



Producer Poll Results

National Wildlife Federation

survey & analysis conducted by Trust In Food™



FINDINGS & INSIGHTS

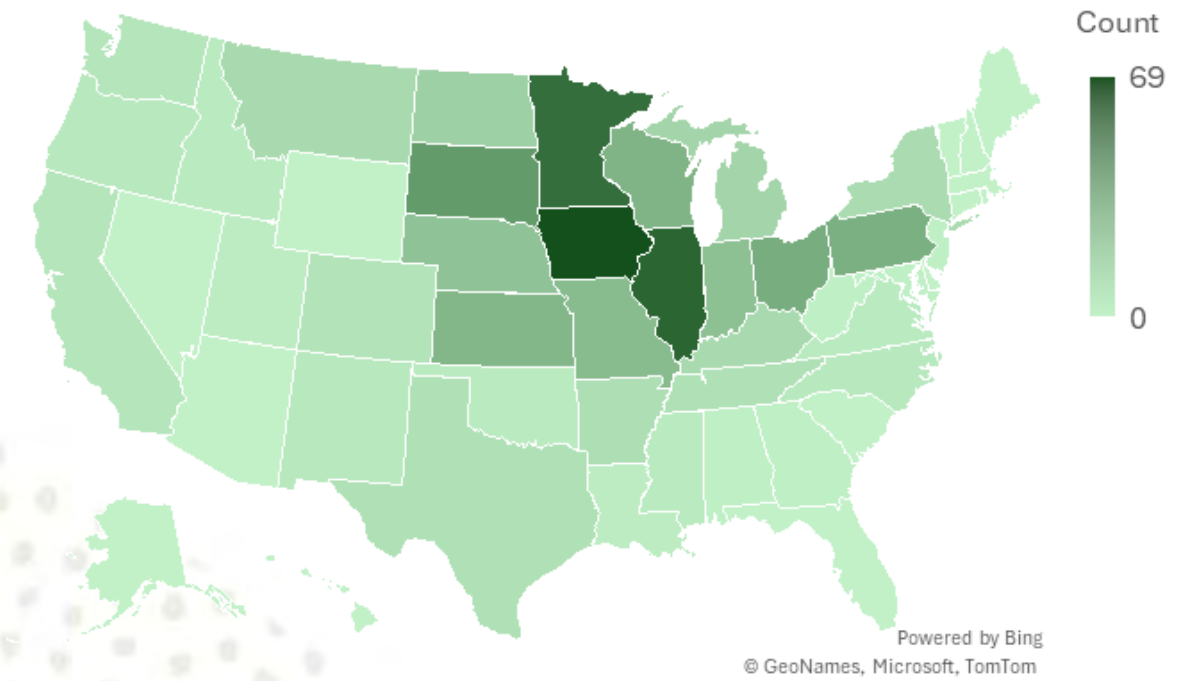
Methodology & Approach

Farm Journal's Trust In Food team collaborated with NWF to conduct a quick-turn, 2024 end-of-year research study, to gauge producer perspectives on timely topics including agriculture conservation policy.

Methodology

- Potential participants were identified, recruited, and rewarded for their participation via the Farm Journal database that aligned with the following attributes:
 - Located in continental U.S., excluding Alaska and Hawaii
 - Farmed row crops, specialty crops, or livestock (excluding forestry, etc.)
- The co-developed 20-question survey (with 15 demographic and screening questions for deeper analysis and qualification) was deployed December 6 and December 10, 2024.
 - Preliminary results were delivered for a preview and released to the public in mid-December
 - **In total, 520 farmers, representing 36 different states participated.**
- Polling data was analyzed utilizing standard methods for quantitative and qualitative responses. Additional insights were uncovered via cross-tabulation on key demographic variables including geography, commodity type, age, and farming history.

Respondents by Location



TOPICS INCLUDED:

- USDA Conservation Programs
- Farm Bill
- Climate-Smart Agriculture
- Grasslands Support
- Agricultural Diversification
- Easement Programs



Topline Insights



Topline Insight

Farmers value and benefit from agriculture conservation programs - and support increased funding for them.

Most farmers see the value of conservation and climate-smart agriculture programs and want them to continue and grow.

Key Results

The poll results provided insight into timely topics:



USDA Funding

- **75%** of producers surveyed told us they support an increase in long-term funding for USDA's voluntary conservation programs.



Farm Bill

- **84%** of producers surveyed told us they support the passage of the Farm Bill by Congress as soon as possible



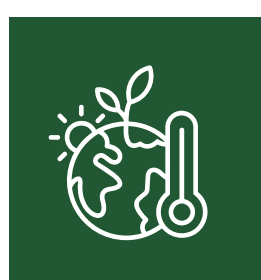
Soil Health

- **84%** of producers surveyed told us they found improvements to soil health were the most valuable part of a climate-smart agriculture program



Conservation Value

- **73%** of producers think USDA conservation programs help improve their bottom line, reduce input costs, and modernize their operation



Climate-Smart

- **68%** of producers surveyed told us that they think designating funding to help farmers adopt climate-smart agriculture practices is a good use of federal funds

Key Results

The poll results provided insight into timely topics:



Trust

- **68 - 73%** of producers see local conservation districts, USDA's Farm Service Agency, USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service, and cooperative extensions as the most trusted sources of information



Conservation Reserve

- **67%** of producers surveyed told us they support increasing the acres available in the Conservation Reserve Program



Grasslands

- **78%** of producers surveyed told us they support additional funding to promote voluntary, incentive-based conservation of grasslands



Diversification

- **61%** of large, row crop producers, and farmers under 40, are interested in diversifying their operation by adding a new crop or line of business



Easements

- **80%** of producers surveyed told us they support the ability to choose conservation easements to limit development, ensure land stays in production, and support landowners



Detailed Findings

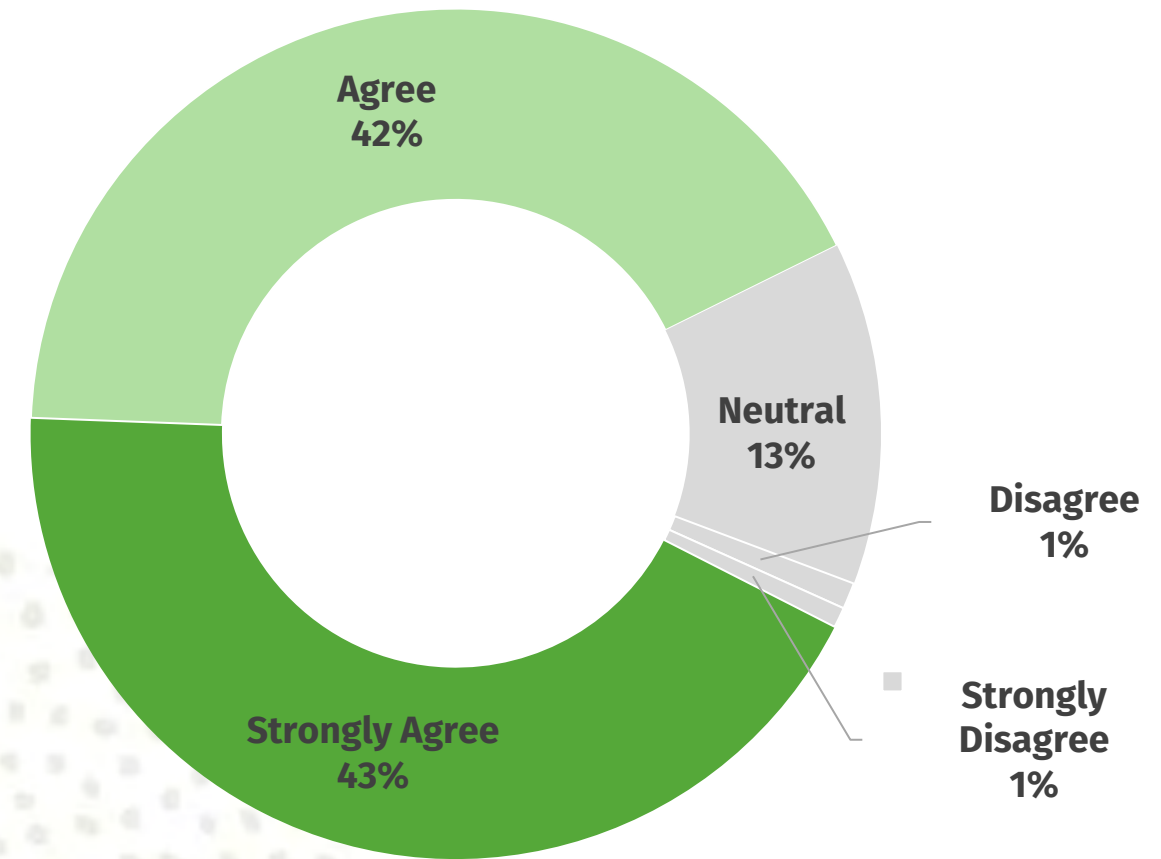
Producers broadly support the Farm Bill and value its speedy passage.

➔ **85%** of producers surveyed in a nationwide poll of farmers and ranchers told us they support the passage of the Farm Bill by Congress.

