

Grower Views on Nitrogen Management Survey Summary

Survey region: East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition (ESJWQC)

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Project Summary:

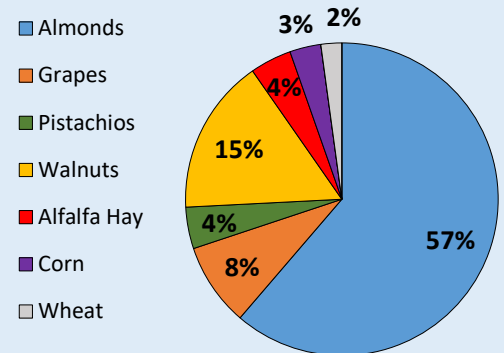
- UC Davis sent our Grower Views on Nitrogen Management Survey to ESJWQC growers to ask about their views on nitrogen management and better understand how the Coalition can provide support to growers in adopting nutrient management practices and complying with the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program.
- The survey was sent to ~1,200 ESJ WQC growers between June and August 2018. We received 183 responses (15% response rate) and determined the sample was representative of the whole Coalition in terms of crop type and operation size.
- The project objectives include: (a) providing feedback to ESJWQC outreach and extension programs on needs to continue assisting growers with adoption of nitrogen management practices; (b) providing feedback to the Coalition programs and Regional Water Board on what growers think about the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program.

Key findings on practice adoption:

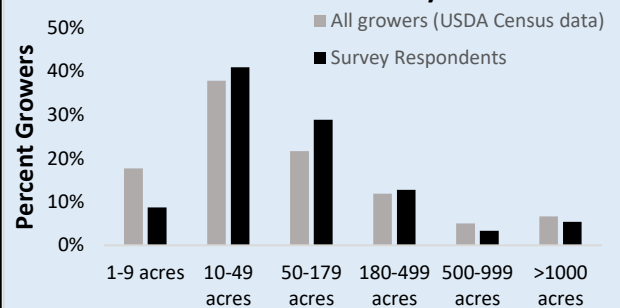
- Agronomic benefits of nitrogen management practices (improvements to crop yield and quality, soil fertility & return on investment) are some of the most important factors considered in adoption decisions.
- Uncertainty of practice impact on the farming operation, cost, and regulations are the most frequent barriers preventing adoption of nitrogen management practices.

