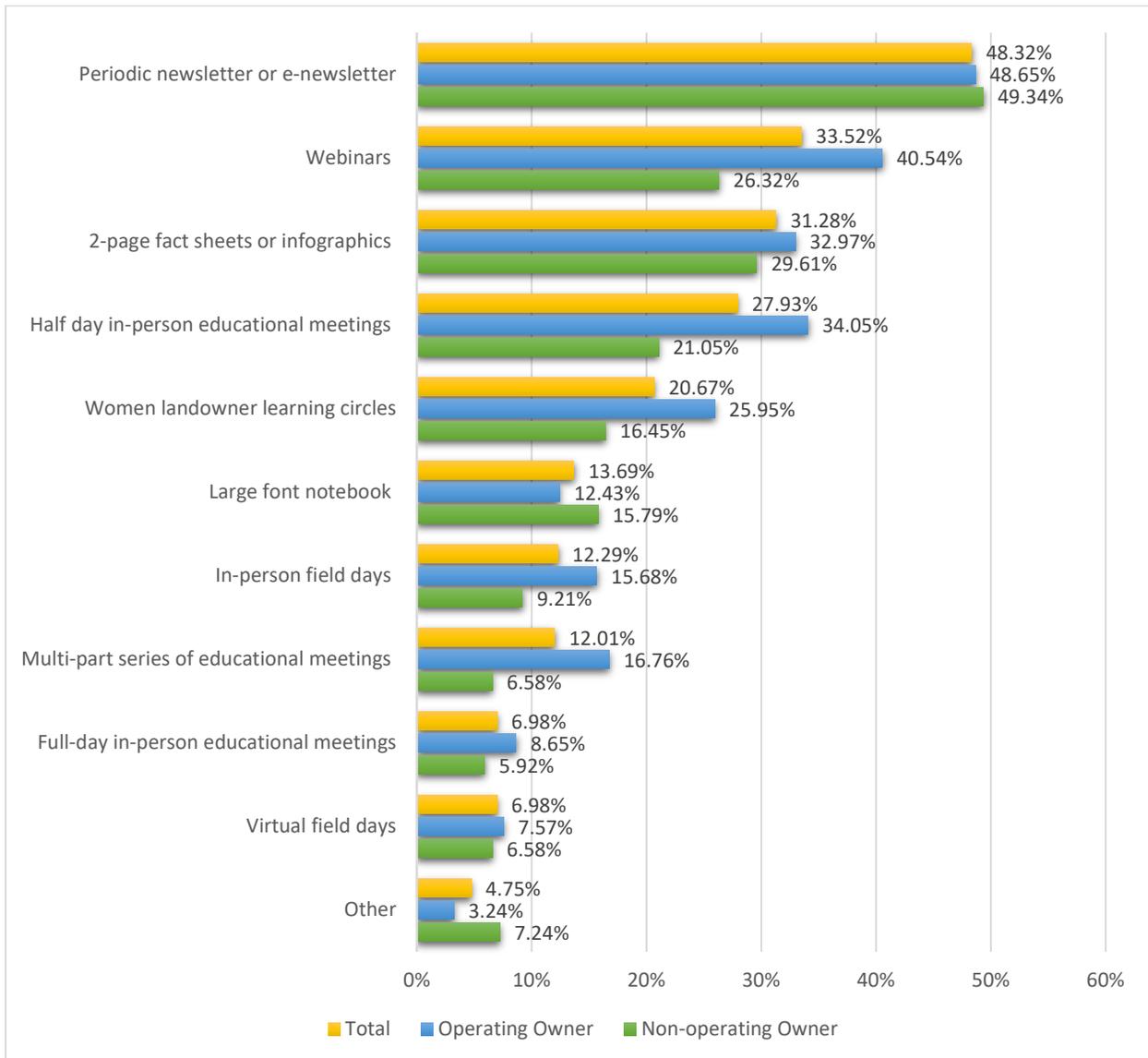


Figure 25. Respondents preferred ways to receive information and educational programming.

Note: We asked respondents to select their top three preferred ways to receive information and educational programming.

Table 8 shows the percentages of respondents who simultaneously chose two typical methods to receive transition information mentioned in Figure 25 and somewhat reflects the correlation between the methods. Table 8 shows the total percentages of a typical method chosen by respondents in bold and the relatively high correlations between the two typical methods are in red. Respondents who prefer periodic newsletters or e-newsletters also prefer two-page fact sheets or infographics (19.27%) and webinars (17.32%). The correlation between half-day in-person meetings with periodic newsletter or e-newsletter and webinars are also relatively high, which indicates that half-day in-person meetings are the fourth-most popular method following newsletters, fact sheets, and webinars. Respondents who prefer half-day in-person meetings also tend to prefer women landowner learning circles (8.1%), and respondents who prefer periodic newsletters also tend to prefer large font notebooks (8.4%).

Table 8. Cross Selection of Percentages of Respondents' Preferred Ways to Receive Information and Educational Programming

	Large font notebook	Periodic newsletter/ e-newsletter	2-page fact sheets/ infographics	Webinars	In-person field days	Virtual field days
Large font notebook	13.69%	8.38%	6.15%	3.07%	1.12%	0.28%
Periodic newsletter/ e-newsletter		48.32%	19.27%	17.32%	3.07%	4.75%
2-page fact sheets/ infographics			31.28%	10.61%	1.96%	1.40%
Webinars				33.52%	3.35%	3.07%
In-person field days					12.29%	0.56%
Virtual field days						6.98%

Table 8 (cont.) Cross Selection of Percentages of Respondents' Preferred Ways to Receive Information and Educational Programming

	Half day in-person meetings	Full day in-person meetings	Multi-part series of meetings	Women landowner learning circles	Other
Large font notebook	2.51%	0.56%	1.12%	2.23%	0.00%
Periodic newsletter/ e-newsletter	9.78%	1.40%	2.79%	7.54%	1.12%

2-page fact sheets/ infographics	6.42%	0.84%	2.79%	4.75%	0.84%
Webinars	9.22%	3.07%	3.63%	6.70%	0.84%
In-person field days	6.42%	1.68%	3.07%	2.79%	0.00%
Virtual field days	1.12%	0.56%	0.00%	2.51%	0.00%
Half day in-person meetings	27.93%	1.96%	6.15%	8.10%	0.00%
Full day in-person meetings		6.98%	1.40%	1.68%	0.00%
Multi-part series of meetings			12.01%	3.35%	0.00%
Women landowner learning circles				20.67%	0.84%
Other					4.75%

Figures 26a and 26b show respondents' preferred ways to receive educational information for operators and non-operators by age groups. Operators interested in receiving educational information are overall younger than interested non-operators, with more respondents between 30 and 60 for operators. In particular, for operators, the main target age groups are from 30 to 79, and for non-operators, the main target age groups are above 50.