- + High support across age groups, slightly less among farmers 40 and under
- + Highest support among crop producers

85% Agree

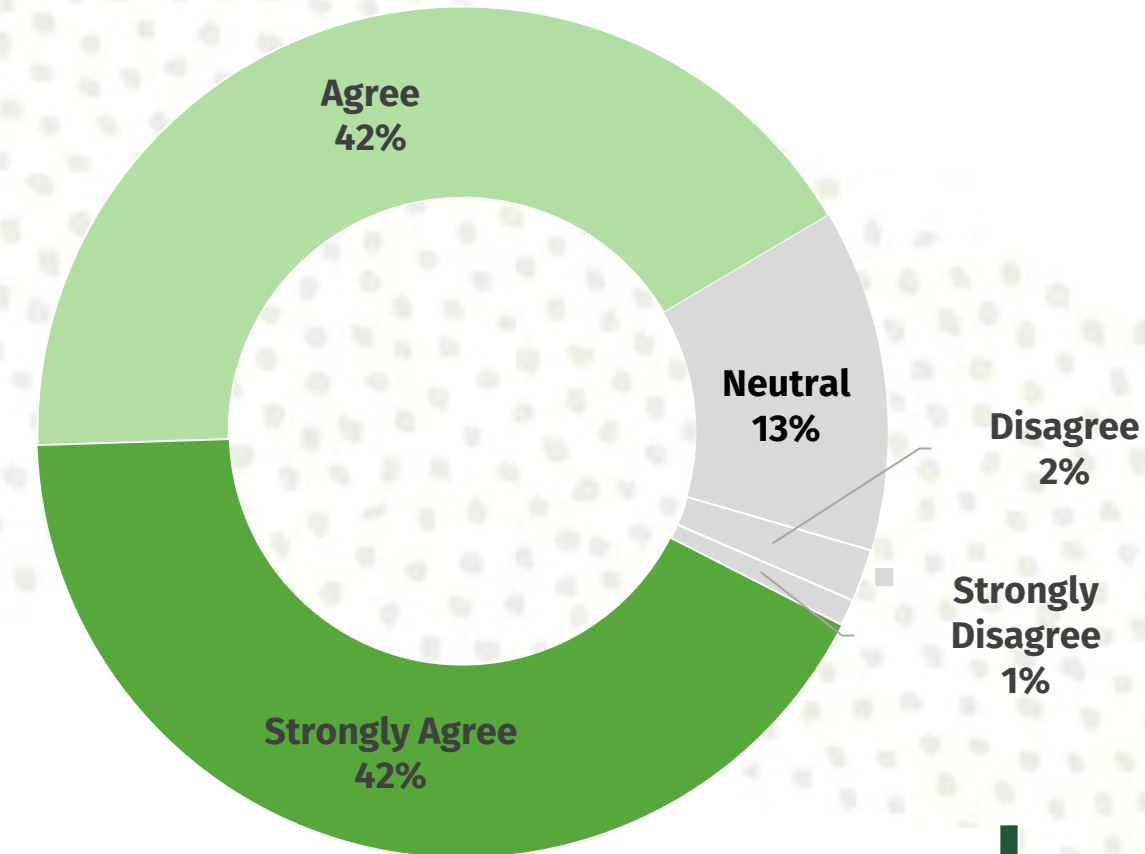
I support the passage of the Farm Bill by Congress.



➔ **84%** of producers surveyed in a nationwide poll of farmers and ranchers told us that passing a Farm Bill **as soon as possible** is important.

84% Agree

Passing a Farm Bill as soon as possible is important.



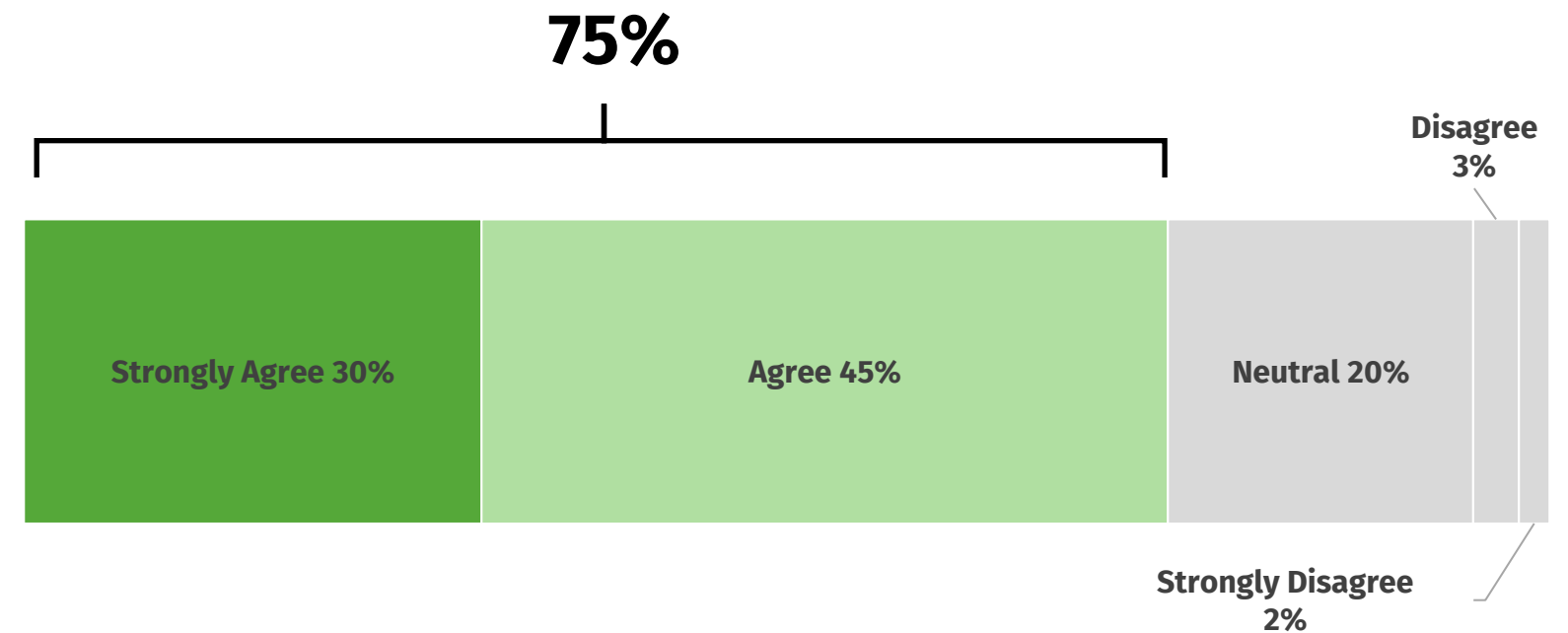
Percent of Producers
(520 respondents)

Most farmers support increased funding for voluntary conservation programs and see value in the additional climate-smart funding provided in the IRA.

➔ **75%** of producers surveyed in a nationwide poll of farmers and ranchers told us they support an increase in long-term funding for USDA's voluntary conservation programs.

- + More support was indicated by younger and older farmers
- + Lower support among farmers 40-64, but 71% still agree or strongly agree
- + 100% of farmers surveyed in Arkansas and 79% of those surveyed in Pennsylvania said that they supported a long-term increase in USDA conservation funding

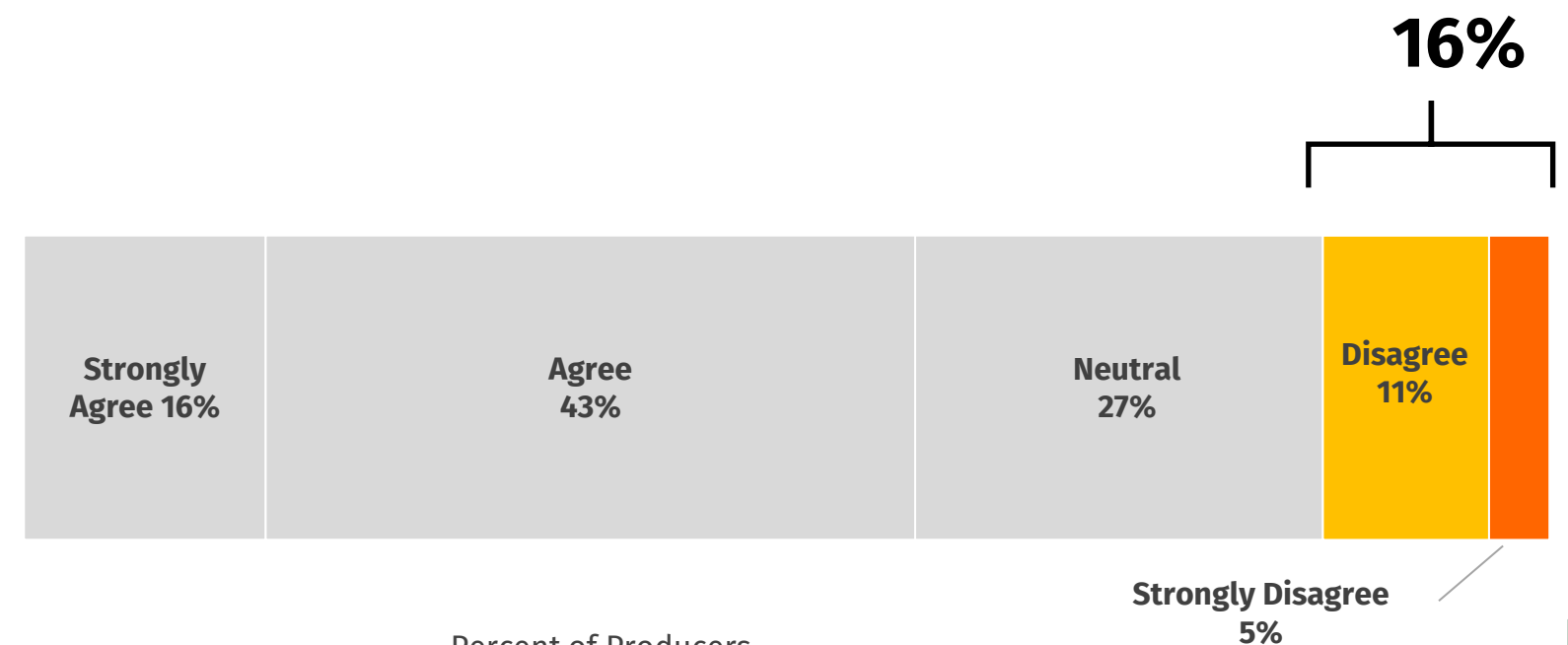
I support an increase in long-term funding for USDA's voluntary conservation programs.



