

The Power of Online Polling

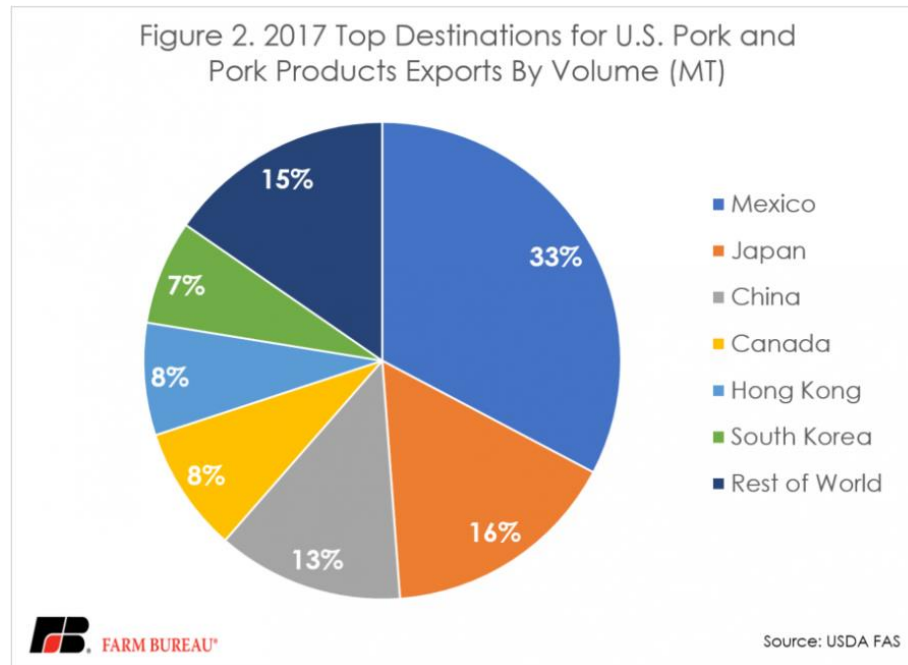
Leveraging Results For Strategic Outcomes



Mace Thornton
Executive Director of Communications
American Farm Bureau Federation

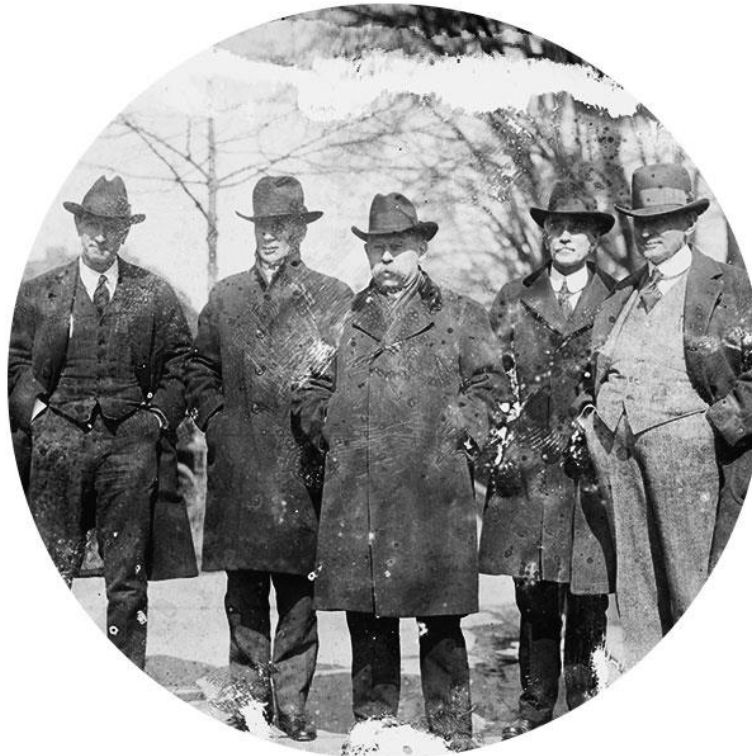
Who and Why?

