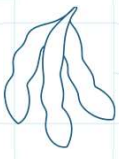
THE GOOD FARMER:

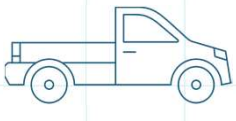
Farmers' views of themselves and agriculture

It is About Them

To influence behavior change, it is necessary to understand an individual's beliefs and attitudes

- You are not the "audience"
- Education is usually not enough to motivate behavior change
- Understand how they view themselves as farmers and the act of agriculture
- Recognize there are always barriers and trade-offs when adopting new behavior





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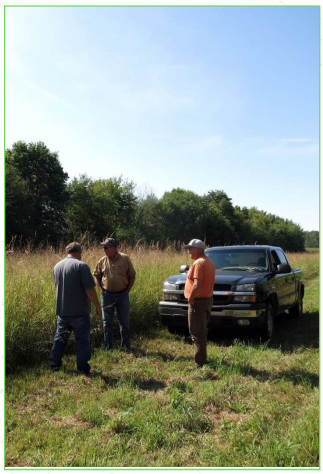
Good Farmer Identity



- Offers a way to talk with farmers about adopting conservation practices.
- Understanding how farmers view the practice of agriculture, enables you to use values-based messages to demonstrate how a practice would fit into their farm operation.
- You are already using some aspect of this framework

Good Farmer Identity: US Corn Belt

- First survey was of Iowa farmers
- Results were verified with another survey of row crop producers across the Corn Belt
- Data were analyzed using standard statistical methods
- Two prominent identities emerged

It's About People and Place

- No single definition of a "good farmer"
- Use as a framework and then incorporate local social and agricultural expectations of how agriculture should be practiced
- Context is important
- Regulation can dramatically influence the context

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Type A Believe a Good Farmer . . .

- Uses latest chemical technology
- Operates up-to-date equipment
- Produces highest yield per acre
- Earns the highest profit per acre
- Keeps fields "clean"*
- Farm looks nice
- Keeps fencerows clear

*This was developed prior to recent push to get cover crops on row cropland

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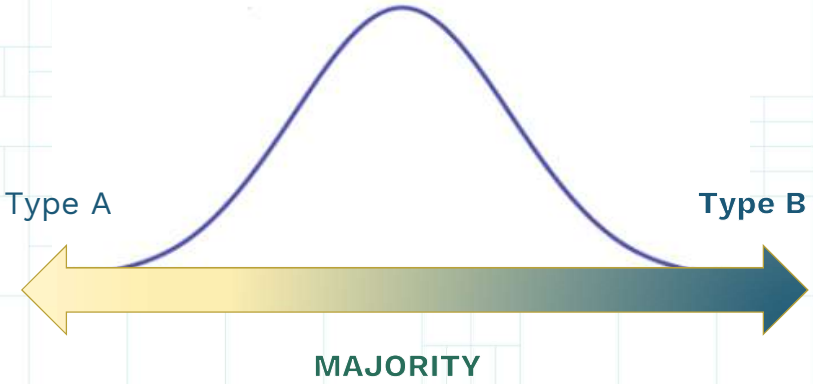
Type B Believe a Good Farmer. . .

- Reduces nutrient runoff from cropland
- Uses practices to minimize soil erosion
- Develops and maintains good organic matter
- Considers stream health when planning
- Balances farm land conservation with short-term profit
- Manages farm operation to support local watershed health
- Scouts fields before spraying pesticides
- Balances profits with reduced negative environment impact
- Minimizes tillage

Continuum of Identity

Most farmers are a combination **of Type A** and **Type B**



Farmer Identity and Constructed Wetland

Farmer Identity Exercise

- Choose the terms that seem most appropriate when talking with **Type A** or **Type B** farmer or landowner about a constructed wetland for their tile-drainage system
- In some cases the phrase may be accurate for both identities