➔ **Only 16%** of producers surveyed in a nationwide poll of farmers and ranchers disagreed that the additional funding for climate-smart agriculture practices provided under the IRA is beneficial to producers.

- + Most support among 1st and 2nd gen farmers and specialty crop producers

I think the additional funding for climate-smart agriculture practices provided under the Inflation Reduction Act is beneficial to producers.



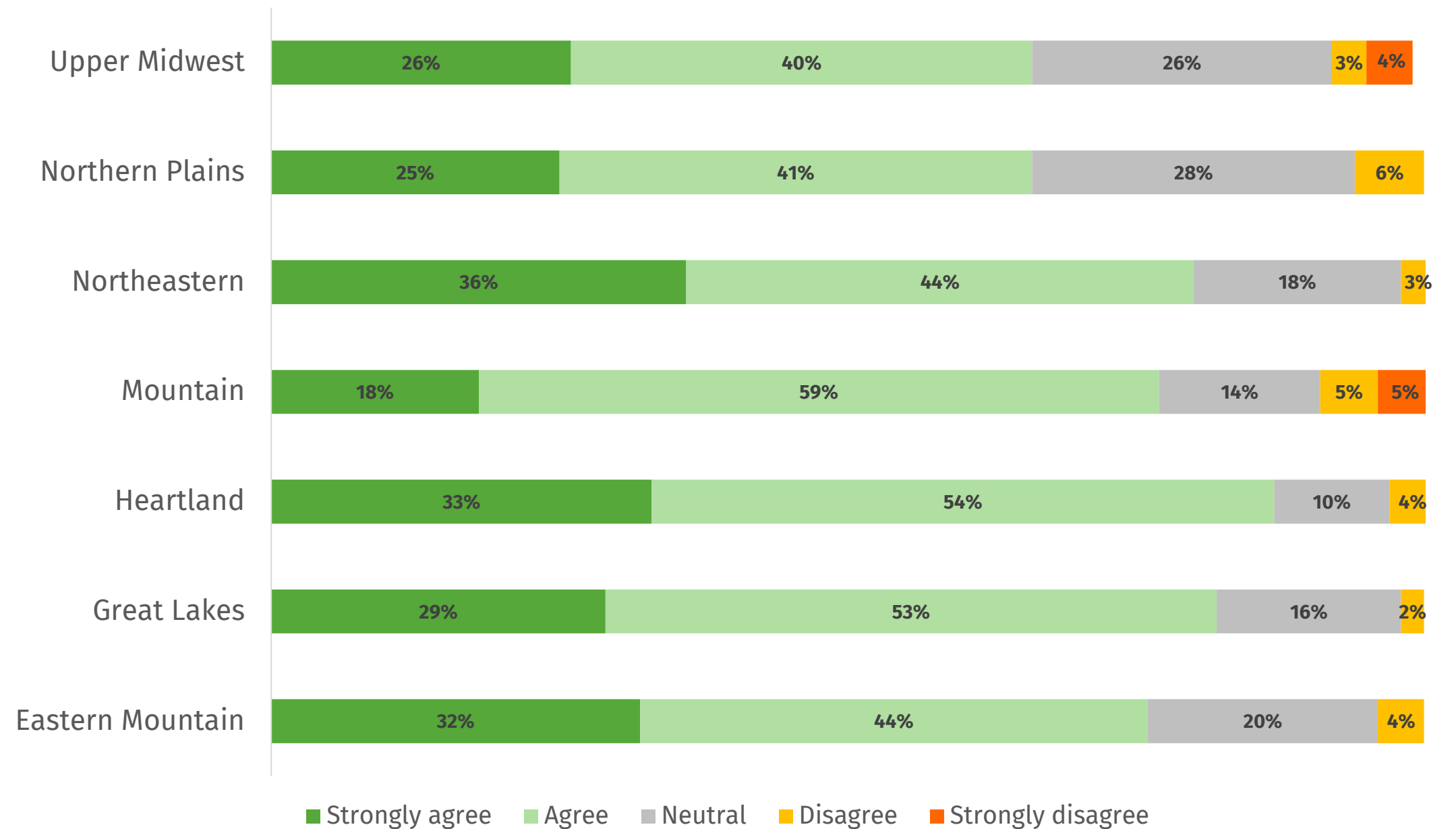
Percent of Producers (520 respondents)

Support for increased, long-term funding for USDA's voluntary conservation programs is strong across different regions.

➔ Farmers and ranchers across all surveyed regions had strong levels support for an increase in long-term funding for USDA's voluntary conservation programs.

- + Highest support was indicated in the Northeastern, Heartland, and Great Lakes regions
- + The least support was indicated in the Upper Midwest and Northern Plains – 66%, respectively
- + In no region was disagreement greater than 10%

I support an increase in long term funding for USDA's voluntary conservation programs.*



*Regions correspond to USDA - ARS National Agricultural Statistics Service regions. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Farmers are largely in favor of making conservation and climate-smart agriculture program funding permanent.

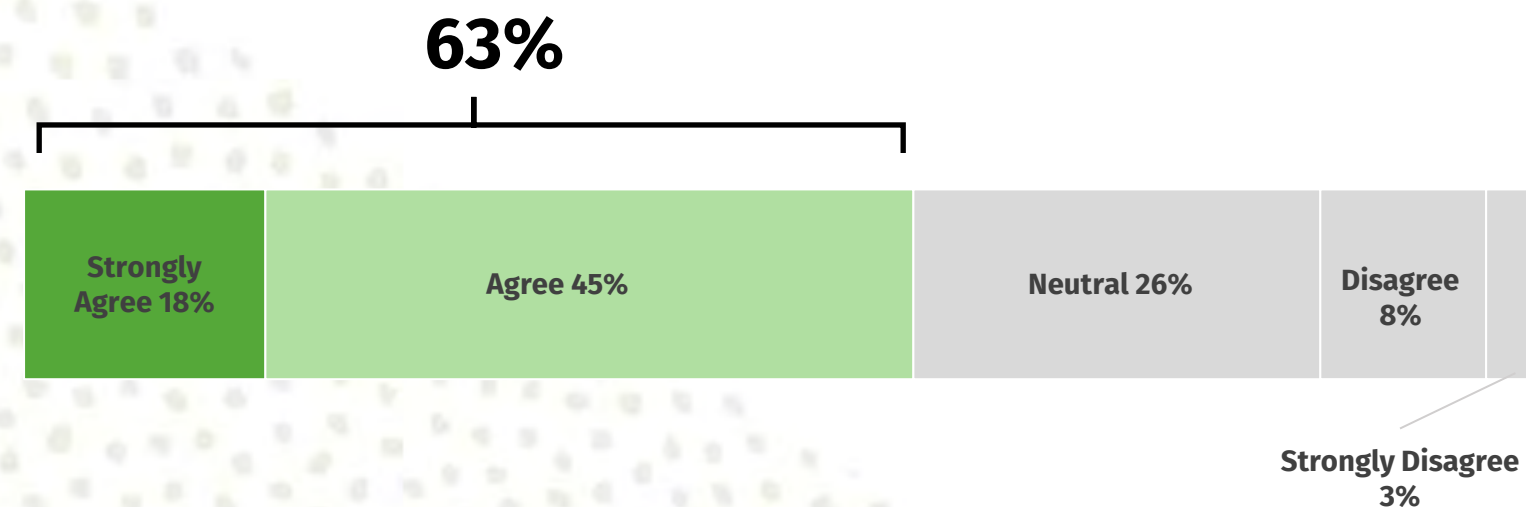
➔ **63%** of producers surveyed told us they believe Congress should **move the remaining, unspent climate-smart agriculture funds permanently into Farm Bill conservation programs** to provide additional long-term funding to help farmers and ranchers adopt climate-smart agriculture conservation practices now and in the future.

- + Most support among farmers 40 and under
- + Only 11% disagree

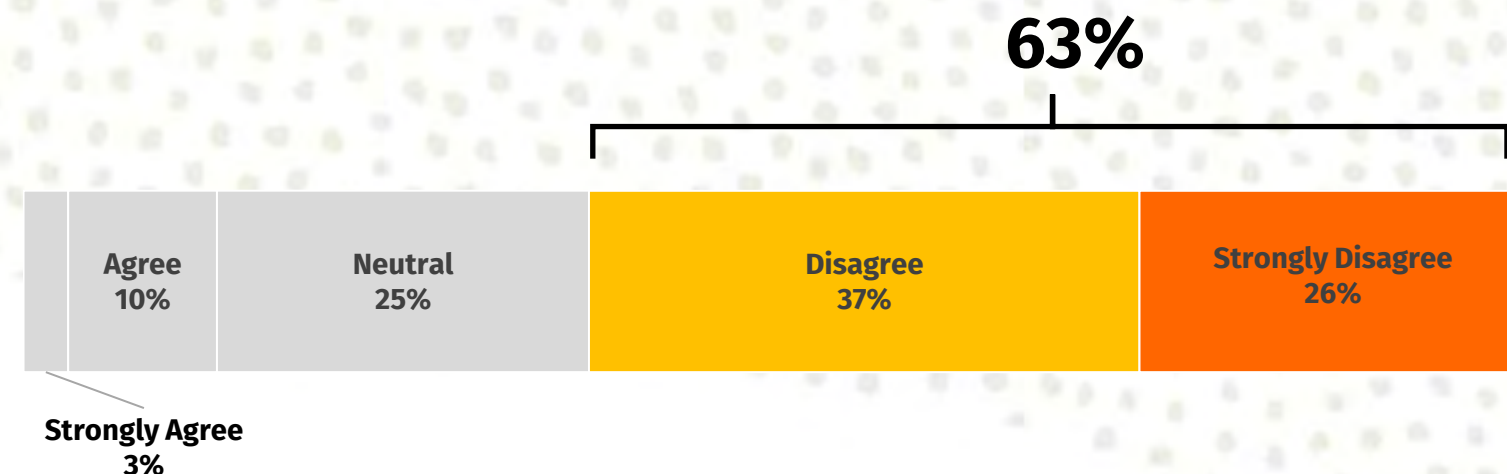
➔ **More than half (63%)** of producers disagree when asked if Congress should take away conservation money to use it for other purposes.

