

# Corn and Soybean Grower Survey

## Cognitive Interview Guide

### USDA Burden Statement:

The time to complete this information collection is estimated to be 60 minutes.

*[This is comment for readers]*

### Interview Procedures

*Procedure 1:* In early interviews, we will ask respondents to first answer sections A-C and stop after they have answered the enrollment question. We will then ask detailed probes about their thought processes for the enrollment question. This will allow us to use early interviews to focus on obtaining in-depth feedback on the enrollment decisions. After obtaining in-depth feedback on the enrollment decisions, we will ask the respondent to continue the survey, and if time allows, we will then probe on other sections of the survey.

*Procedure 2:* In later interviews, we will adapt the procedure so that the respondent first takes the entire survey (sections A-E) and then answers all probe questions, beginning with the enrollment decision. This will allow us to better understand the response burden for the whole survey.

In all cases, the respondent shares their screen while answering survey questions.

The interview procedures minimize burden by splitting the tasks of in-depth information collection on a portion of the survey and testing the full survey instrument across two sets of respondents and limiting information collection time to one hour.

The two procedures are summarized below.

<b>Procedure 1 (Early Interviews)</b>	
1	Answer survey sections A-C
2	Detailed probes on enrollment question (Interview Questions #1-10)
3	Interviewer shares screen with alternate enrollment question layout, probes on the alternate layout (Interview Questions #11-14)
4	Answer survey sections D-E
5	Probes on the other sections of the survey (Interview Questions #15-20)

<b>Procedure 2 (Later Interviews)</b>	
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1	Answer survey sections A-E
2	Detailed probes on enrollment question (Interview Questions #1-10)
3	Interviewer shares screen with alternate enrollment question layout, probes on the alternate layout (Interview Questions #11-14)
4	Probes on the other sections of the survey (Interview Questions #15-20)

Throughout, after a respondent provides some answer, we may use various context-dependent generic probes to be used to learn more about their answer's meaning or to spur a more detailed response. Examples of such probes include:

- Can you tell me more about that? *Or:* Can you tell me more about “*what they mentioned*”?
- For my notes, are you saying, “*restate their thought in different way*”?
- What does the term “*word they used*” mean to you?
- Can you tell me more about your thought process for answering that question?
- Was that information easy to recall?
- You mentioned “*X*”, is that something you have experienced? Have you heard about others experiencing this?  
[“*Experience*” may not apply to all situations, so adjust this generic probe accordingly.]
- In your own words, what does “*X*” mean to you?  
*Here, “X” may be any term in the question or answer choices not covered below, such as:*
  - Cover crop
  - Conservation or reduced tillage
  - Flexible
  - Termination period
  - Federal program

1. What do you think about the survey so far? [if needed] Did any parts of it stand out to you? How so (in what ways)? [if needed] Was anything or were any parts difficult for you?  
*Or, for procedure 2:* What did you think about the survey? [if needed] Did any parts of it stand out to you? How so (in what ways)? [if needed] Was anything or were any parts difficult for you?

[*Enrollment*]

[*This part is to focus on the understanding and comprehensiveness of the enrollment selection questions. We want to know if the important information was transmitted correctly, and their decision process.*]

2. Now think about the cover crop enrollment question. Do you have any general comments on it?

3. Talk me through your thought process for how you answered this question.

*Ask responsive probes based on what the person says. Sample probes include:*

- What parts of the cover crop program were most important to your enrollment choice?
- More generally, what parts of any cover crop program are important to your enrollment decisions?

4. Tell me in your own words what “X” means to you.

*Select one program attribute from this list:*

- Contract flexibility
- Timing of cover crop termination and cash crop planting
- Time it takes to apply
- Contract processing time
- Professional advice before and after planting]

5. When you answered the question, what benefits did you think the program would provide to you?

6. *(If they just saw the version with two contracts)* Thinking about the programs you were offered, describe to me the differences you noticed between the programs.

7. Describe to me how accepting this contract would change the way you are farming on this field.

7a. What would change on this field if you did not enroll?

*Probes to stimulate discussion include:*

- What would you need to do on your field if you enrolled?
- How sure are you about your enrollment answer?
- What effects would the program have on your soil and field?
- What effects, if any, would the program have off of your farm?

8. In your own words, what does “X” mean to you?

*Select one program attribute not already discussed:*

- Contract flexibility
- Timing of cover crop termination and cash crop planting
- Time it takes to apply
- Contract processing time
- Professional advice before and after planting]

9. Talk me through what you think a “No” to a program enrollment means here? If you said no, what would do on this field instead?

10. Did you think your field is eligible for this contract?

- Yes
- No

10.a. Tell me what you thought the eligibility criteria.

*[Enrollment part 2: Now show person the alternative version of enrollment questions on your screen. Have them answer, and then discuss]*

*[This part is to focus on the other version of the choice experiment, some of the previous questions don't make sense to ask again, therefore we ask a general question here.]*

11. What do you think about this version of survey?

*Possible probes if limited response:*

- What are your thoughts?
- Compared to the other way of asking, what did you find better or worse about this version?
- Did you find this version easier or harder to answer?

12. *[If not already mentioned or clear]* In your own words, for this enrollment question, what did you think a Yes meant for this question? What did you think a No meant here?

13. How do you think your answer affects whether this program is offered or not, and the type of offers?

14. For any of the contracts you saw, would you want those to be available to you (through a federal program, through a state program, through an NGO, through a private company)?

*[Other parts of the survey, important to cover, but secondary to understanding the big picture responses and the SP responses]*

*[This part is to focus on the other part of the survey. The understanding and comprehensiveness of the questions. Since we ask about their past behavior, we want to ask about the recall burden.]*

15. We were just talking about your cover crop enrollment answers on a specific field. Would your cover crop enrollment decisions be different for other fields? How so?

- Do you have fields where you would never cover crop? If so, why?

16. When answering the “X” question(s), is this something you would normally need to check records for?

- *Ask about each of these questions in turn:*
  - i. Rotation history
  - ii. Cover crop history
  - iii. Tillage practices
  - iv. Programs you participated in
- Are there any other things from the survey where you would normally check records?
- *[If any of above are yes, then probe about simpler ways that would take less time.]*

*[This is to talk about respondents’ own perception for this field, to see their comprehension of the information that was conveyed.]*

17. What benefits do you see from using cover crops on this field? (if not covered above.)

- How do cover crops affect soil fertility?
- How do cover crops affect yield?
- How do cover crops affect soil run-off?
- Are there other ways cover crops affect your field?

18. What problems do you see from using cover crops on this field? (if it not covered above.)

- What about weed pressure?
- What about pest pressure?
- Are there other problems with cover crops for this field?

19. Do you feel like the survey asked you about things you have already reported to USDA in other ways?

*If so:* What did you think about that (e.g., annoying, seemed reasonable here, etc.)?

*[Improvement areas (when nearing interview end)]*

20. In addition to what we talked about above, can you think about ways we could have worded questions better? For example, were there any terms that seemed wrong or out of context or was there text that seemed odd?