Smart Wetlands Key Messages

Requires up-front costs, but significantly reduces negative impact of nutrients on local environment	Can test water at inlet to understand impacts of crop production practices in the tile-drainage area	Can be designed to include buffers and other structures to reduce erosion from overland water flow
Can be installed on unproductive land thereby improving profitability	The most cost-effective nutrient removal practice available	Does not require changes in crop production practices or systems
Placed in out of public view	Improves water quality in watershed	Once established, it is a self-sustaining systems for years
Constructed wetland are a new technique to improve tile drainage systems in Illinois	Reduces nutrient flowing from cropland into streams/ditches thereby protecting stream health	A long-term, effective and efficient way to stop flow into creeks and ditches in the watershed

Type A Identity

Constructed Wetland Benefit	Identity Attribute
----------	Uses latest chemical technology
Is a new application of a proven method to improve tile drainage systems in Illinois	Operates up-to-date equipment
Can be built on marginal land thereby improving yield and profitability	Produces highest yield per acre
Can be built on marginal land thereby potentially improving profitability	Earns the highest profit per acre
Can square up fields and borders	Keeps fields “clean”
Can be built on land away from public view	Farm looks nice
----------	Keeps fencerows clear

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Type B Identity

Constructed Wetland Benefit	Identity Attribute
Reduces nutrient flowing into streams/ditches	Reduces nutrient runoff from cropland
Can be designed as part of a include overland flow reducing erosion	Used practices to minimize soil erosion
----------	Develops and maintains organic matter
Reduces nutrient flowing into streams/ditches	Considers stream health
Requires up-front costs, but reduces negative impact of nutrients on local environment	Balances conservation with short-term profit
improves water quality local watershed	Supports local watershed health
----------	Scouts before spraying pesticides
Requires high up-front costs, but reduces negative impact of nutrients on environment	Considers profits versus negative environment impact
----------	Minimizes tillage

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Key Messages

Type A

- Efficient system that works on its own
- Is the most cost-effective nutrient removal practice
- Requires no changes to crop production
- Placing on marginal land can increase profitability of operation
- Can be placed out of public view

Type B

- Protects stream health
- Protects watershed health
- Reduces nutrient runoff from cropland
- Minimizes soil erosion
- Balances profits with reduced negative environment impact

The Big Takeaway

Generally Type A and Type B use many of the same farming practices. They diverge when you consider their expectations.

- **Type A** focus on earning short-term payouts from their farming operation
- **Type B** are more comfortable forgoing some short-term payout in favor of the long-term benefits to their land and surrounding ecosystems

In Our Experience . . .

The Swamp Thing

Constructed wetlands are a tough sell

- What is the Wetlands Initiative?
- Why would we want a wetland, we're farmers?
- A couple generations of my family has invested in tile drainage to drain wetlands on this farm and you think we need a wetland?
- You want me to set aside 3-5 crop acres to build a shallow pond that won't even be deep enough for fish?

In Our Experience . . .

At the farm pay attention to these items

What is in the machine shed?

How does the farmstead look?

How do the crop fields look?

Is there livestock?

Don't let an initial negative attitude rattle you

Don't jump right into a conversation about the conservation unless the farmer initiates.

Find some way to personally with the farmer

Ask about any photos present to start a conversation about their family and who might be taking over the farm operation some day.

In Our Experience . . .

Ahead of your visit identify some basics about the farm operation and land

- What types of crops are grown, including livestock
- Are commodity or specialty field crops or livestock?
- What are the general local biological, geological and physical conditions?
- What are the specific biological, geological and physical conditions on their farm?
- What are the prevailing social systems such as family, government, religious, educational and business?
- What can identify about farmers social systems such as family, government, religious, educational and business?
- Who owns the land they farm?
- Is the cropland subject existing management requirements such as HEL or property under local, state or federal
- Are there existing conservation practices on the farm?

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THE WETLANDS INITIATIVE

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