- **American Farm Bureau Federation**
- **How we use research**
 - Formal
 - Informal
 - Secondary



About the American Farm Bureau Federation

- **Started in 1919**
 - **Farmers from 30 states gathered in Chicago**



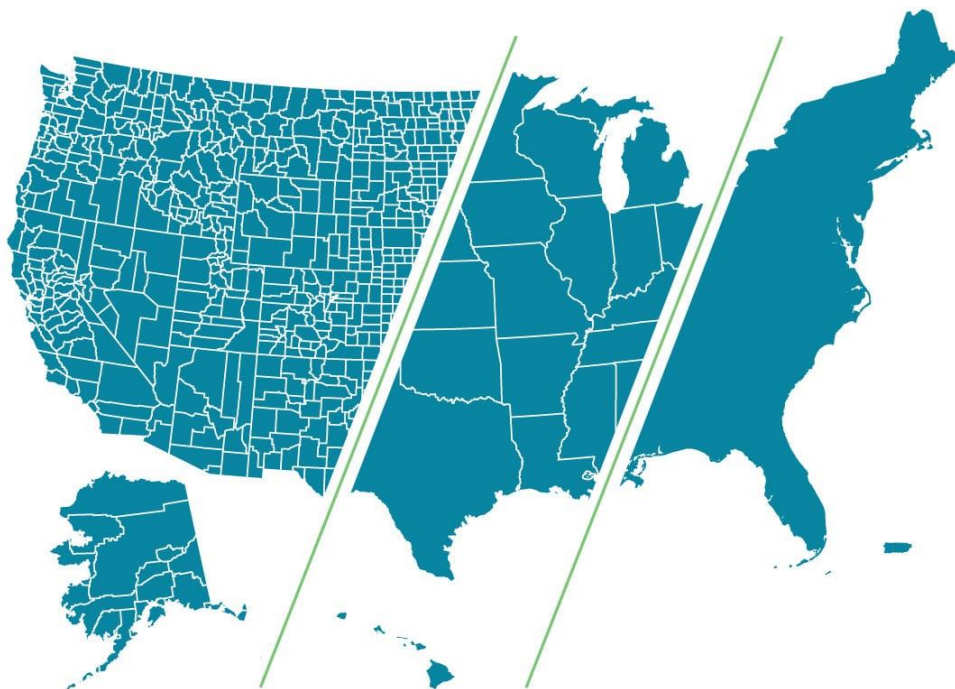
About the American Farm Bureau Federation

- **Today: Recognized as The Voice of Agriculture**
 - Nearly 6 million member families



About the American Farm Bureau Federation

- **Grassroots Structure – Members join at the county level**
- **AFBF is a federation of the 50 state Farm Bureaus and the Puerto Rico Farm Bureau**



About the American Farm Bureau Federation

- **Original Purpose**
 - Farm Bureau is an independent, non-governmental, voluntary organization governed by and representing farm and ranch families united for the purpose of analyzing their problems and formulating action to achieve educational improvement, economic opportunity and social advancement and, thereby, to promote the national well-being.



About the American Farm Bureau Federation

- **Current Mission Statement**
 - **AFBF is the unified national voice of agriculture, working through our grassroots organizations to enhance and strengthen the lives of rural Americans and to build strong, prosperous agricultural communities.**



Areas of Work

- **Our Bread and Butter – Public Policy Advocacy**
 - Congress
 - The Administration
 - The Courts
 - The News Media



How We Function

- **Collaborative Issues Management**
- **Comprehensive Strategic Planning**
- **Lobbying**
- **Grassroots Engagement/Mobilization**
- **Strategic Communications**
- **Proactive Media Outreach**
- **Emphasis on Outcome Measurement**