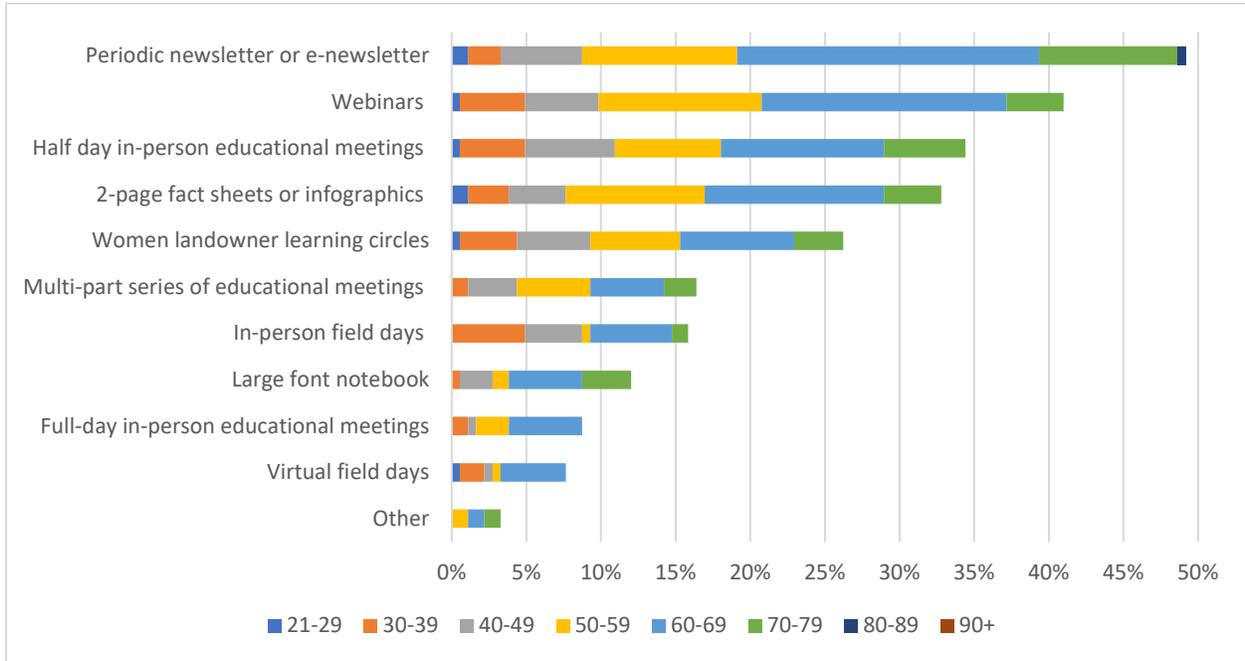


Figure 26a. Operators' preferred ways to receive information and educational programming by age group.

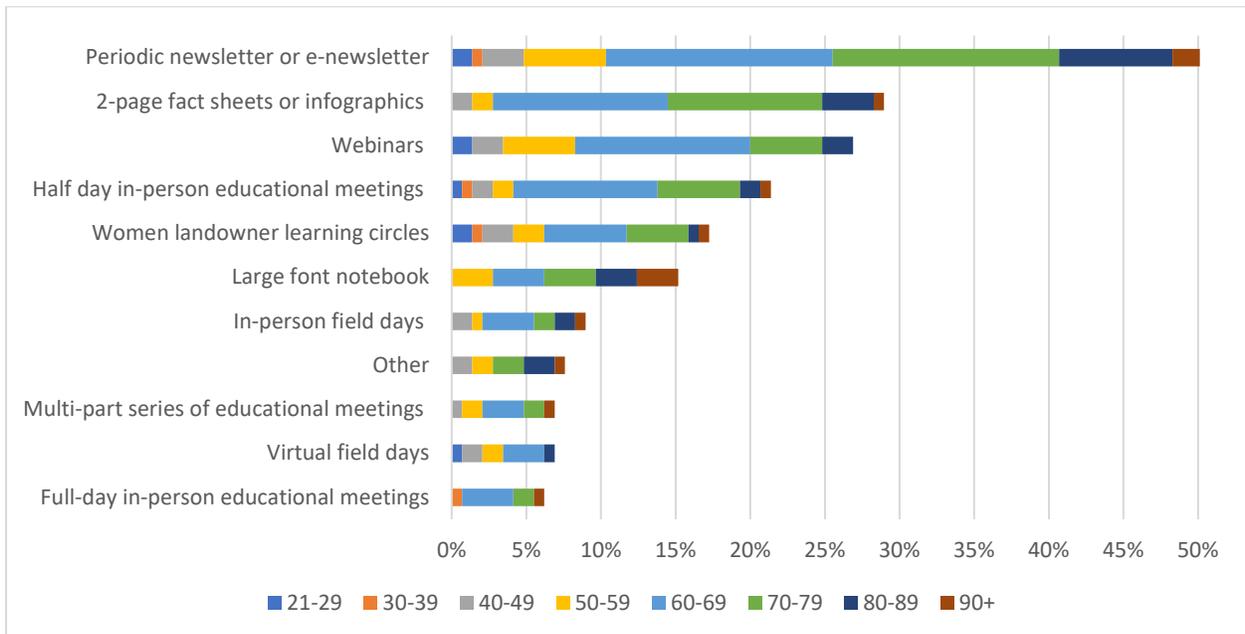


Figure 26b. Non-operators' preferred ways to receive information and educational programming by age group.

Figures 27a and 27b show the percentages of operators’ and non-operators’ preferred methods of receiving educational information in each age group. There almost no operators above the age of 80—only one operator above 80 responded and chose periodic newsletters—and few operators are in their 20s (see Figure 27a). Older owners (30 to 79) prefer periodic newsletters and large font notebooks and younger owners prefer women landowner learning circles and in-person field days. There is no obvious gap between age groups in other ways to receive information. In summary, old operators tend to receive information through printed papers and young operators tend to receive information through in-person activities.