- + Only 13% of producers agreed that Congress should take away the conservation funding and use it for other purposes

I believe Congress should **move** the remaining, unspent climate-smart agriculture funds permanently into Farm Bill conservation programs to provide additional long-term funding to help farmers and ranchers adopt climate-smart agriculture conservation practices.



I believe Congress should **take** this conservation money back and use it for other purposes.



Percent of Producers (520 respondents)

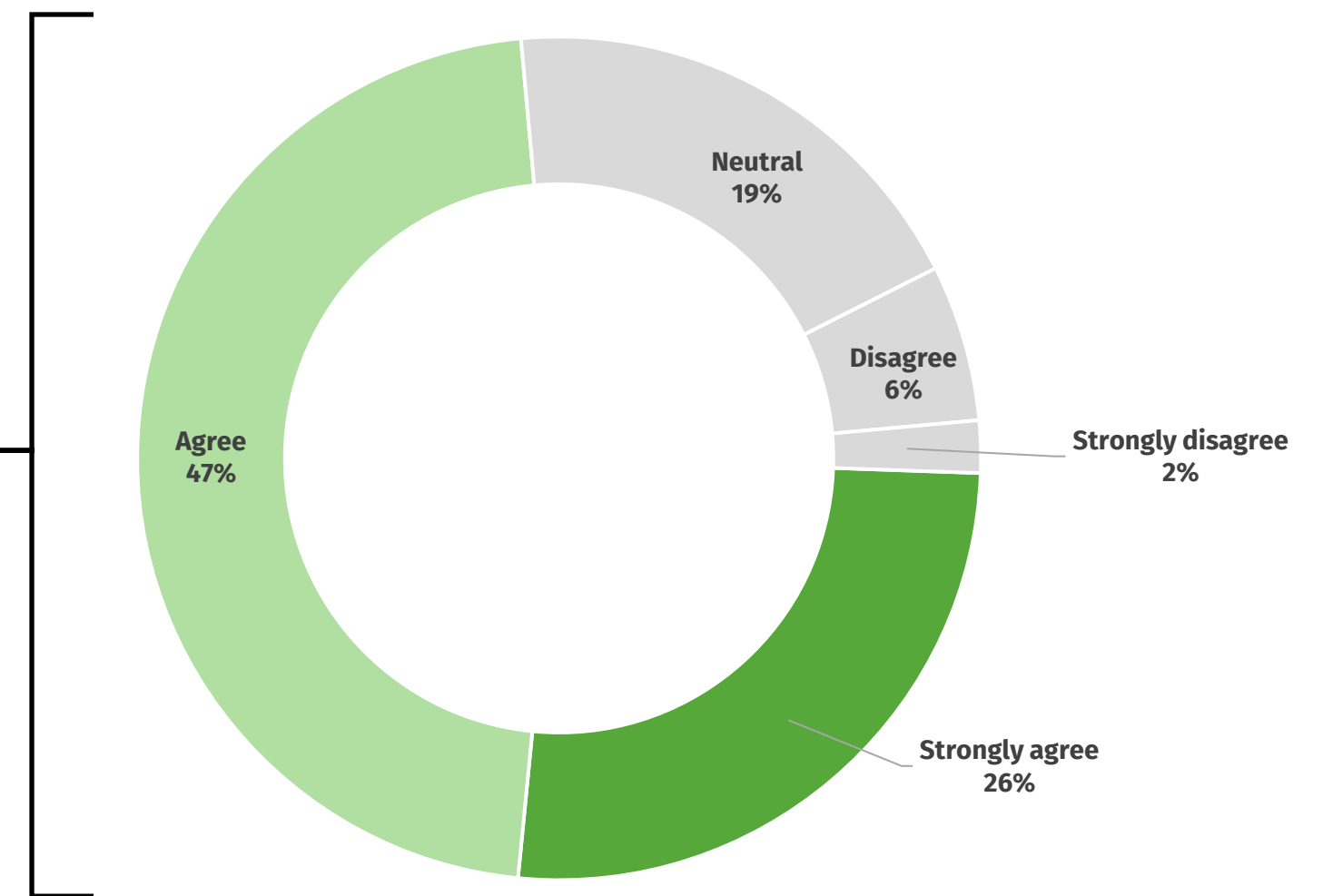
Farmers see tangible value in USDA conservation program payments.

➔ **73%** of producers surveyed in a nationwide poll of farmers and ranchers told us that they think USDA conservation program payments are important in helping producers **improve their bottom line, reduce input costs, and modernize their operations.**

➔ Agreement was particularly high among first generation farmers. Knowing what we know about the financial challenges of getting started in farming, this indicates that **USDA conservation programs are helping to support beginner farmers at a crucial point in their establishment.**

USDA conservation program payments are important in helping producers improve their bottom line, reduce input costs, and modernize their operations.

73% Agree



Percent of Producers
(520 respondents)

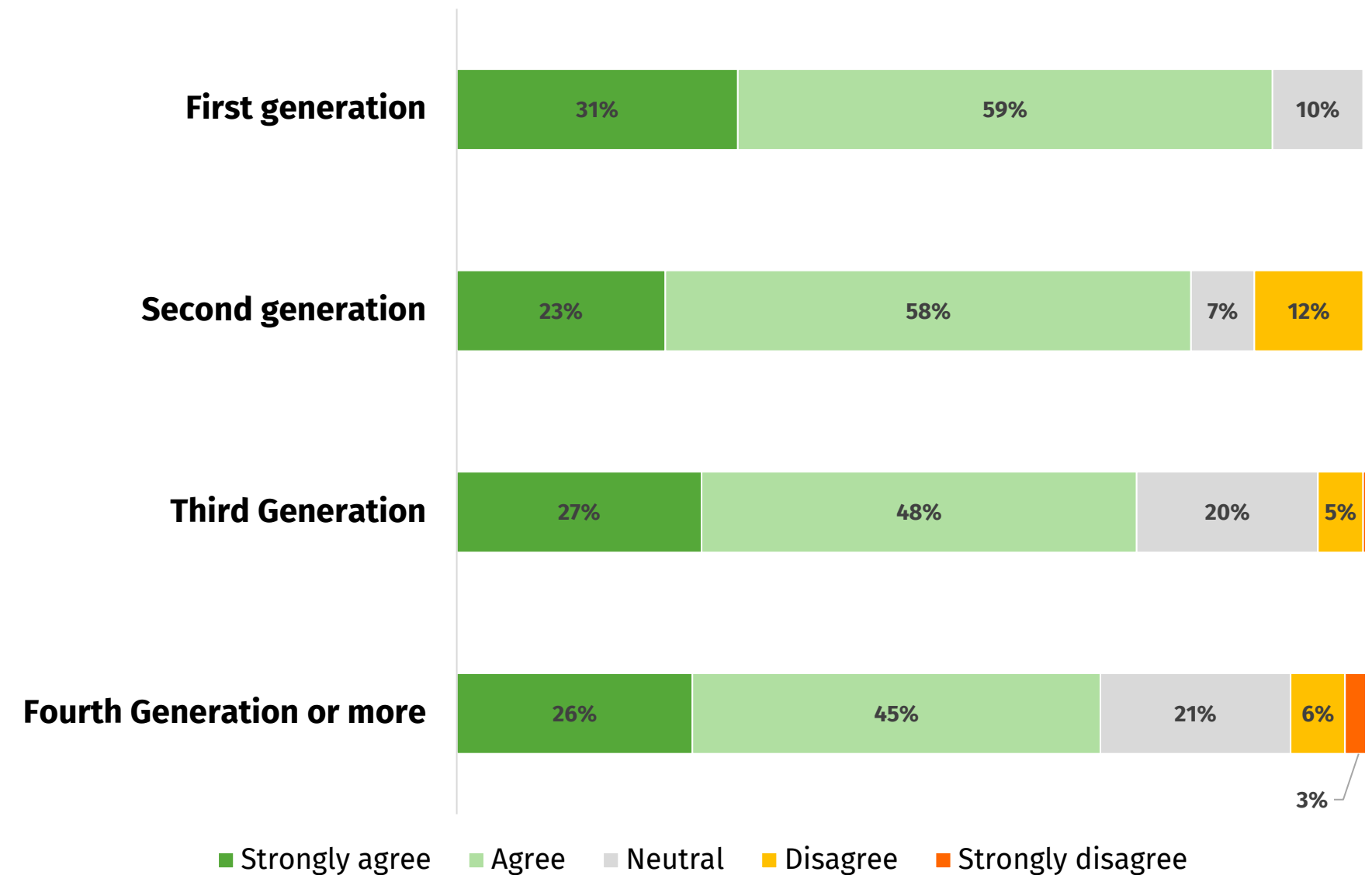
Farmers agree that conservation payments are important to producers across generations.

➔ **Support for conservation program payments is high across generations.**

- + **90%** of first generation farmers agreed.
- + **81%** of second generation farmers agreed.