The Importance of Research

- **Research Feeds Each Mission Area**
- **Nonprofit Challenges**
 - Diverse National Membership
 - Must be Efficient
 - Must be Effective



Informal Methods

- Informal polls
- Larger informal surveys
- In-depth interviews
- Secondary research



Our Formal Research Method

- **Working with Morning Consult**
- **Online Polling**
- **Base Audience: Registered Voters**
- **Base Sample Size: 2,000**
- **Nationally Representative Sample**
- **Drill Down for Specific Audiences**
- **Direction for valid poll design**
- **Post-polling analysis and support**

The Importance of Formal Research

Why we make the investment

- **Informing issues management**
- **Setting baseline measurements**
- **Identifying and engaging key stakeholders**
- **Message development and testing**
- **Finding compelling story angles**
- **Identifying spokespersons**
- **Briefing legislators and regulators**
- **Amplifying timely topics**

Leveraging Research: Inform

- **Informs our Issues Management Process**
 - Is the issue ripe for action?
 - Is the political environment aligned?



2018 FARM BILL: CRITICAL VOTE AHEAD: Contact Your Legislator Now to "VOTE YES!" to Get it Across the Finish Line

Every lawmaker needs to hear from a Farm Bureau member today. There should be no question in their minds as to how important the 2018 farm bill is to agriculture and our rural economy. The bill addresses several major concerns and Congress needs to hear from Farm Bureau members to help prevent the bill from being torn apart and missing its timelines.

★ Take Action Now

Leveraging Research: Audience

- **Engage the Audience**
 - Does this appeal to our grassroots audiences?
- **Who will join us?**
 - Who will amplify our call to action?



Leveraging Research: Messaging

- **Message Development and Testing**
 - Do existing messages resonate?
 - What new messages move the needle?

Talking Points: Rural Infrastructure

Key Messages:

- Rural infrastructure provides critical links to global markets for agriculture and other industries. Farmers and ranchers depend on highways, railways and waterways to ship food, fuel and fiber across the country and around the world.
- America's deteriorating rural infrastructure threatens our position as the unquestioned leader in agricultural production worldwide.

Leveraging Research: The Story

- **Is there a compelling story behind the issue?**

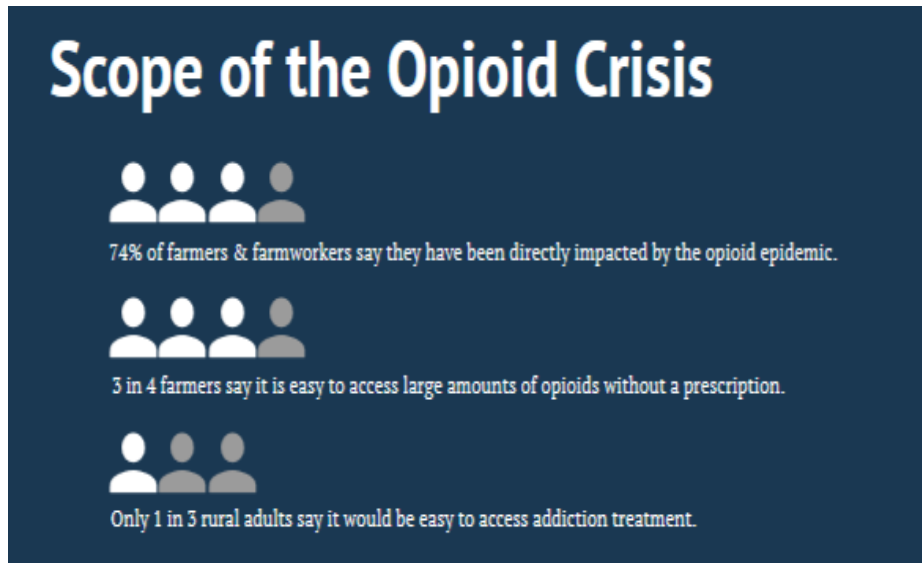
Survey Shows Massive Opioid Impact in Farm Country; Farm Groups Call for Dialogue, Action

WASHINGTON – The opioid crisis has struck farm and ranch families much harder than the rest of rural America, a Morning Consult survey shows.