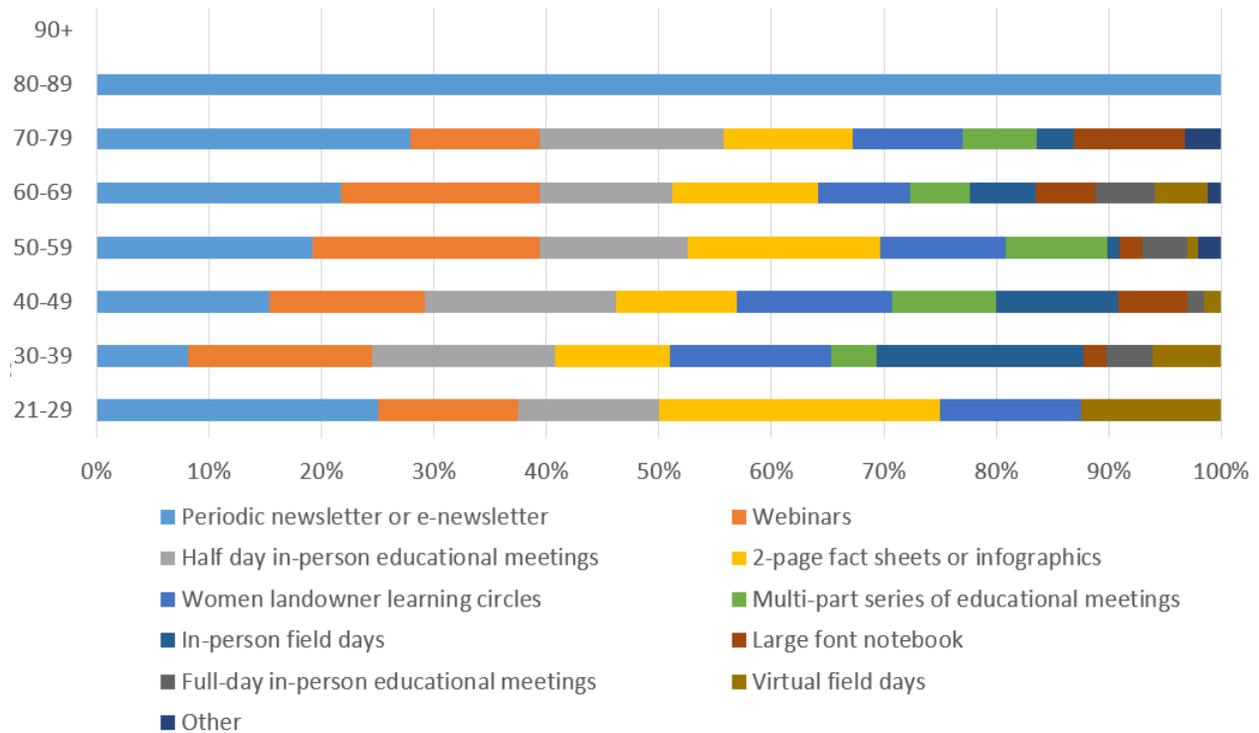


Figure 27a. Operators’ preferred methods of receiving information and educational programming by age group.

There were few non-operator respondents younger than 40—only four non-operator respondents were in their 30s (Figure 27b). For non-operators above 40, older owners prefer periodic newsletters, two-page fact sheets or infographics, and large font notebooks; and, younger owners prefer webinars, virtual field days, and women landowner learning circles. In summary, older non-operators tend to choose printed papers to receive information while younger non-operators tend to choose virtual or in-person methods.

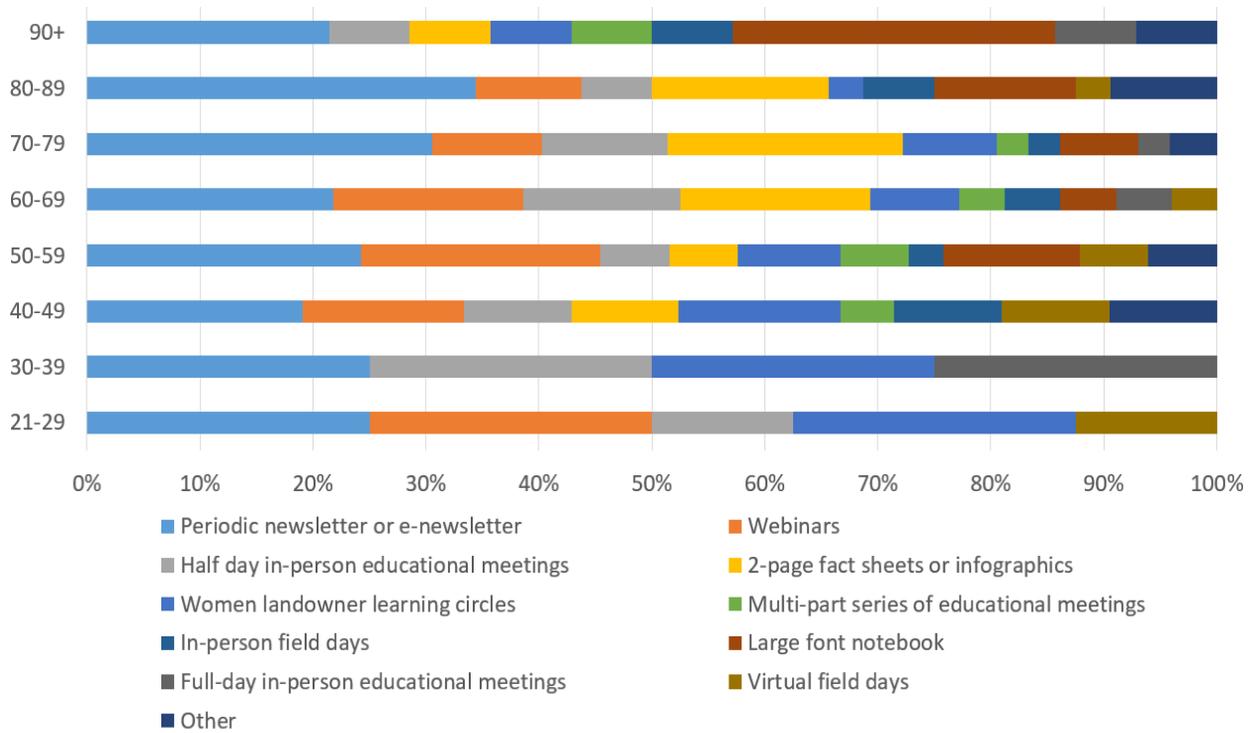


Figure 27b. Non-operators’ preferred methods to receive information and educational programming by age group.

III. vii. Landowners and Their Families’ Characteristics

The ages of the 348 respondents range from 21 to 98, with the largest proportion between 50 and 80 (73%), as Figure 28 shows. Sixty-six percent of the respondents are above 60 and 83% are above 50. The average age is 63.

