



Great Lakes Protection Fund

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Funded Project

Strategies to Engage Middle Adopter Farmers on Cover Crops

Project No.	1089
Timeline	2015 – 2021
Award Amount	\$653,000
Team Leader	National Wildlife Federation
Project Website	https://growingoutreach.nwf.org/grow-more/

The goal of this project was to change the behavior of those farmers resistant to implementing conservation practices (referred to as middle-to-late adopters and who comprise over 70% of farmers) through improved communication strategies. The team sought to answer the question: What messages resonate best with those farmers who are resistant to change?

The team developed and tested a series of outreach and communications strategies to engage middle-to-late adopter farmers that address the fundamental cultural components of their decision making as it pertains to conservation practices. The team undertook original research into the mental models of middle-to-late adopter farmers in the basin, evaluated existing successful strategies and sharpened those strategies based on their research and experiences.

From this research the team built a brand-new training program and curriculum called Grow More which they tested, evaluated and refined at several pilot locations in the basin. Grow More has grown into a popular, sought after program that trains agricultural outreach professionals in the best ways of reaching middle-to-late adopters to convince them to adopt conservation practices. This is a new approach as, historically, most conservation outreach has been strongly focused on innovators and early adopters, which comprise a small percentage of the farming population.