USDA conservation program payments are important in helping producers improve their bottom line, reduce input costs, and modernize their operations.*



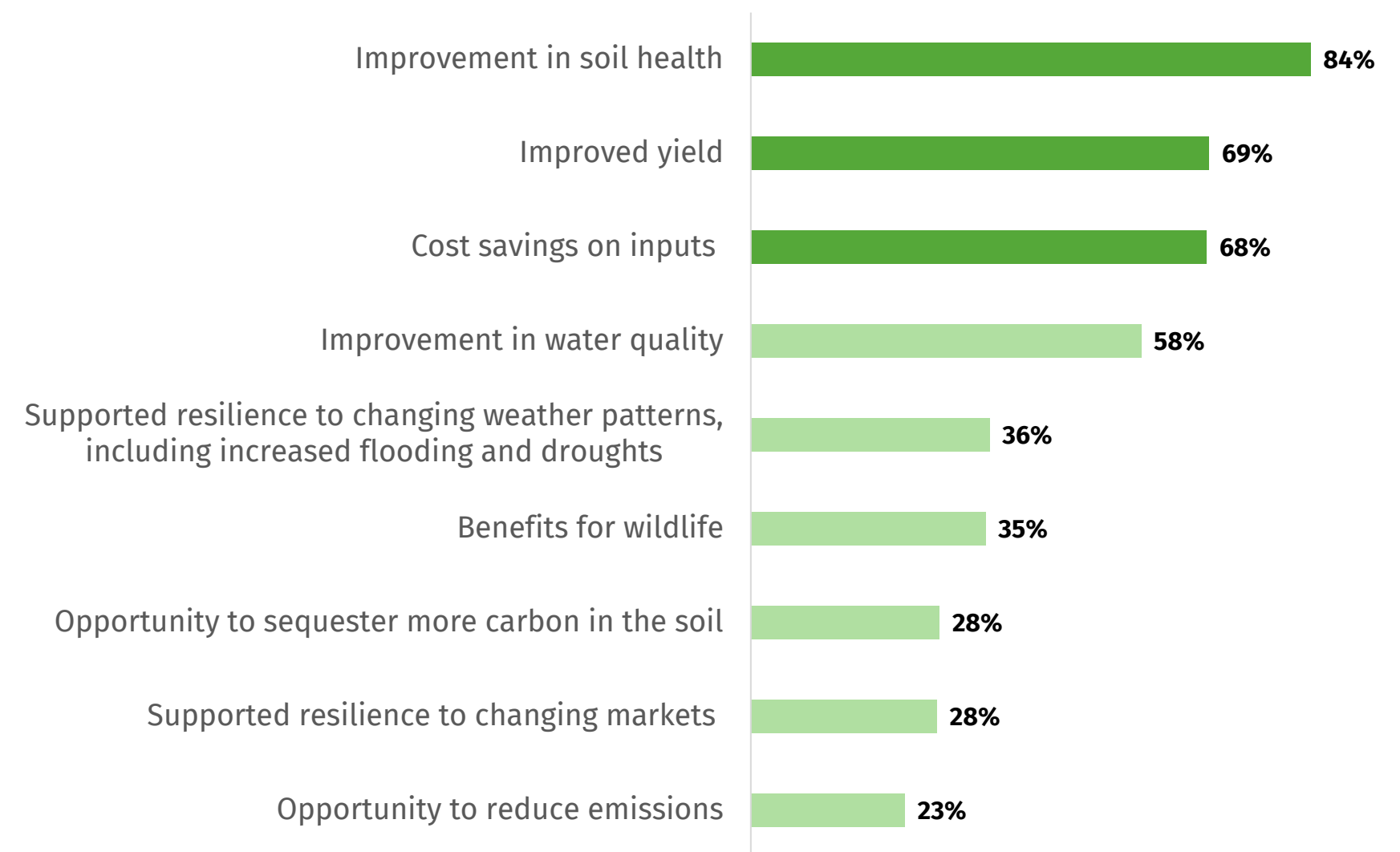
*Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Climate smart agriculture programs provide real benefits to farmers' bottom lines.

➔ In a nationwide survey of producers, the most valuable elements of participating in a climate-smart agriculture program were indicated to be **soil health, improved yield, and cost savings on inputs**, demonstrating that producers find real value from these programs to their operations.

➔ While producers value the direct benefits of the funding to their operation, many also value the **climate-smart conservation funding's off-farm benefits to water quality, reduced impacts of climate change, and wildlife populations.**

If you were to participate in a climate-smart agriculture program, which of the following would you find valuable?

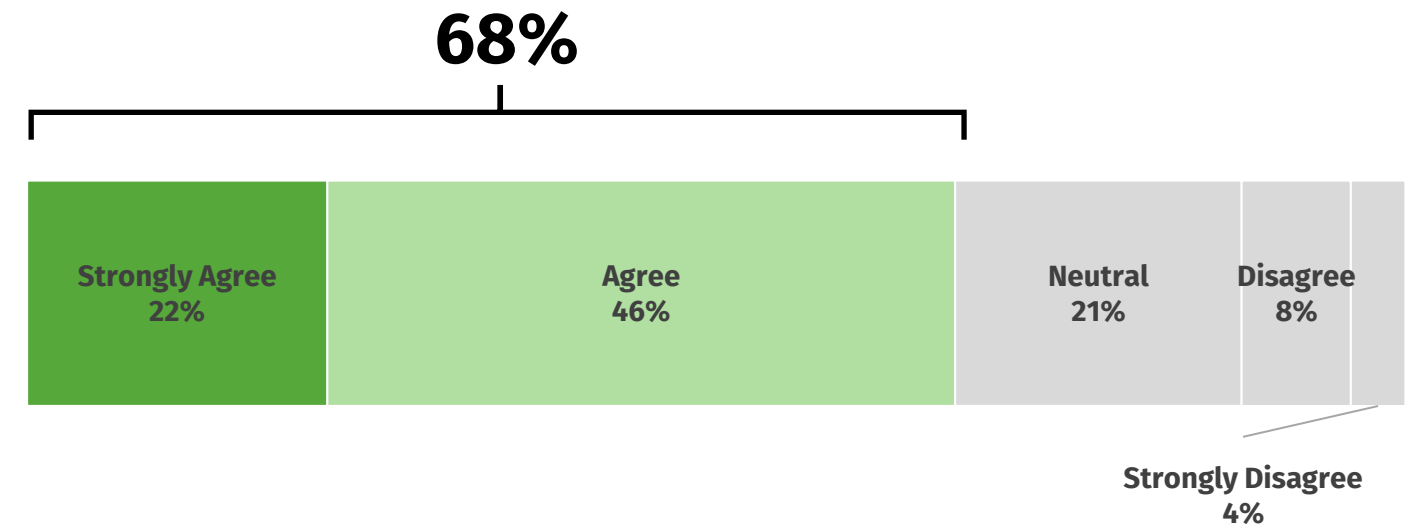


Producers Selected
(520 respondents)

Farmers agree conservation and climate-smart agriculture programs are a good use of public dollars.

➔ **68%** of producers surveyed in a nationwide poll of farmers and ranchers told us they think designating funding specifically to help farmers adopt climate-smart agriculture is a good use of federal funds.

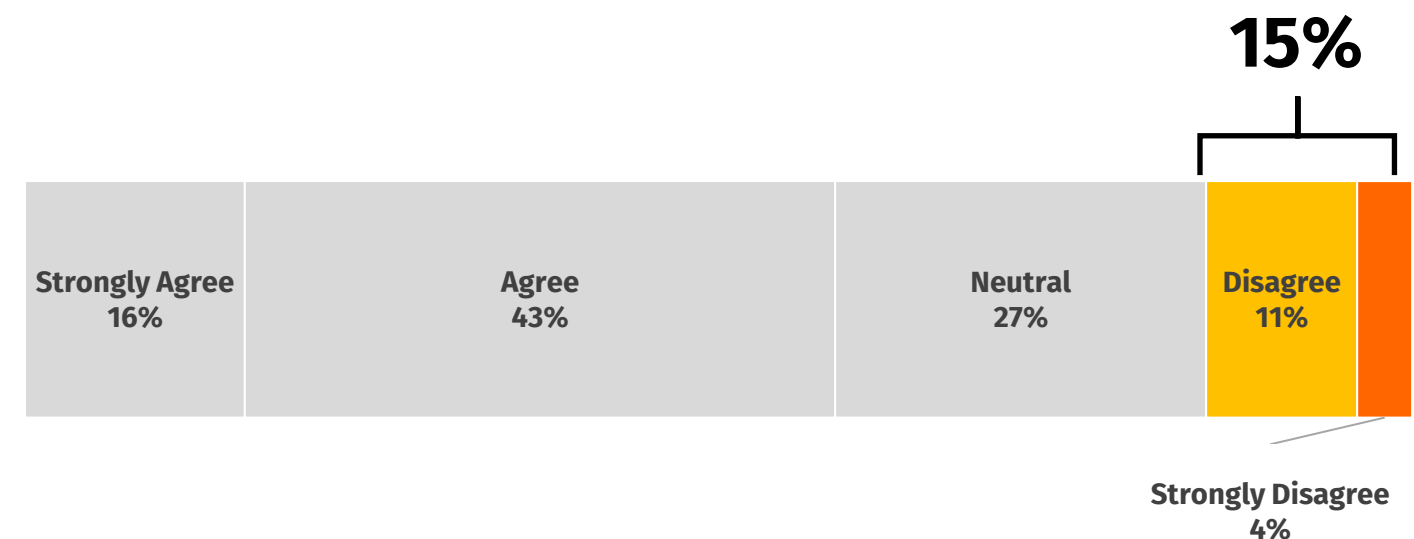
I think designating funding specifically to help farmers adopt **climate-smart agriculture** practices like planting cover crops, reduced tillage, nutrient management, irrigation management and rotational grazing is a good use of federal funds.