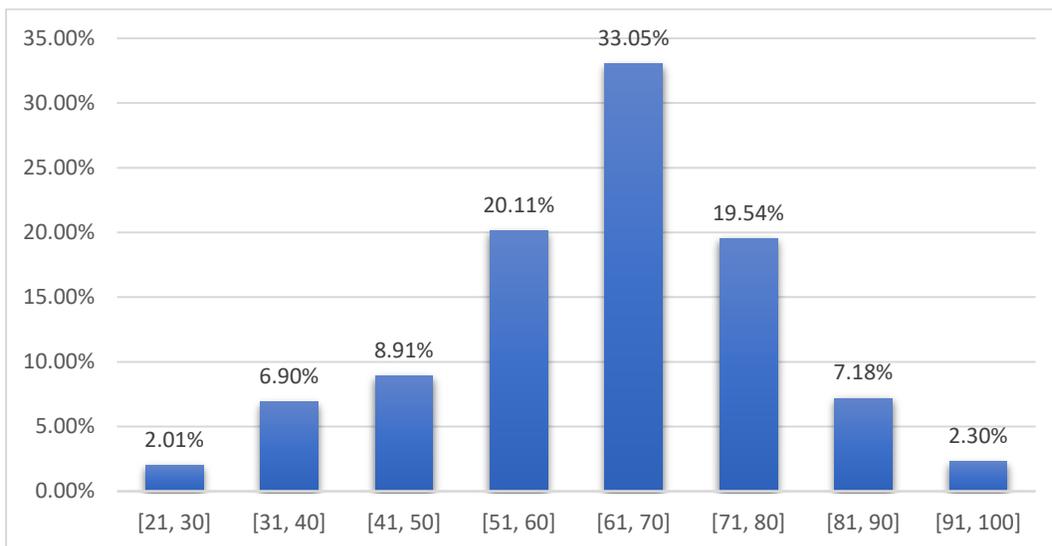


Figure 28. Distribution of respondents’ ages.

Most of the 351 respondents (98%) have been married at least once (Figure 29). Eighty (22.8%) respondents are either widows or separated from their partners and seven respondents never married.

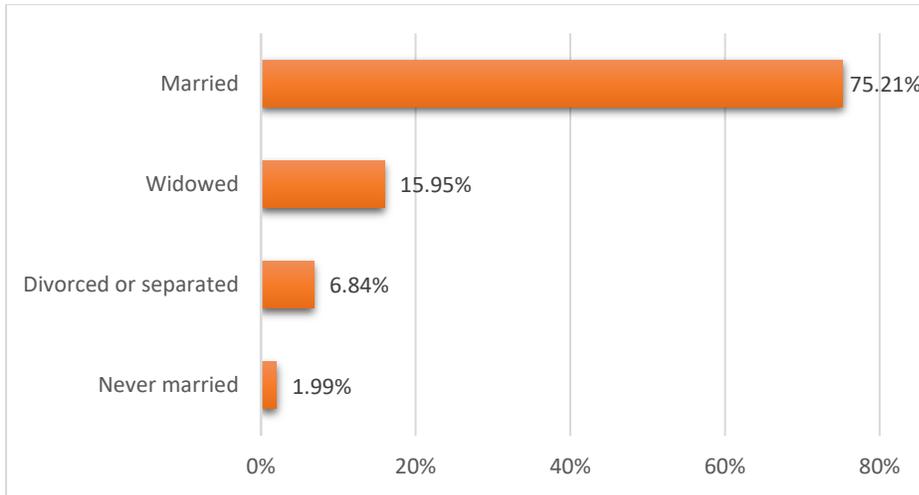


Figure 29. Respondents’ marital status.

Note: We asked respondents to select one marital status that best describes themselves.

Around 30% of 355 respondents are first-generation owners of the farmland parcel they have owned the longest. Second- and third-generation owners each account for 25% of respondents, and 20% of owners are from at least the fourth generation (Figure 30). Of the 353 respondents, 92% do not feel burdened by the farmland they own or co-own (Figure 30). For the 8% of respondents who feel burdened, several mention that aging makes it hard to manage the farm business, which is a time and effort cost. Some owners have other jobs in addition to farm management, which makes them exhausted. Some absentees also noted difficulty finding a good operator and figuring out tax matters. Some inherited farmland due to family expectations and responsibilities but do not enjoy the work. Lack of relevant farming knowledge, debt, and worries about risk and loss are also concerns.

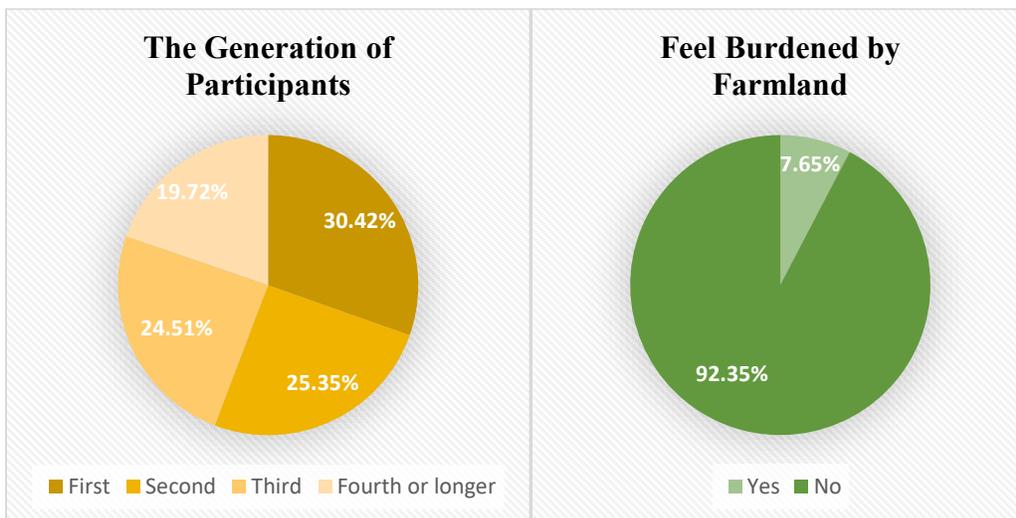


Figure 30. Respondents’ generations and concerns about farmland.

As Figure 31 shows, 83.5% of respondents report receiving off-farm income, and 67.9% report both off-farm income and annual gross household income in 2020. The distribution of the percentages of off-farm income ranges from 1% to 100%, with an average percentage of 55.24%. Around 43% of respondents have off-farm income no less than 70% of their gross household income, and about half (47.73%) have more than half of their gross income from off-farm income. Fifteen (6.17%) respondents reported all their income is from off-farm activities.