While just under half of rural Americans say they have been directly impacted by opioid abuse, 74 percent of farmers and farm workers say they have. Three in four farmers say it would be easy for someone in their community to access opioids illegally, and just under half of rural adults – 46 percent – say the same. The poll, sponsored by the American Farm Bureau Federation and National Farmers Union, is a first step in the groups' collaboration on this issue.

Leveraging Research: The Story

- Sometimes there is! The survey illuminated this trend



Opioid Effects on Farm Country

Joint Survey by Farm Groups Shows Massive Challenge with Opioid Abuse in Rural America

11/30/2017 | 10:10 AM CST



By Jerry Hagstrom, DTN Political Correspondent



Q Search

Bloomberg

Sign In

Opioid Crisis Hits Farmers Harder Than Their Rural Neighbors

By Alan Bjerga

November 30, 2017, 12:01 AM EST



REUTERS

World Business Markets Politics TV

Farmers harder hit by opioid crisis than rest of rural U.S.: survey

Leveraging Research: Campaign Footing

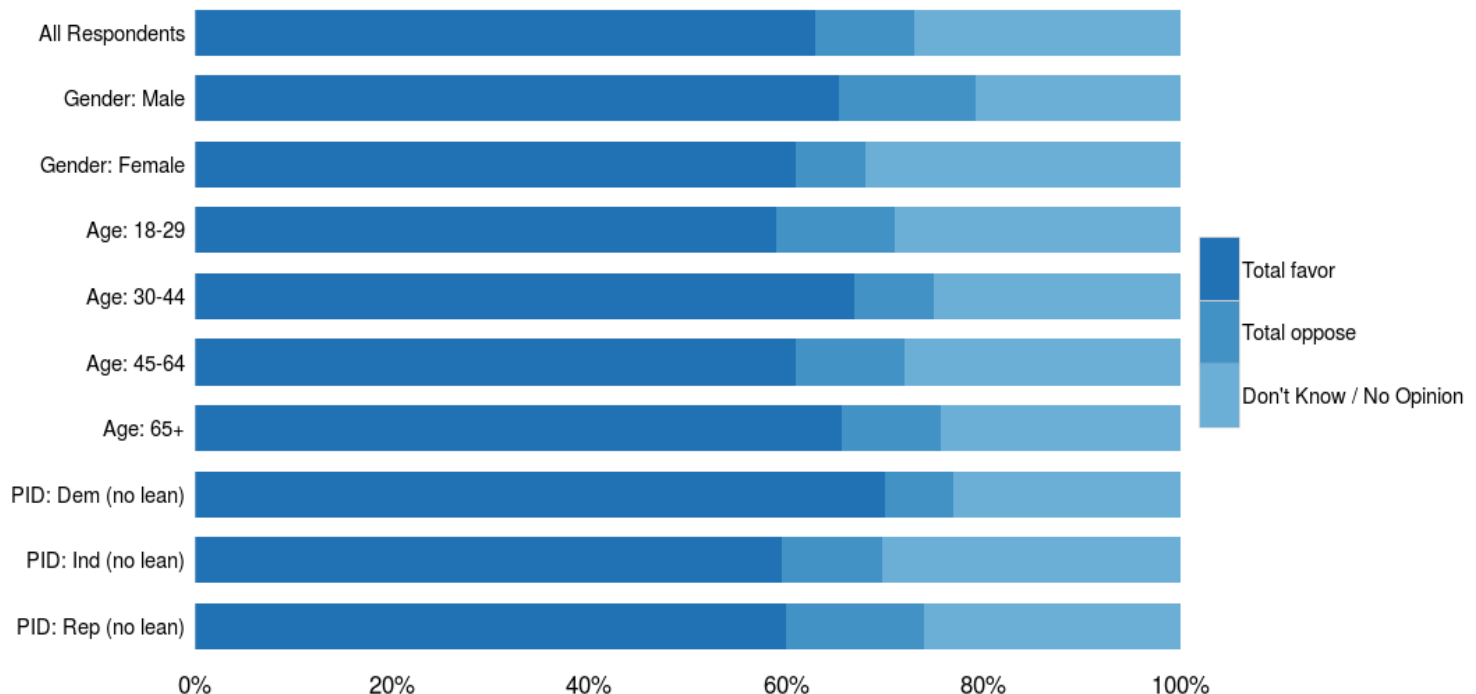
farmtownstrong.org



Leveraging Research: Hill Briefing Material

Sixty-three percent support modernizing the Endangered Species Act (ESA)

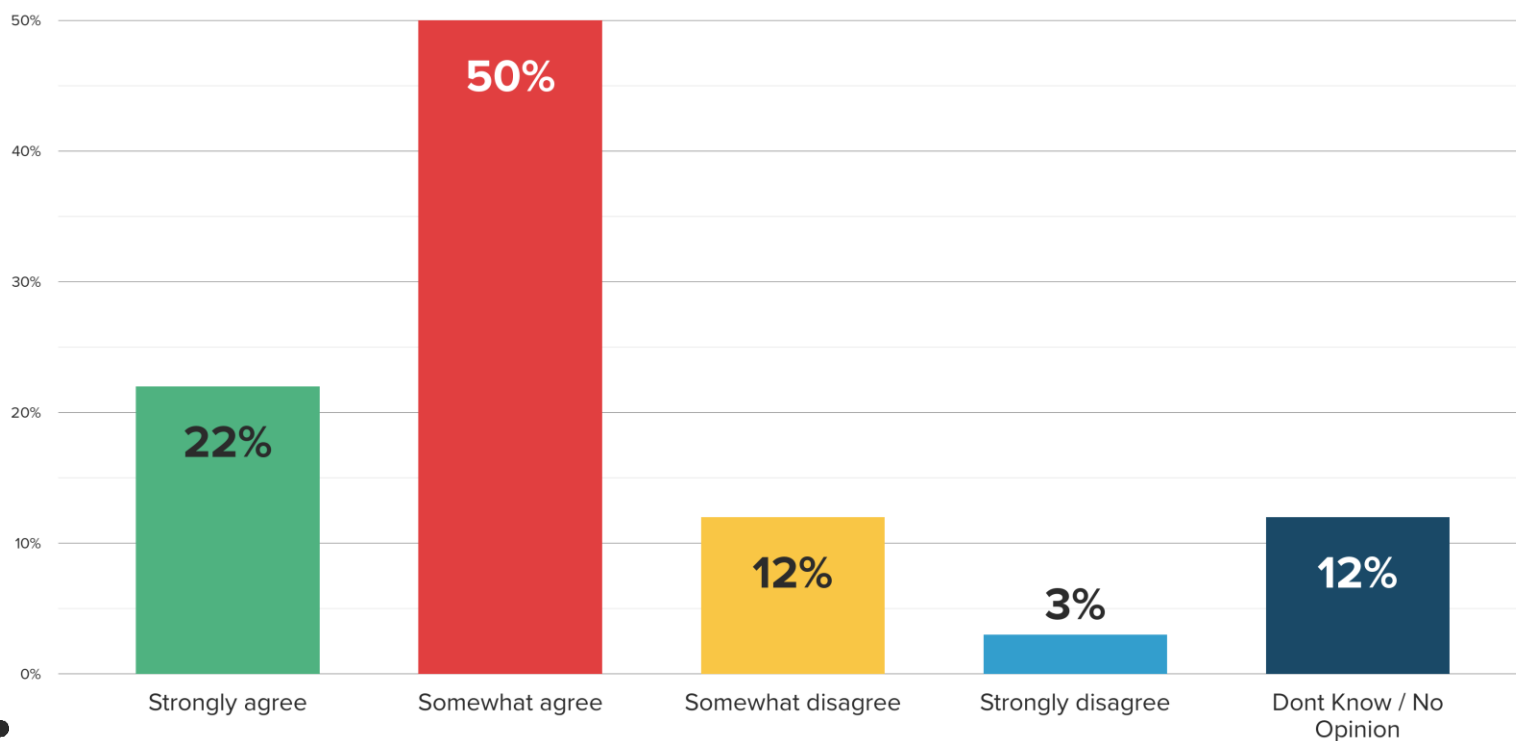
Given what you know about the Endangered Species Act, do you favor or oppose updating and modernizing the Endangered Species Act?