➔ **Only 15%** of producers told us that they did not think the additional funding for climate-smart agriculture practices provided under the Inflation Reduction Act is beneficial to producers.

- + Highest support of IRA among specialty crop producers
- + Higher support for IRA among 1st and 2nd gen farmers

I think the additional funding for climate-smart agriculture practices provided under the **Inflation Reduction Act** is beneficial to producers.



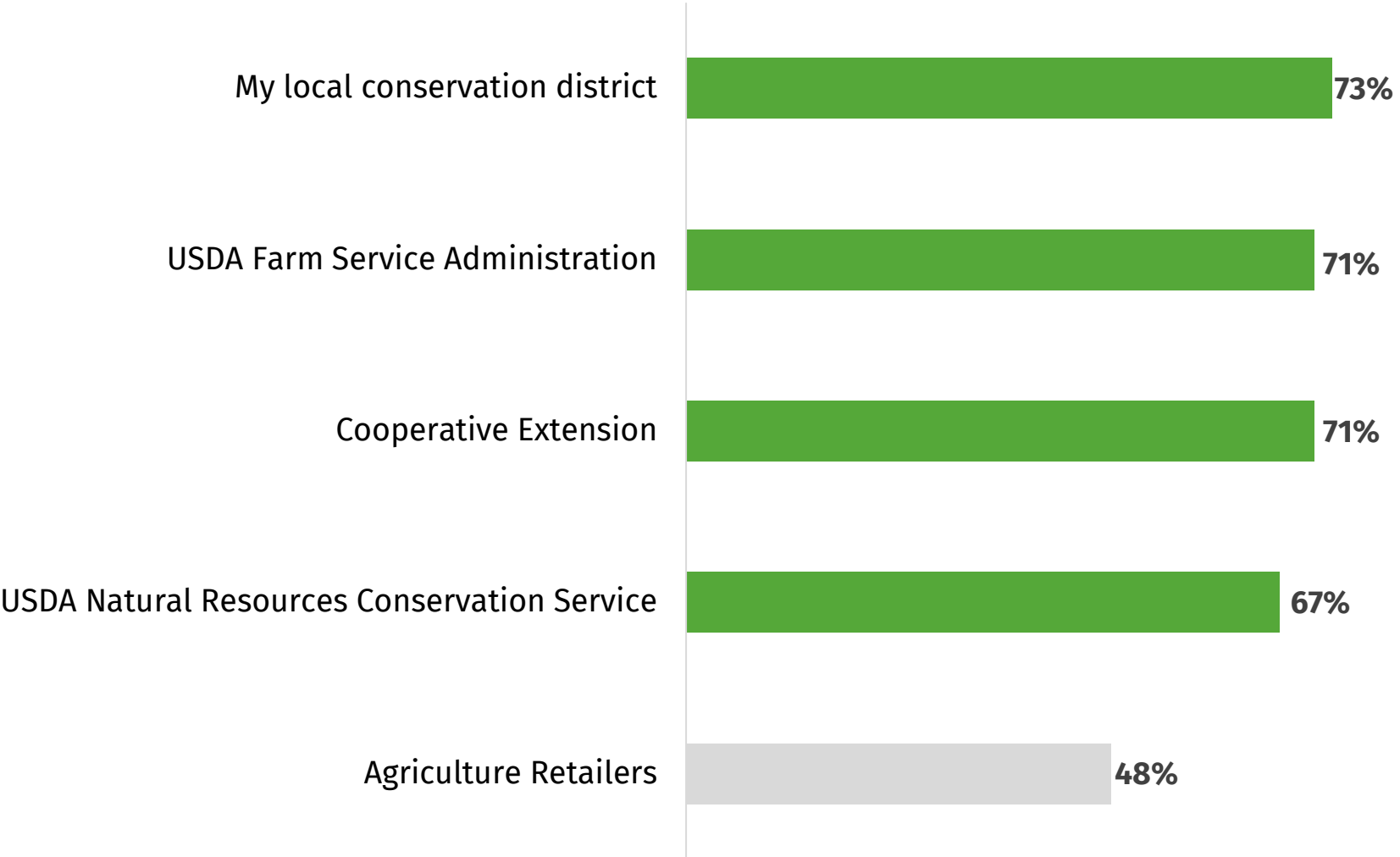
Percent of Producers (520 respondents)

Farmers generally trust information from conservation districts, FSA, NRCS, and cooperative extensions.

- ➔ **Local conservation districts** are the most trusted source of information according to 73% of producers.
- ➔ **USDA's** Farm Service Agency, Cooperative Extensions, and USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service have very high levels of trust among producers.



Please indicate the trustworthiness of the information you receive from the following organizations.
"Very trustworthy" or "Trustworthy" shown

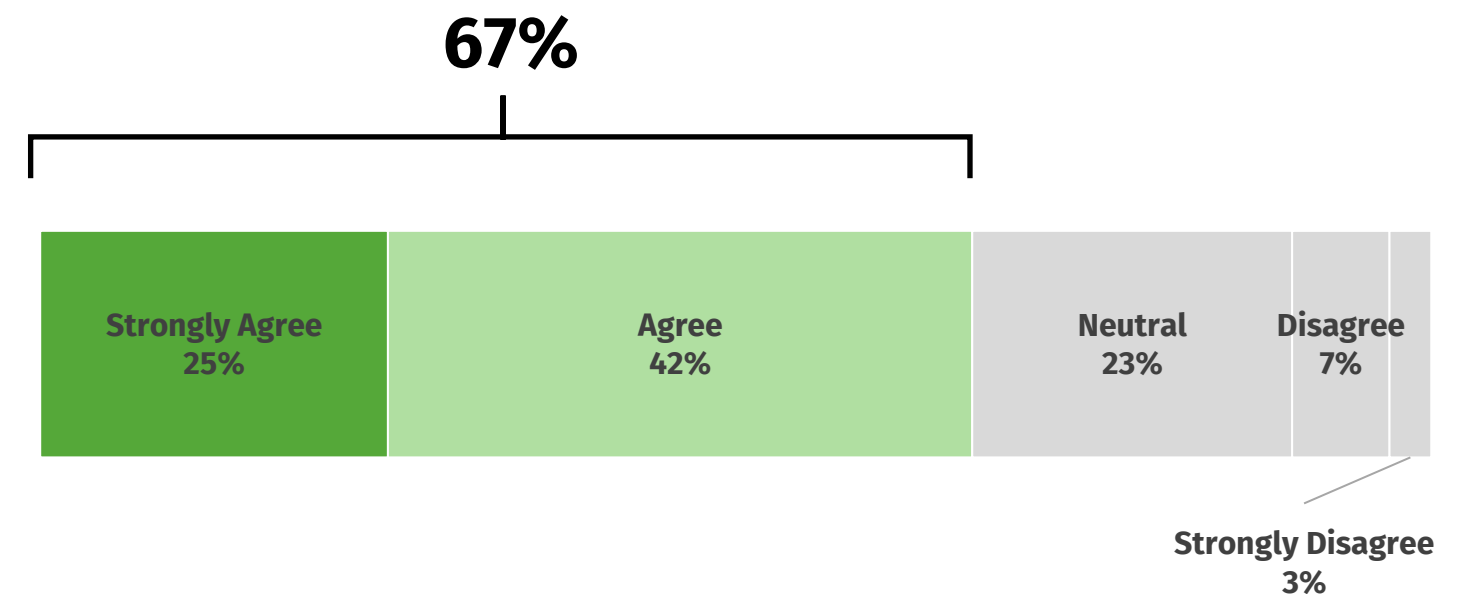




There is strong support for the Conservation Reserve Program among farmers

- ➔ **67%** of producers also tell us they support increasing the acres available in the Conservation Reserve Program
- Support was particularly high among row crop farmers
 - Only 10% disagree

I support increasing the acres available in the **Conservation Reserve Program** to help more landowners reduce soil erosion, protect water quality and provide wildlife habitat.