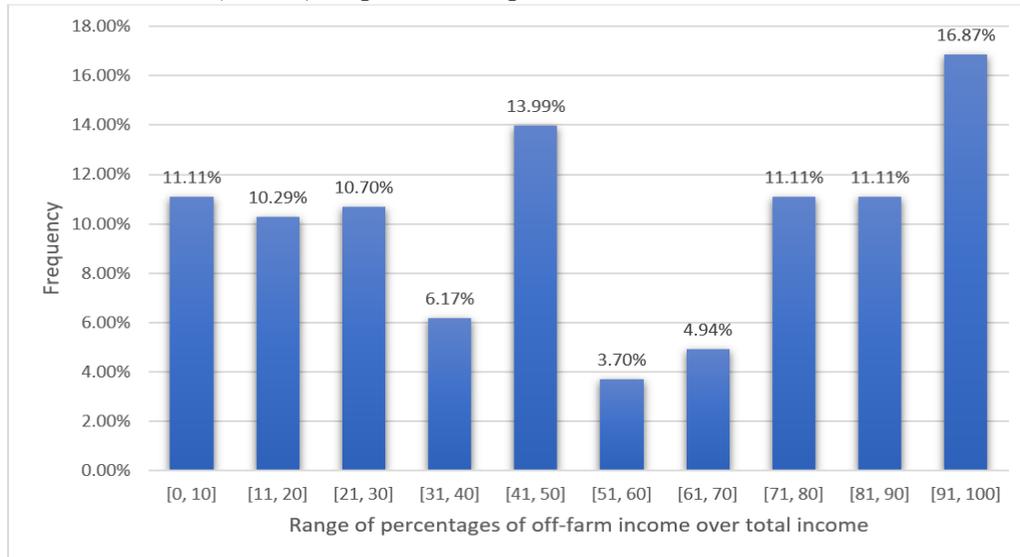


Figure 31. Percentages of off-farm income distribution.

Among 295 respondents, the approximate gross cash farm income before deducting expenses and taxes in 2020 mostly lies below \$350,000 (81.7%) with the percentage slightly lower than the national level (89%) reported by the US Department of Agriculture (see Figure 32).¹

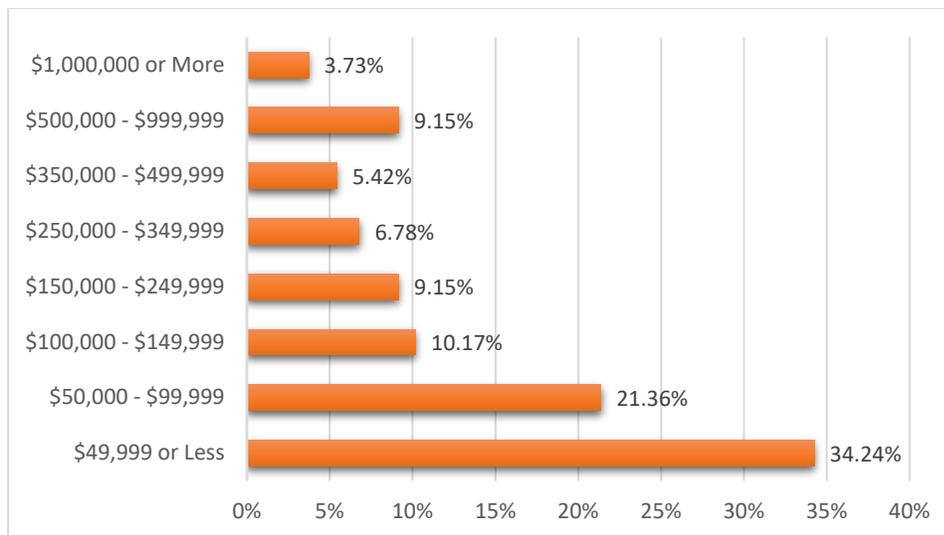


Figure 32. Respondents' approximate gross cash farm income in 2020.

¹ Most farmers receive off-farm income, but small-scale operators depend on it. USDA ERS - Chart Detail. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/gallery/chart-detail/?chartId=58426>.

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Zhang, W., A. Plastina, and W. Sawadgo. 2018. "Iowa Farmland Ownership and Tenure Survey 1982–2017: A Thirty-five Year Perspective." Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, FM 1893.

Appendix A. Voices from Women Landowners

“Glad you are taking this type of survey to the public and especially to women. Glad ISU offers great workshops and materials on leases! Attended one and it was very informational!”

“I inherited some land and married into the rest of it. There is a huge difference in the way the two ownerships are handled.”

“Succession planning is interesting to me and the best way to communicate with non-farming family members about succession planning for land”

“My son rents the land and takes care of conservation practices as his father did.”

“I wish laws wouldn't change. Hard to do estate planning when the tax laws change depending on who is president!”

“I rely on our Farm Management Company to negotiate a competitive leasing rate. I have already put 18 of my 93 total acres in CRP. I would like information about Farm Management companies, e.g., Farmers National, Hertz, etc., which are the most honest, charge reasonable fees, etc. I'd like information about Iowa estate taxes for people like us who have owned our land a long time.”

“Do not like government interfering with the transition of land to the family by trying to change taxes too frequently every time a new administration comes into place. Need consistency for farmers to survive. Do not need the government telling us what we can and not have. After all, we do the work. We know the business.”

“Income restrictions on CRP payments are counterproductive. If the goal of CRP is to protect the land, why are there any income restrictions on payments if owners make over a certain amount of other income?”

“We have slowed down due to our ages and health. With COVID 19 we haven't sold to "public" too much. With age and weather, we have lost all of our fruit trees.”

“I have no problem with the arrangement we have now while I'm still alive. What happens when I'm no longer alive, I guess I've considered to be "their problem".”

“There should never be a tax when you die and leave your land to your family and the basis should automatically go to wherever the average land value is at the time of death. We are taxed to death now.”

“NO farm ground should ever be in the hands of foreigners. This means that no corporate purchases by foreigners be allowed and that the root of ownership be exposed always. No shell corporations made to show a citizen ownership but really they are just the front man for the purchase or sale of property. Monopolies like Bill Gates ownership of more farmland than any individual should not be allowed. Once ownership of our farmland is in the hands of only a few,

the cost to the consumer will be astronomical and/or there will be no food. It is very troubling to see these things happening today and nothing being done to stop it. We must not let China own our food supply. They already own too much of the U.S.”

“Transition was all preplanned when my spouse was alive, years ago. Now if the US government/congress could stop changing taxing so a person can transition and not lose all for taxes. I am in favor of conservation and have done and will continue to do practices to improve the land. Tenant supports all my conservation wishes.”

