

Iowa Nutrient Management Survey



Photograph courtesy of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

***Thank you for your willingness to complete this survey.
Please read each question carefully
and provide a response for each question or item.***

In 2014, did you operate a farm?

Yes.... → If yes, please continue to question 1 below.

No..... → If no, please return this survey to us in the postage-paid envelope provided.

Nutrient Reduction Strategy

The Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy is a plan to reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus that enters Iowa's streams and rivers and eventually the Gulf of Mexico. It is designed to help reduce nutrients in surface water in a scientific, reasonable, voluntary, and cost-effective manner. The strategy sets goals for both "point sources" (e.g., water treatment plants) and "nonpoint sources" (e.g., agriculture) of nutrients. The goal for Iowa agriculture is that nutrient losses into waterways will be reduced by 41% for nitrogen and 29% for phosphorus.

1. Before reading the description above, how knowledgeable were you about the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy? (Please circle one number.)

<u>Not at all knowledgeable</u>	<u>Slightly knowledgeable</u>	<u>Somewhat knowledgeable</u>	<u>Knowledgeable</u>	<u>Very knowledgeable</u>
1	2	3	4	5

2. Information about the Nutrient Reduction Strategy has been publicized through many sources. Please indicate whether or not you have learned about it from the sources listed below. (Please circle one number on each line.)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
a. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or Soil and Water Conservation District.....	1	2
b. Another government agency (e.g., Iowa Dept of Agriculture and Land Stewardship)	1	2
c. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach	1	2
d. The farm press (magazines, radio, TV programs, websites, that focus on agriculture)	1	2
e. The popular press (general interest newspapers, TV programs, radio, magazines)..	1	2
f. Commodity or farm organization (e.g., Soybean Assn, Corn Growers, Farm Bureau).....	1	2
g. Agricultural retailer (e.g., fertilizer, agricultural chemical dealer)	1	2
h. Seed company representative	1	2
i. Independent/private crop adviser or agronomist	1	2
j. Other farmers	1	2
k. Other (Please specify) _____.....	1	2

A watershed is an area of land that drains into a common waterway or water body. Watersheds are often described as “nested” because smaller watersheds that drain into smaller waterways make up larger watersheds that drain into rivers and ultimately into the sea.

Watershed management refers to planning and action focused on maintaining clean water and general environmental quality within a watershed.

3. Please answer the following questions about the watershed where your farm operation is located. (Please circle one number on each line.)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a. Is there an active watershed management group in the watershed?	1	2	3
b. Are local farmers involved in organized watershed management activities?	1	2	3
c. Are local non-farming residents involved in organized watershed management activities?	1	2	3
d. Are you involved in organized watershed management activities?	1	2	3
e. Does any of the land you farm border any creeks, streams, rivers, or lakes?...	1	2	3

4. Please provide your opinion on the following statements related to the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy. (Please circle one number on each line.)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. I would like to improve conservation practices on the land I farm to help meet the Nutrient Reduction Strategy's goals.....	1	2	3	4	5
b. I don't know how well my farm operation is doing in terms of keeping nutrients out of waterways	1	2	3	4	5
c. Fertilizer and ag chemical dealers should do more to help farmers address nutrient losses into waterways...	1	2	3	4	5
d. I am concerned about agriculture's impacts on Iowa's water quality	1	2	3	4	5
e. Nutrients from Iowa farms contribute to water quality problems (e.g., hypoxia) in the Gulf of Mexico	1	2	3	4	5
f. Iowa farmers should do more to reduce nutrient and sediment run-off into waterways	1	2	3	4	5
g. I would be willing to have someone help me evaluate how my farm operation is doing in terms of keeping nutrients out of waterways	1	2	3	4	5
h. Helping to meet the Nutrient Reduction Strategy's goals is a high priority for me	1	2	3	4	5
i. In general, landlords are willing to help farmers address nutrient loss from the farmland they rent	1	2	3	4	5
j. I am concerned about potential water quality regulations targeting agriculture.....	1	2	3	4	5
k. The nutrient management practices I use are sufficient to prevent loss of nutrients into waterways.....	1	2	3	4	5
l. If society wants inexpensive, abundant food, people have to be willing to deal with some impacts on water quality	1	2	3	4	5
m. I am already doing all that I can to reduce nutrient loss from my farm into waterways	1	2	3	4	5
n. I am concerned about Iowa's contribution to water quality problems (e.g., hypoxia) in the Gulf of Mexico..	1	2	3	4	5

5. Many of the following are practices that can reduce nutrient loss into waterways. Please circle all numbers that apply about practices that you used or did not use in your farm operation in 2014. Please include acreage estimates for items “a” through “n.”