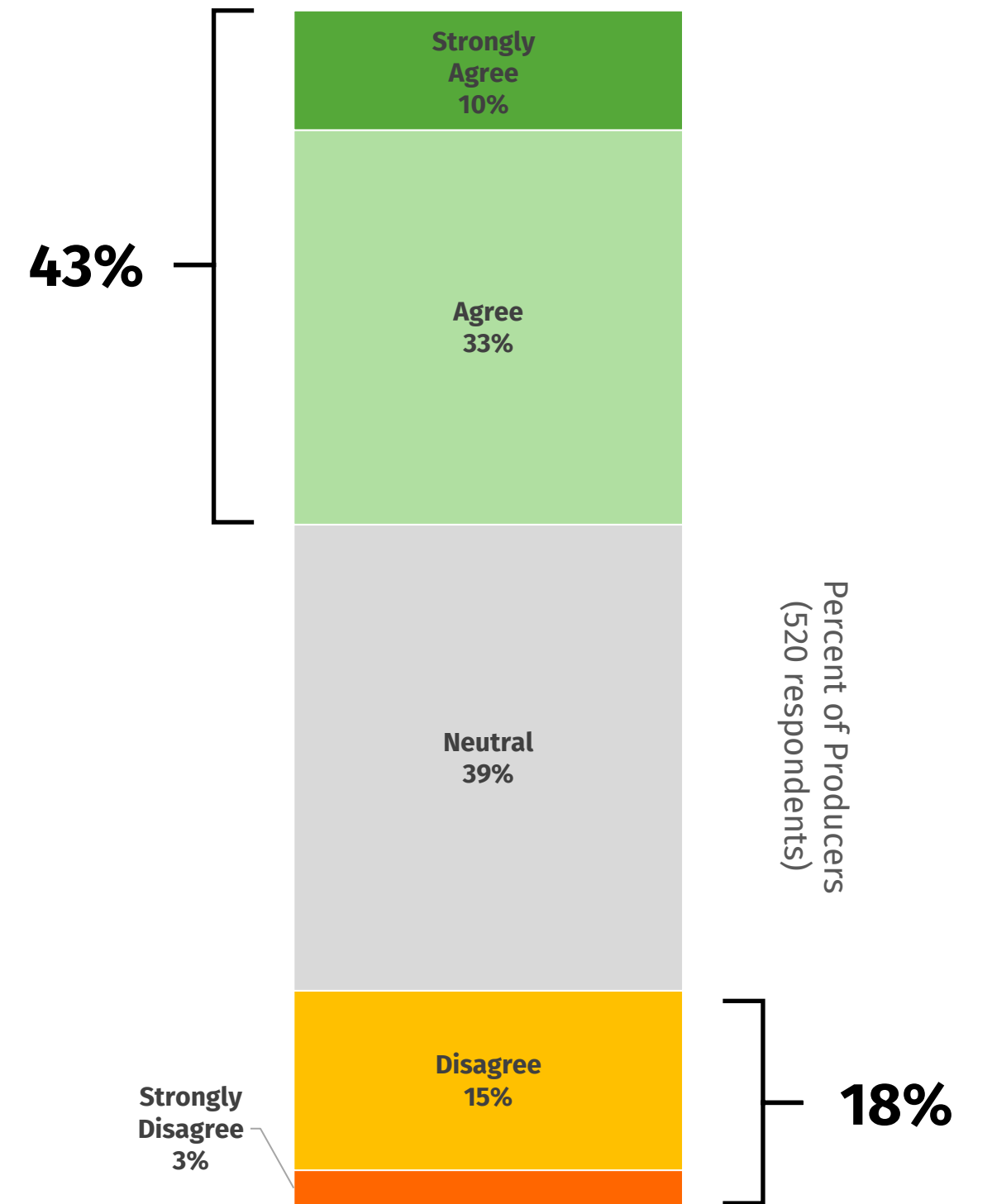
A significant number of farmers are interested in diversifying their operations

➔ **43%** of the surveyed farmers and ranchers said that they are interested in diversifying their operations in the near future.

- Highest among specialty crop producers and row crop farmers with larger farms.
 - 61% of farmers under 40 are interested in diversifying
 - 61% of row crop farms, 2,000+ acres, are interested in diversifying
- Support was lowest amongst older producers, 65+

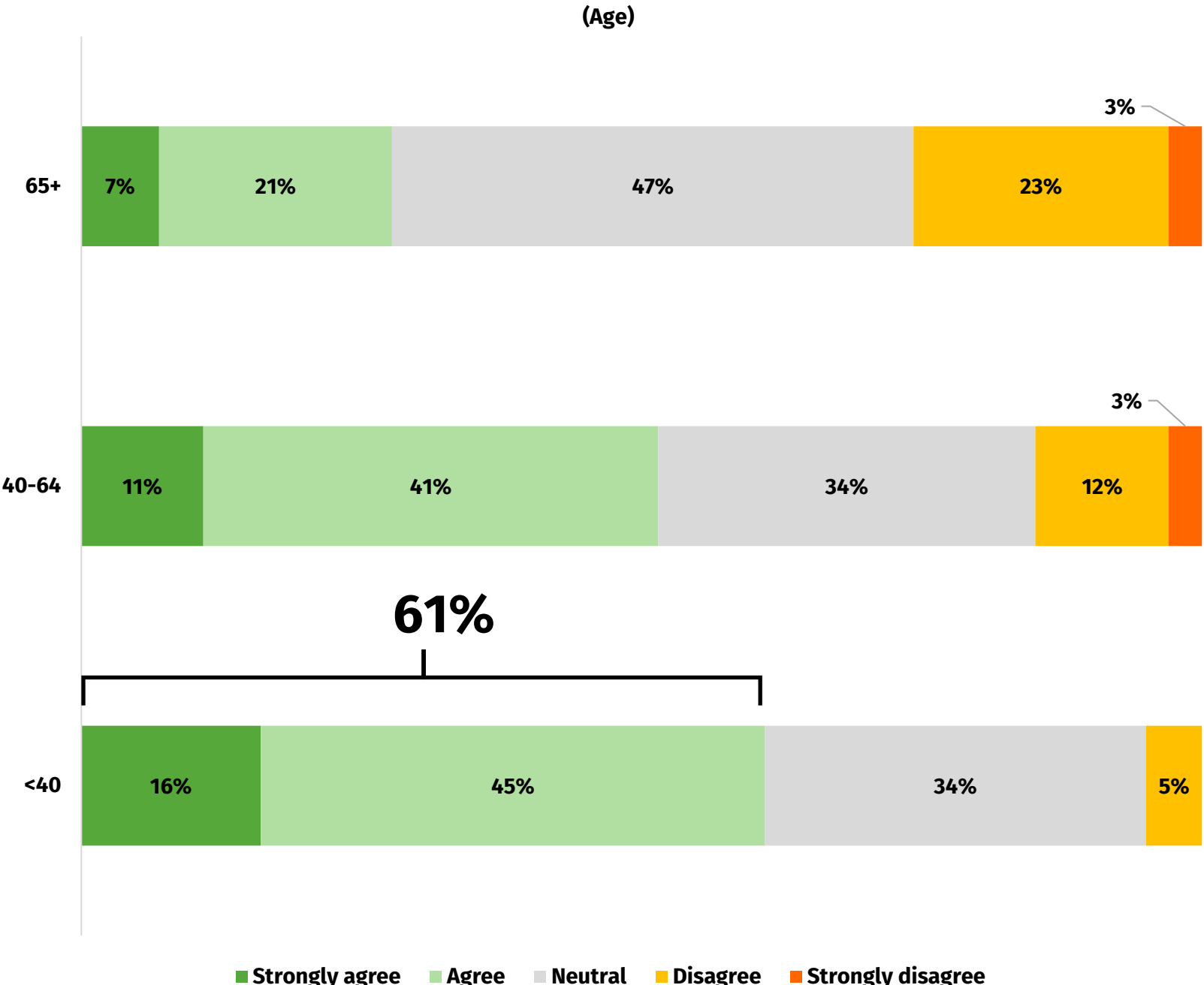
➔ **39%** of producers **are neutral** on the idea of diversification – potentially due to barriers to diversified agriculture: cost, potential risk, time, lack of market infrastructure, or a general lack of understanding about agricultural diversification

I am interested in diversifying my farm or ranch in the next five years, such as adding a new crop or new line of business.

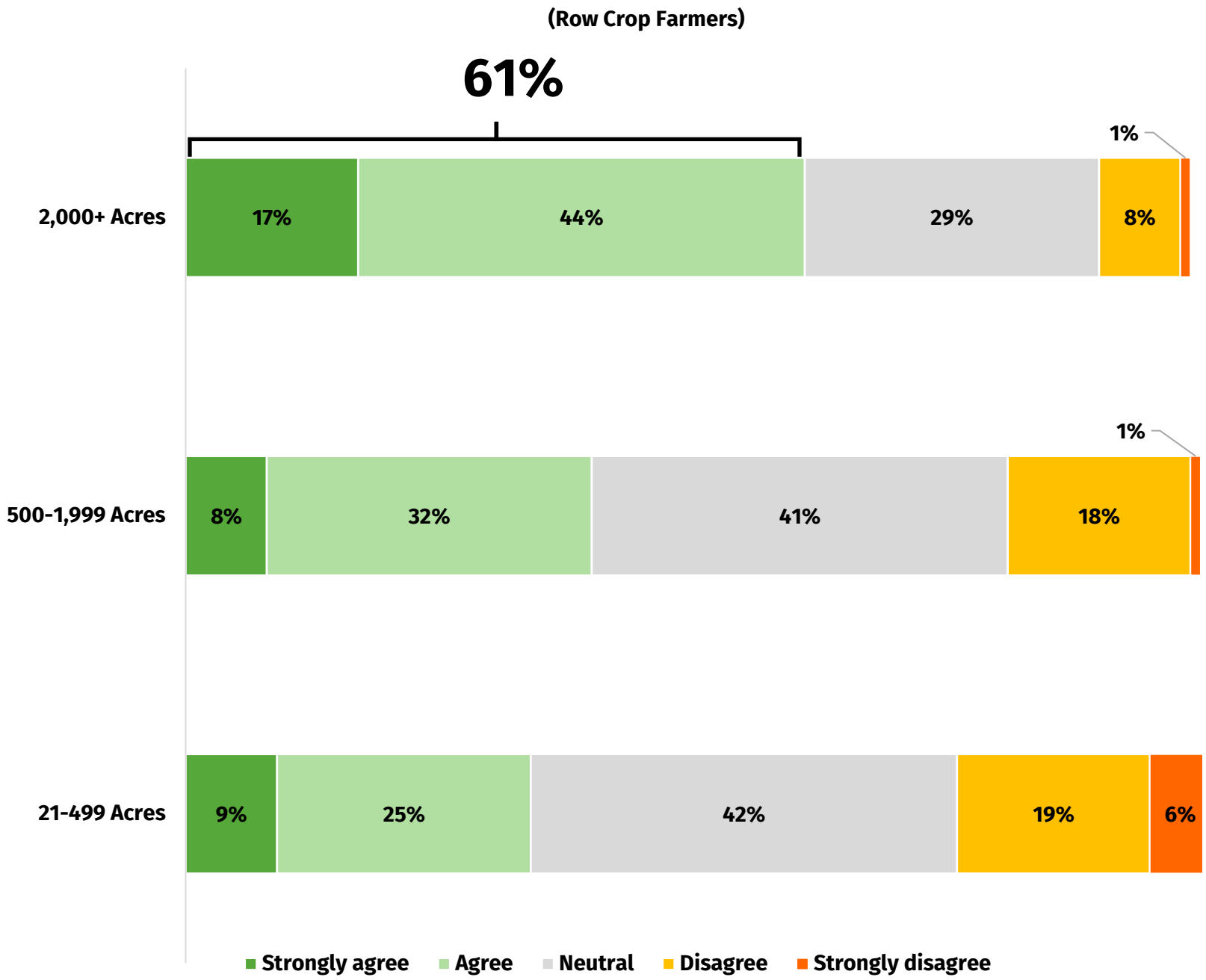


Both younger and larger row crop farmers are the most interested in diversifying their farms.