“I'm ready to move back to the city. I'm tired of driving so far to get into Des Moines. Farm wives truly should be given more credit for what they have to put up with.”

“It's been a great life and the best possible experiences for kids!!!”

“I enjoy my farm background. I do not enjoy paying the ever-increasing land taxes.”

“It is a challenge. The bank in Lansing takes care of my husband's half. We recently hired Hertz Farm Management. We are having to drill a new well because of bad water. Lots of animals in Allamakee County. 750 cows next door, lots of swine facilities.”

“I am concerned about the tax consequences after our death. I don't want our boys to have to sell the farm to pay inheritance taxes. I worry that the government will not be on our side and don't have total confidence in our lawyer.”

“Mostly interested in transferring land as we retire and for avoiding inheritance tax when possible. We have met with a financial planner and have a plan, but still hard to implement with future unknowns-pricing rent, cash rent, crop prices, etc.”

“How to transition add-on businesses like horticultural production, saw milling, etc. How to make money in agri-tourism from conservation practices.”

“It is difficult to cashflow the farm which has operated at a loss since we purchased it from my husband's siblings. Approximately 100 acres is prairie, wetland and timber which we worry will be lost if we have to sell.”

“I co-farm a few hundred acres, but only own 5. I'm finding it difficult to answer these questions because my GCFI is based on farm and off farm income, but only a fraction is from owned farm ground.”

“I plan on farming for a long time!”

“As a widow and everyone expecting a piece of everything you own...with no skin in the game, I've developed the attitude "She who owns the gold/land, makes the rules."”

“I own and farm the land I own and am fairly young, so the transition discussion isn't quite there yet.”

“I have a very good tenant, a neighbor. I noticed a lot of erosion on the steeper portions of the rented land. The neighbor drove around with me and then we had NRCS come make the tour again. It was decided and we agreed upon one third of the field would need to go into CRP. The tenant was fine with this although he ended up with only two thirds of what he was farming.”

“It is helpful to hear of other women share their experiences in all aspects of managing/working the farm.”

“The trust is in process of selling”

“It's definitely a labor of love. Commitment to doing something for the connection with the land and its intrinsic value, rather than motivation by money. Long term perspective of land stewardship and benefits of maintaining open spaces and connection to our ag history.”

“Landownership has been a major goal of my husband and mine. Our farming operation is our livelihood. We own some ground, we sharecrop, and we rent. We farm 2000 acres and owning our own ground has helped us to grow our operation and ensure a legacy for our 4 children.”

“My husband and I worked hard to pay for our farmland so that makes owning the land cost effective. Being leveraged is a huge burden to people. We always chose to live below our means. The borrower is slave to the lender no matter what the purchase.”

“Please stop renting to land hogs! Let us "little guys" have a chance!!!”

“While my husband owns 900 acres only 198 is owned by me as tenant in common with right of survivorship. Would enter my estate only if husband passes first. Rest of farm has uncertain ownership as his estate. He is unsure how he wants to plan his estate and remains stuck in formatting a plan.”

“The FSA office automatically assigns the male spouse as sole operator/farmer, even though I make many decisions. As a result of me not being an operator, I cannot serve on boards as a farmer member. I have much more interest and time to devote to a board and would be a better member than my "primary operator" spouse.”

“I own my farm individually, but I have 2 siblings that own adjacent farms (3 separate farms created from 2 family farms during my mother's estate settlement). The same farm operator farms the 3 separate farms but splits the rental revenue proportionally among the 3 owners. This limits my ability to make independent decisions for my farm. Everything must be mutually agreed upon and be suitable for our farm operator's operation.”

“Transition planning is my biggest concern, but not on the ground we own, but from both my and my husband's parents.”

“I am blessed with the opportunity to live on the land and help care for it. I do not have a major role in decision making but could be more involved if I wanted to be. Our family farm

corporation was created in the 1960s and has worked well to transition between generations. I am very happy that our daughter has chosen to return to the farm.”

“I know extension provides training etc. The opportunity is there, I have not taken advantage of training offered. I think Henry County does a great job providing training.”

“The GCFI above is the total flexible farm lease on the 902 tillable acres that our corporation owns. As an individual household, my share of that farm income is way less than \$49K. I didn't realize it before this survey, but I think what I'm really missing is a network of farm owners. No one in our extended family actually farms anymore, and since we also don't live in Iowa, I feel pretty disconnected from what's going on with farming. Our decisions are based on ISU resources, discussions with our tenant, lawyer, CPA...but we don't really have a sounding board for discussing big decisions. Our lawyer facilitated a conversation about succession, which is how we decided to not deal with it until 2030. When that time comes, my cousins and I are going to have a difficult time making decisions. I want to be prepared. I anticipate that I may still be serving as President of the Corporation by then. No one else is really interested in a leadership role.”

“I have great concerns over possible inheritance tax and step-up issues proposed for the future.”

“Working and paying for land and then having to figure out how so keep from giving majority of it away in taxes”

“I'm going to be retiring in a couple of years, and I will have a tenant. Information about how to get information about estate planning without having to buy a "product" some to get advice from that can be trusted.”

“In recent years I have turned my ground into an LLC with me renting from the LLC.”

Appendix B. 2021 Women Landowner Survey Questionnaire

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

Women in Ag



Women Landowner Survey

Please complete the questionnaire by circling the appropriate response or writing in the blanks provided. If you wish to comment on any question or qualify your answers, feel free to use the space in the margins. Thank you for your time and information!

ABOUT YOU AND YOUR FARM

1. Are you a woman who currently owns or co-owns Iowa farmland?
 - 1 = Yes
 - 2 = No → Thank you for your time. Please return the survey in the envelope provided.