Survey sample characteristics

Crops grown by survey respondents

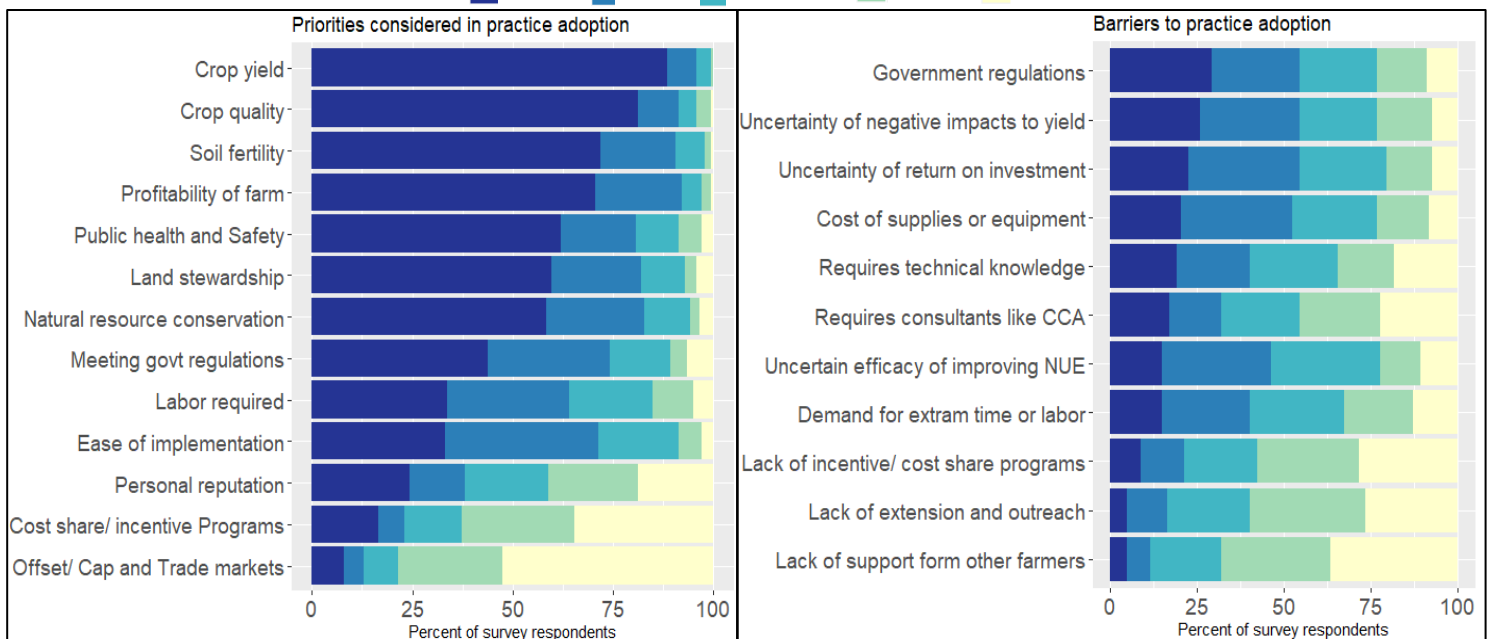


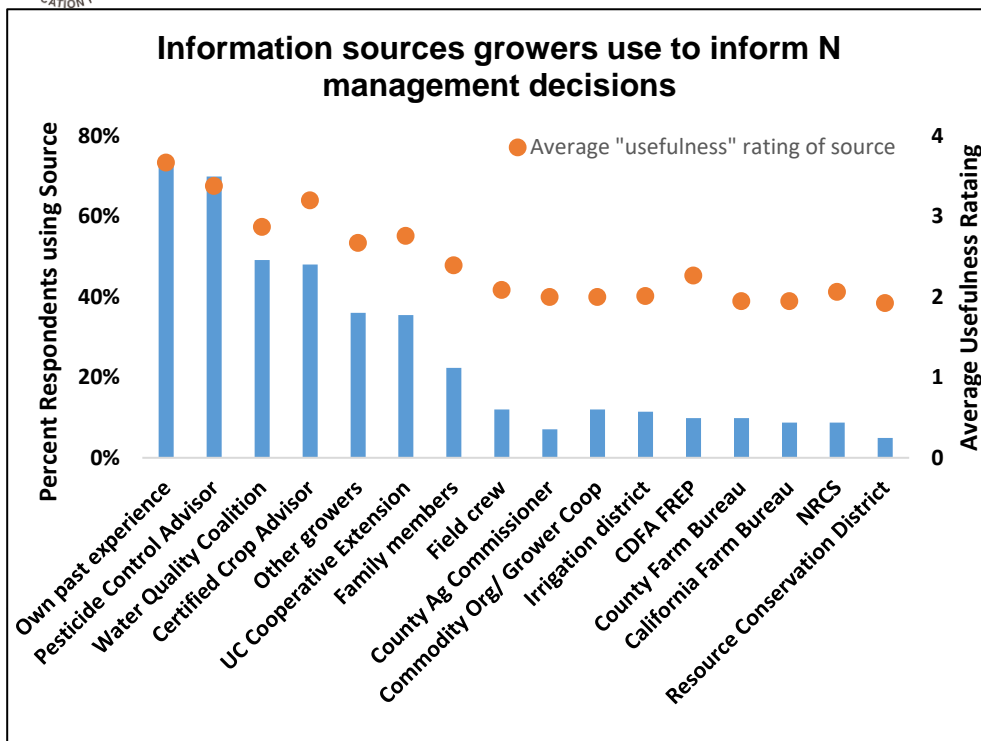
Distribution of farms by size



Survey asked growers how often the following priorities or barriers affected their decisions to adopt N management practices

Always (Dark Blue), Often (Medium Blue), Sometimes (Light Blue), Rarely (Light Green), Never (Yellow)



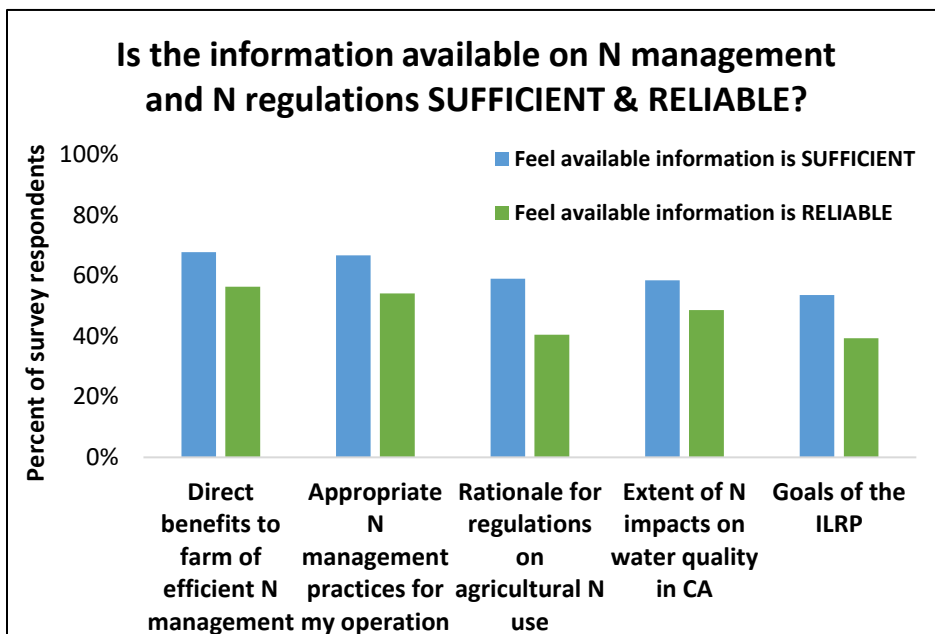


Key findings on nitrogen information landscape:

- Growers seek information from many sources to base their nitrogen management decisions, but most important sources are PCAs (cited by 70% growers) and their own past experiences (73%).
- The Water Quality Coalition is also an important and fairly useful information source, used by 50% of growers.
- Average ratings of the usefulness of different information sources correlate very closely with how commonly the information source is referenced.

Is there good enough information on N management and N regulations?

- On N management, the majority of growers (>50%) feel there is *sufficient* and *reliable* information on the on-farm benefits of efficient N management and which practices are most appropriate for their land.
- On N regulations, the majority of growers (>50%) feel there is *sufficient* information available on the rationale and goals of the regulations, but there is less trust that this is *reliable* information.



Takeaways for Outreach:

- PCAs are a highly valued information source and may be crucial partners to disseminating information about nitrogen management & regulations.
- Emphasizing on-farm benefits of improved nitrogen management is key to motivating practice adoption.
- Improved communication on the goals and expectations of the Irrigated Lands Regulatory Program is still needed.

Next steps: Further analysis of the survey will determine how factors influencing adoption vary across different crop types and farming operations. UC Davis will continue collaborating to understand how to improve outreach and extension of nitrogen management practices and regulations.