	Not used in 2014; no plans to use it	Not used in 2014; might use it in the future	I used the practice in 2014	How many years have you used the practice?		Total acres in the practice in 2014
	↓	↓	↓	1 to 3 years	Over 3 years	
a. Cover crops.....	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	_____
b. No till (all years of rotation).....	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	_____
c. Intermittent no-till	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	_____
d. Strip tillage	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	_____
e. Conservation tillage, excluding no-till and strip tillage.....	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	_____
f. Tile, ditches, or other drainage	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	_____
g. Fall nitrogen application	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	_____
h. Spring nitrogen application	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	_____
i. Growing season nitrogen application (i.e., side-dress)....	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	_____
j. Manure used as fertilizer.....	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	_____
k. Variable rate N application.....	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	_____
l. Nitrogen rate based on Corn N rate calculator (MRTN).....	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	_____
m. Nitrogen stabilizer (e.g., N-SERVE).....	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	_____
n. Cropland converted to perennial crops (e.g., hay, pasture, trees).....	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	_____
o. Extended rotations (3 or more crops over a 3-5 year rotation).....	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	<p><i>Acreage estimates are not necessary for these practices.</i></p>
p. In-field buffer strips (e.g., contour) to filter nutrients and sediment.....	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	
q. Buffers along streams or field edges to filter nutrients and sediment from runoff	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	
r. Bioreactor(s).....	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	
s. Pond(s)/sedimentation basin(s).....	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	
t. Terraces	1	2	3 <input type="checkbox"/> If 3, then <input type="checkbox"/>	1	2	

Reminder: If you used a practice, please indicate how long you have used it, and the 2014 acreage.

6. Some practices from the previous question are listed below. If you did not use a particular practice on your farm in 2014, please indicate the reasons why you did not use it. (Please circle all reasons that apply and/or write a reason.)

	Risk to crop yield	Cost too high compared to benefits	Don't know enough about it	Not appropriate for my farm's soil or terrain	Other reason; please write in five words or less
a. Cover crops.....	1	2	3	4	_____
b. No till (all years of rotation).....	1	2	3	4	_____
c. Strip tillage	1	2	3	4	_____
d. In-field buffer strips (e.g., contour) to filter nutrients and sediment.....	1	2	3	4	_____
e. Buffers along streams or field edges to filter nutrients and sediment from runoff	1	2	3	4	_____
f. Bioreactor(s).....	1	2	3	4	_____
g. Spring nitrogen application	1	2	3	4	_____
h. Growing season nitrogen application (i.e., side-dress).....	1	2	3	4	_____
i. Variable rate N application.....	1	2	3	4	_____
j. Nitrogen rate based on Corn N rate calculator (MRTN).....	1	2	3	4	_____
k. Nitrogen stabilizer (e.g., N-SERVE).....	1	2	3	4	_____
l. Extended rotations (3 or more crops over a 3-5 year rotation).....	1	2	3	4	_____

7. Government agencies and private conservation organizations have many programs to help farmers and landowners establish conservation practices on their land. Please answer the following questions about your contact with agencies, organizations, and their programs.

	Yes	No
a. In the last 5 years, have you received conservation technical assistance from a state or federal agency?.....	1	2
b. In the last 5 years, have you received conservation technical assistance from a non-governmental organization (e.g., Soybean Association, Pheasants Forever)?.....	1	2
c. In the last 5 years, have you received cost share to help you fund conservation practices?	1	2

8. Please indicate how much influence the following sources of information have on your decisions about nutrient management practices and strategies. (Please circle one on each line.)