2. Are you in a decision-making role about what happens with your farmland?
 - 1 = Yes, a great deal
 - 2 = Yes, some
 - 3 = No

3. How many acres of Iowa farmland do you have any ownership interest in? _____ Acres

4. In which county is the **largest** parcel of Iowa farmland you own or co-own located?
_____ County

- 5a. Do you own farmland in other Iowa counties?
 - 1 = Yes → 5b. Please list other Iowa counties _____
 - 2 = No

6. In what manner do you own the **largest** parcel of Iowa farmland you own or co-own?
(Please select ONE response)
 - 1 = Sole Owner → **Please skip to Question 8, next page**
 - 2 = Joint Tenancy with right of survivorship (commonly spouses)
 - 3 = Tenancy in Common
 - 4 = Partnership or Limited Partnership
 - 5 = Corporation
 - 6 = Limited Liability Company (LLC)
 - 7 = Revocable Living Trust
 - 8 = Irrevocable Trust
 - 9 = Other (Please Specify: _____)

7. Who are your co-owner(s)? *(Please select ALL THAT APPLY)*

- a. Spouse/partner
- b. Parents
- c. Children
- d. Siblings

- e. Other relative (cousin, niece, nephew, grandparent, aunt, uncle)
- f. Non-relatives
- g. Other (Please specify: _____)

8. Which of the following **best** characterizes your farm? *(Please select ONE)*

- 1 = Row crop only (e.g., corn or soybeans)
- 2 = Livestock or poultry only (e.g., beef cattle, hogs, broilers or layers)
- 3 = Pasture or grazing or timberland only
- 4 = Row crop and livestock/poultry
- 5 = Row crop and pasture/timber
- 6 = Other (Please specify: _____)

9a. Currently do you personally farm full-time, part-time, or not at all?

- 1 = Full-time
 - 2 = Part-time
 - 3 = Not at all
- } **Please skip to Question**

9b. Which of the following best describes you? *(Please select ONE)*

- 1 = Retired farmer
- 2 = Non-operating landowner with farming experience
- 3 = Non-operating landowner with no farming experience
- 4 = Other (Please specify: _____)

10. How did you acquire your farmland? *(Please select ALL THAT APPLY)*

- a. Purchased from family members
- b. Purchased from non-family
- c. Received as a gift from a living person
- d. Inherited after someone passed away
- e. Acquired in another way (Please specify: _____)

11. What are the **top reasons** for you to own your farmland? *(Please select your TOP THREE)*

- a. Source of current income
- b. Source of retirement income
- c. Long-term investment return
- d. I inherited it
- e. Family or sentimental reasons
- f. Preserving land for agriculture
- g. Other (Please specify: _____)

YOUR LEASING OR RENTAL PRACTICES

12. Do you lease some or all of your Iowa farmland to a farm operator(s)?

- 1 - Yes
- 2 - No → **Please skip to Question 19**

13. How many tenants do you currently rent out to? _____ tenants

14. How many acres in total are rented out? _____ acres rented out

15. Do you charge a discounted rental rate to some or all of your tenants compared with market rates in your area?

1 - Yes 2 - No 3 = Don't know

16. Do you have a verbal or written lease agreement with your tenants(s)?

1 = Verbal

2 = Written

3 = Have some tenants with verbal agreements, some with written agreements

17. What type of lease agreement do you **most commonly** use with your tenant(s)?

(Please select ONE response)

1 = Fixed cash rental lease

2 = Flexible cash rental lease (rate may depend on market prices or other factors)

3 = Crop share agreement (for example, owner and tenant share input costs; each may market own portion of crop)

4 = Other (Please specify _____)

18. Is the tenant who rents the greatest number of acres a relative, a friend, a neighbor, or someone else?

1 = A relative (by blood or marriage)

2 = A friend

3 = A neighbor

4 = Someone else

19. How interested are you in receiving information about each of the following issues related to farmland leasing and farm economics?

Leasing Issues	Not at all interested	Slightly interested	Somewhat interested	Very interested
a. Determining the right rental rates for my land	1	2	3	4
b. General farmland lease provisions	1	2	3	4
c. Incorporating conservation practices into leases	1	2	3	4
d. Negotiating farmland leases	1	2	3	4
e. Effective communication with my tenant(s)	1	2	3	4
f. Legal requirements for lease termination or tenant eviction	1	2	3	4
g. Breach or other failure of a tenant to comply with of farmland lease provisions	1	2	3	4
h. The best way to find a new tenant	1	2	3	4
i. Finding information about my land (e.g., Corn Suitability Rating 2 (CSR2) or crop yields)	1	2	3	4
j. Economics of farmland ownership, including return on assets (ROA)	1	2	3	4
k. Protecting my right to the lease payment	1	2	3	4
m. Tax consequences of different leasing options	1	2	3	4
n. Leasing to a beginning farmer	1	2	3	4

o. Finding information about crop production costs and other expenses	1	2	3	4
p. Information about landowner responsibilities (e.g., fences, property taxes)	1	2	3	4

CONSERVATION ON YOUR LAND

20. What conservation practices are currently in use on any Iowa farmland you own or co-own?
(Please select ALL THAT APPLY).

- a. Cover crops
- b. No-till or strip-till
- c. Low-till or other conservation tillage
- d. Perennial prairie strips
- e. Saturated buffers
- f. Grass waterways
- g. Terracing
- h. Crop residue management
- i. Livestock manure management
- j. Extended crop rotation (more than two crops in rotation)
- k. Bioreactors
- l. Drainage water management
- m. Wetlands
- n. Pond or sediment basin
- o. Other (Please specify: _____)
- p. I'm not sure
- q. None

21. Which of the following conservation-related management decisions are currently being made primarily by **your tenant**? *(Please select ALL THAT APPLY).*

- a. NOT APPLICABLE, NO TENANT
- b. Crop inputs (fertilizer and chemicals)
- c. Crop varieties (seed and rotations)
- d. Tillage practices
- e. Use of conservation practices or not
- f. When and how to install drainage tiles
- g. When to maintain or repair fences
- h. Livestock management decisions

22. How concerned are you about each of the following conservation issues?

Conservation Issues	Not at all concerned	Slightly concerned	Somewhat concerned	Very concerned
a. Discussion of conservation practices on my farmland might upset my family or co-owners.	1	2	3	4
b. It is difficult to find information about state or federal conservation programs.	1	2	3	4
c. Incorporating conservation practices into leases.	1	2	3	4
d. I am not familiar with conservation practices.	1	2	3	4

e. Communicating with my tenant about conservation practices.	1	2	3	4
f. Accessing the equipment needed to implement conservation practices.	1	2	3	4

22. (cont.) How concerned are you about each of the following conservation issues?