Leveraging Research: Timely Topics

Three-Quarters of Voters Agree That Modern Agriculture is Sustainable

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Modern agriculture is sustainable.



Leveraging Research: Timely Topics

Americans Say Agriculture is Sustainable, Favor Incentives Over Regs



Leveraging Research: Timely Topics



Americans say agriculture is sustainable

From the notion of a modern farm or ranch being economically able to sustain a family, to the idea of working with the land in a manner that supports food and fiber production for future generations, sustainability means different things to different people. Even in agricultural circles, definitions of sustainability run far afield, from the environment to economics.

A recent Morning Consult poll asked 1,917 registered voters to give their opinions regarding agriculture and sustainability. One definition of sustainable agriculture was offered, generally, as defined by the 1977 and 1990 farm bills, a system of agriculture that will satisfy human food and fiber needs, enhance environmental quality, use resources efficiently, sustain the economic viability of farmers and benefit society as a whole.

Almost everyone supports sustainability, by one definition or another. And, while the background noise around this discussion might sometimes suggest otherwise, many Americans think agriculture and farming are among the nation's most sustainable sectors.

Leveraging Research: Who Should Speak?

Spokesperson credibility: Female vs. Male Farmers

- For three specific issues – Food, Conservation, Animal Care – when people expressed their preference, women scored higher than men.

Food

Female farmers...34%

Male farmers...19%

Don't Know / No Opinion...48%

Conservation

Female farmers...28%

Male farmers...22%

Don't Know / No Opinion...50%

Animal Care

Female farmers... 33%

Male farmers... 20%

Don't Know / No Opinion 939 47%

Leveraging Research: Bringing it Home

- Infographics
- Paid Distribution
- One-pager



Leveraging Research: Bringing it Home

Points from a deeper dive on the trade research:

- 49 percent of voters blame imports from other countries for job losses in sectors like manufacturing.
- Entering into trade agreements with other countries will strengthen U.S. economy and help American farmers. (50% vs 30%)
- Congress should pass more fair trade policies that open additional markets for U.S. farmers and ag exports. (74% support vs 9% oppose)
- Any effort to renegotiate trade deals should first focus on securing gains already made. (75% agree vs 6% disagree)
- Trade agreements have increased U.S. agriculture exports to Canada and Mexico by 350%. (62% more likely to support fair trade policies)

Leveraging Research: Bringing it Home

Messages supported by trade research:

- The agriculture and farming industry is vital to the U.S. economy - and ag depends on trade.
- Renegotiating any trade deal related to agriculture should start by securing gains that have been created by American farm exports. These exports support economic growth and American jobs, on and off the farm.
- While voters blame foreign products for job losses, agriculture exports have outpaced agricultural imports.
- Fair trade agreements have increased agriculture exports to countries like Canada and Mexico by \$38 billion since 1993.
- Congress should pass more fair trade policies that provide new markets for U.S. farmers and U.S. agriculture exports. When ag industry grows, the American economy grows with it.

Questions?

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