	<u>No Influence</u>	<u>Slight Influence</u>	<u>Moderate Influence</u>	<u>Strong Influence</u>	<u>Very Strong Influence</u>
a. Family members.....	1	2	3	4	5
b. Other farmers	1	2	3	4	5
c. Landlord/farm management firm	1	2	3	4	5
d. Local agricultural retailer (e.g., fertilizer, agricultural chemical dealer, coop)	1	2	3	4	5
e. Custom operator/appliator	1	2	3	4	5
f. Seed company.....	1	2	3	4	5
g. Independent/private crop adviser/agronomist.....	1	2	3	4	5
h. Iowa State University Extension (e.g., field days, workshops, publications, videos).....	1	2	3	4	5
i. Iowa Farm Bureau.....	1	2	3	4	5
j. Iowa Corn Growers	1	2	3	4	5
k. Iowa Soybean Association	1	2	3	4	5
l. Practical Farmers of Iowa.....	1	2	3	4	5
m. Iowa Learning Farms.....	1	2	3	4	5
n. Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.....	1	2	3	4	5
o. Iowa Water Quality Initiative (WQI)...	1	2	3	4	5
p. NRCS or county Soil and Water Conservation District	1	2	3	4	5
q. Conservation NGO (e.g., Pheasants Forever, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
r. Other _____	1	2	3	4	5

9. The following are a number of potential barriers to water quality improvement in Iowa. Please indicate your disagreement or agreement with the following statements about these potential barriers. (Please circle one number on each line.)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Many farmers don't have the economic resources to adopt sufficient conservation practices	1	2	3	4	5
b. I can't afford to implement more conservation practices .	1	2	3	4	5
c. There is not enough cost-share and other support available from government agencies	1	2	3	4	5
d. Pressure to make profit margins makes it difficult to afford conservation practices	1	2	3	4	5
e. Landlords are unwilling to spend money on conservation	1	2	3	4	5
f. Landlords don't want to change the way things are done	1	2	3	4	5
g. Nutrient loss is difficult to avoid in corn-soybean production systems	1	2	3	4	5
h. Many conservation practices have negative impacts on yields	1	2	3	4	5
i. Nutrient loss is difficult to avoid in tile-drained fields	1	2	3	4	5
j. Many farmers are not aware that nutrients from agriculture can impact water quality	1	2	3	4	5
k. Farmers who have more run-off and erosion problems are less likely to seek conservation assistance	1	2	3	4	5
l. Farmers who are poor stewards of the land cause most of the water quality problems	1	2	3	4	5
m. Many farmers don't know how to further reduce nutrient losses from their farms.....	1	2	3	4	5
n. I don't know how to further reduce nutrient losses from my farm.....	1	2	3	4	5
o. Farmers need help learning how to reduce nutrient loss more effectively	1	2	3	4	5

Personal and Farm Characteristics

10. What is your gender? Male..... 1 Female..... 2

11. What is your age? _____ years

12. What is the highest level of education you have completed? *(Please circle one.)*

Less than high school.....	1
High school graduate (or equivalent).....	2
Some college, no degree	3
Bachelor's degree	4
Some graduate school	5
Graduate or professional degree	6

13. In 2014, about how many acres of the farmland that you owned or rented from others (including crop share) was in the following? *(If none, please write "0".)*

	<u>Owned</u>	<u>Rented</u>
Corn	_____ acres	_____ acres
Soybeans	_____ acres	_____ acres
Small grains (wheat, oats, sorghum, etc.)	_____ acres	_____ acres
Fruit and/or vegetable production	_____ acres	_____ acres
Pasture and/or hay production	_____ acres	_____ acres
Conservation Reserve Program	_____ acres	

14. In 2014, did you raise livestock for sale or for milk production? *(Please circle one.)*

Yes..... 1

No..... 2

15. Which category best represents your gross farm sales for 2014? *(Please circle one.)*

None	1	\$250,000 to \$499,999.....	5
Less than \$50,000	2	\$500,000 to \$999,999.....	6
\$50,000 to \$99,999	3	\$1,000,000 or more	7
\$100,000 to \$249,999	4		

Do you have any comments you would like to share?

***Thank you very much for completing this survey.
Please return it in the postage-paid envelope provided.***