Conservation Issues	Not at all concerned	Slightly concerned	Somewhat concerned	Very concerned
g. I don't know anyone who is implementing the conservation practices.	1	2	3	4
h. The true value, or lack of value the conservation practices provide to the environment.	1	2	3	4
i. Disapproval from my neighbors.	1	2	3	4
j. Conservation practices may <i>decrease</i> the value of my land.	1	2	3	4
k. It takes too much work and time to implement and maintain conservation practices.	1	2	3	4
m. Cost-share payments are too low.	1	2	3	4
n. There are too many requirements, restrictions and paperwork associated with government programs.	1	2	3	4
o. Conservation practices may interfere with my ability to change land management practices as conditions warrant.	1	2	3	4

23. What topics related to farmland conservation are you **most** interested in receiving information about?

(Please select your **TOP THREE**)

- | | |
|---|---|
| a. Cover crops | i. Government conservation programs |
| b. Agricultural carbon credits program | j. Non-government conservation programs |
| c. Conservation tillage (e.g., no-till, strip-till) | k. Conservation easements |
| d. Soil fertilizer improvement | l. Energy contracts for wind or solar |
| e. Water quality improvement | m. Other (Please specify: _____) |
| f. Wildlife habitat improvement | n. None of the above |
| g. Soil erosion control | |
| h. Pasture and hay land management | |

YOUR FARM TRANSITION PLANS

Farm transition deals with the future of your land. This could include choosing a successor, transferring ownership, or other actions taken during your lifetime as well as estate plans for after death.

24a. Do you have a will?

- 1 = Yes
2 = No

24b. Do you have a written transition plan?

- 1 = Yes
2 = No

25. Have you consulted any of the following people about a transition plan for your farmland or farm business?

(Please select **ALL THAT APPLY**).

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Accountant or CPA | e. Business partner |
| b. Banker | f. Neighbor |
| c. Attorney | g. Farmland operator/tenant |
| d. Financial Advisor | h. Farm consultant |

i. Extension professional
 j. Other (Please specify: _____)

k. Have not discussed with anyone

26. Have you identified a potential individual(s) who will eventually take over the **management** of your farmland?
 1 = Yes
 2 = No

27. Have you identified a potential individual(s) who will eventually take over the **ownership** of your farmland?
 1 = Yes
 2 = No → **Please skip to Question 30**

28. What is the relationship of your most likely successor to you? (Please select **ONE** answer)
 1 = Spouse
 2 = Son
 3 = Daughter
 4 = Son- or daughter-in-law
 5 = Niece or nephew
 6 = Grandson or granddaughter
 7 = Non-related friend
 8 = Current non-related operator
 9 = Other (Please specify relationship to you: _____)

29. How old is your most likely successor? _____ Years Old

30. What do you **expect** will eventually happen to your farm?
 (Please select **ALL THAT APPLY**)
 a. Inherited by family member(s), ownership kept in the family, land rented out and farmed by a tenant
 b. Inherited by family member(s), ownership kept in the family, and farmed by family
 c. Inherited by family members and sold for agricultural purposes
 d. Inherited by family members and sold for non-agricultural development purposes
 e. Farmland will be sold during my lifetime for agricultural purposes
 f. Farmland will be sold during my lifetime for non-agricultural development purposes
 g. Don't know
 h. Something else (Please specify: _____)

31. How concerned are you about each of the following issues related to a successful transition and transfer of your land?

Transition issues	Not at all concerned	Slightly concerned	Somewhat concerned	Very concerned
a. My lack of understanding about different farmland ownership structures and their tax implications.	1	2	3	4
b. I don't know how to find information about business entities that may be useful for my farm, such as partnerships, LLCs, and corporations.	1	2	3	4
c. My family or co-owner(s) are not comfortable having conversations about the future of the farm.	1	2	3	4
d. We have a hard time figuring out a plan that treats all members of the next generation fairly .	1	2	3	4

e. I am not familiar with the different options for transitioning the farm to future generations.	1	2	3	4
f. I cannot find a suitable successor for my farmland or farm business.	1	2	3	4
g. I don't know how to begin to create my estate plan documents such as will or trust.	1	2	3	4
h. We cannot find a neutral third party to help lead conversations about the future of the farm.	1	2	3	4
i. My family have too many disagreements or points of conflict regarding the future of the farm.	1	2	3	4
j. My co-owners or family members cannot find time to hold regular meetings to discuss the future of the farm.	1	2	3	4
k. Other (Please specify: _____)	1	2	3	4

32. What topics related to farmland **transition** are you most interested in receiving information about?
(Please select your TOP THREE)

- a. Farmland and farm business/management succession options
- b. Farm human resources management
- c. Lifetime gifting
- d. Lifetime transfers by sale to family members
- e. Lifetime transfers by sale outside of family
- f. Machinery rental arrangements
- g. Transitioning to a beginning farmer
- h. Tax consequences of different transition options
- i. Estate planning tools (such as wills, trusts)
- j. Business transition tools (such as LLCs, partnerships)
- k. Estate and gift tax matters
- l. Farm family communication
- m. Other (Please specify: _____)
- n. None of the above

YOUR EDUCATIONAL PREFERENCES

33. Please select your **most preferred time** to participate in online or in-person information and educational programming? (Please select ONE)

1 = Mornings 2 = Afternoons 3 = Evenings

34. What ways would you like to receive information and educational programming?
(Please select your TOP THREE)

- a. Large font notebook
- b. Periodic newsletter or e-newsletter
- c. 2-page fact sheets or infographics
- d. Webinars
- e. In-person field days
- f. Virtual field days
- g. Half day in-person educational meetings
- h. Full-day in-person educational meetings
- i. Multi-part series of educational meetings
- j. Women landowner learning circles
- k. Other (Please specify: _____)

ABOUT YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

35. What is the state and county of your primary residence?

_____ State _____ County

36. What is your age? _____ Years Old

37. What is your current marital status?

- 1 = Never married
- 2 = Married
- 3 = Widowed
- 4 = Divorced or separated

38. For the farmland parcel you or your family has owned or co-owned the longest, are you a first, second, third, or fourth generation farmer/landowner on any of the land you own?

- 1 = First
- 2 = Second
- 3 = Third
- 4 = Fourth or longer

39a. Do you feel burdened by the farmland you own or co-own?

- 1 = Yes **39b** → If yes, why do you feel burdened?
- 2 = No

40. Does anyone in your household receive income from off farm sources such as an off-farm job, social security, retirement income, off farm investments, or something else?

- 1 = Yes
- 2 = No → **Please Skip to Question 42**

41. What percent of your household's annual gross income in 2020 came from off-farm sources?

_____ %

42. To the best of your knowledge, what was your approximate **gross cash farm income (GCFI)** before deducting expenses and taxes in 2020?

- 1 = \$49,999 or Less
- 2 = \$50,000 - \$99,999
- 3 = \$100,000 - \$149,999
- 4 = \$150,000 - \$249,999
- 5 = \$250,000 - \$349,999
- 6 = \$350,000 - \$499,999
- 7 = \$500,000 - \$999,999
- 8 = \$1,000,000 or More

43. Please record any other comments you would like to make about farmland ownership in the space below.

Please return your completed survey in the postage-paid envelope provided. Thank you for your time!