I am interested in diversifying my farm or ranch in the next five years, such as adding a new crop or new line of business.



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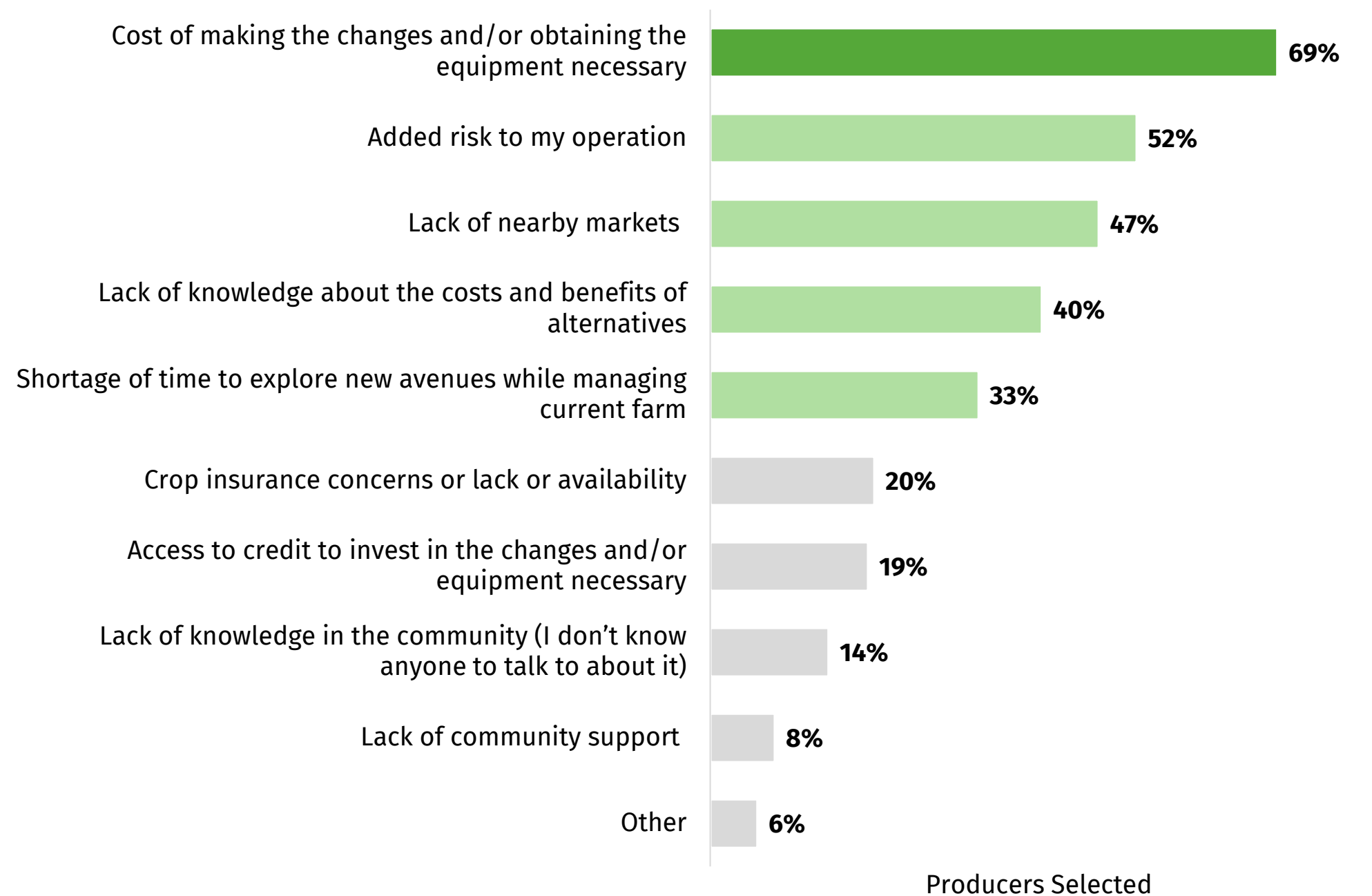
Farmers face many barriers to diversifying their operations.

➔ **Risk and cost** are the biggest barriers to diversification identified, with a lack of nearby markets and knowledge about alternatives close behind.

➔ **USDA conservation programs help reduce costs** related to diversification, the top issue identified by farmers.

The data indicates many producers would be interested in an initiative that supports their ability to diversify. Some producers are already interested, and more could become interested, if they had more support or obstacles removed.

Which of the following are significant barriers to diversifying your operation?
Select all that apply.



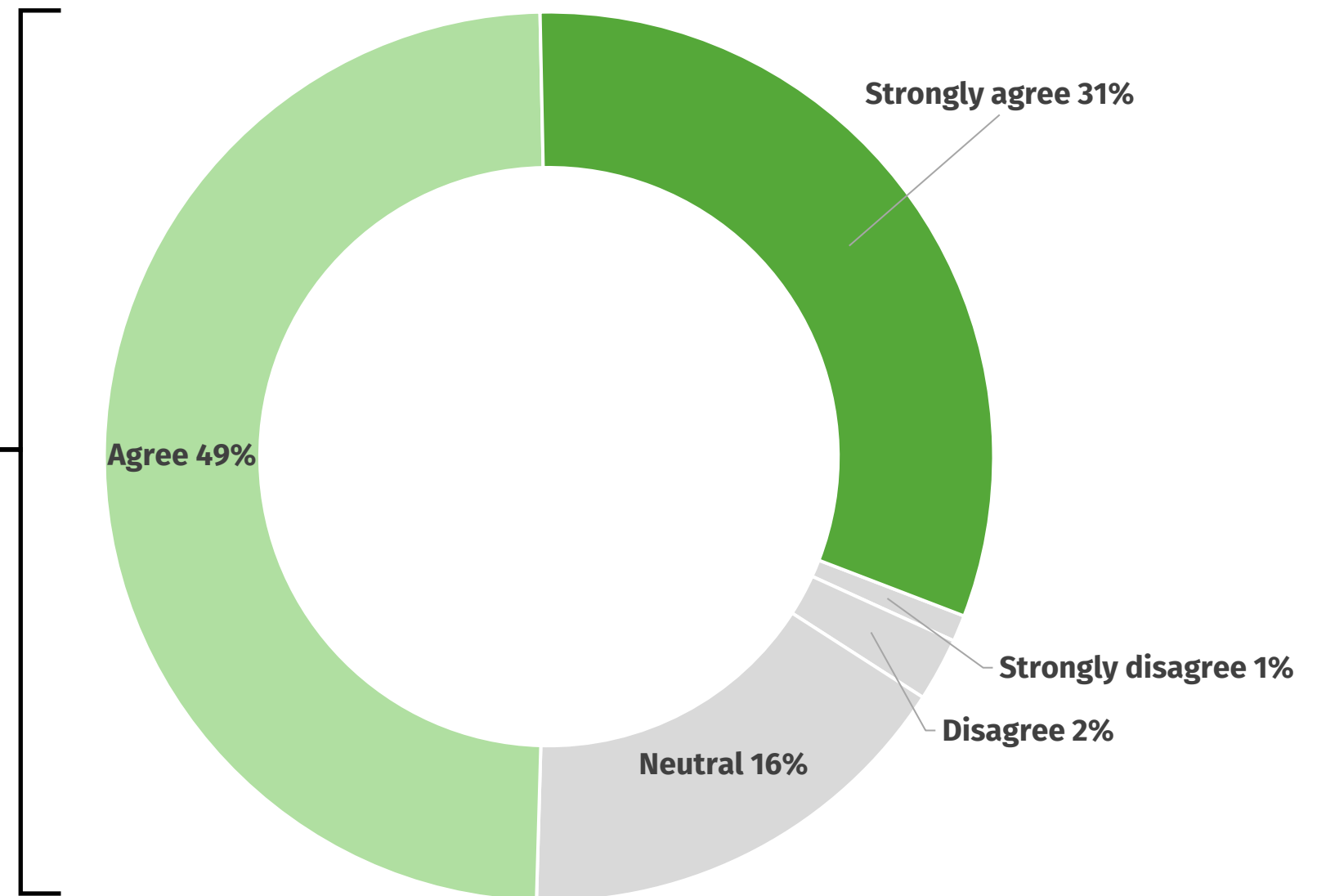
Most producers want to see voluntary easement programs protected.

I support ensuring landowners retain the ability to choose to use conservation easements to limit development, ensure farmland or rangeland remains farmland or rangeland, and provide income for the landowner.

➔ **80%** of producers believe that landowners should retain the ability to choose conservation easements to limit development, ensure farmland or rangeland remains farmland or rangeland, and provide income.

➔ **Only 3%** of producers disagreed with the statement.

80% Agree



Percent of Producers
(520 respondents)



Farmers Support Grasslands Conservation

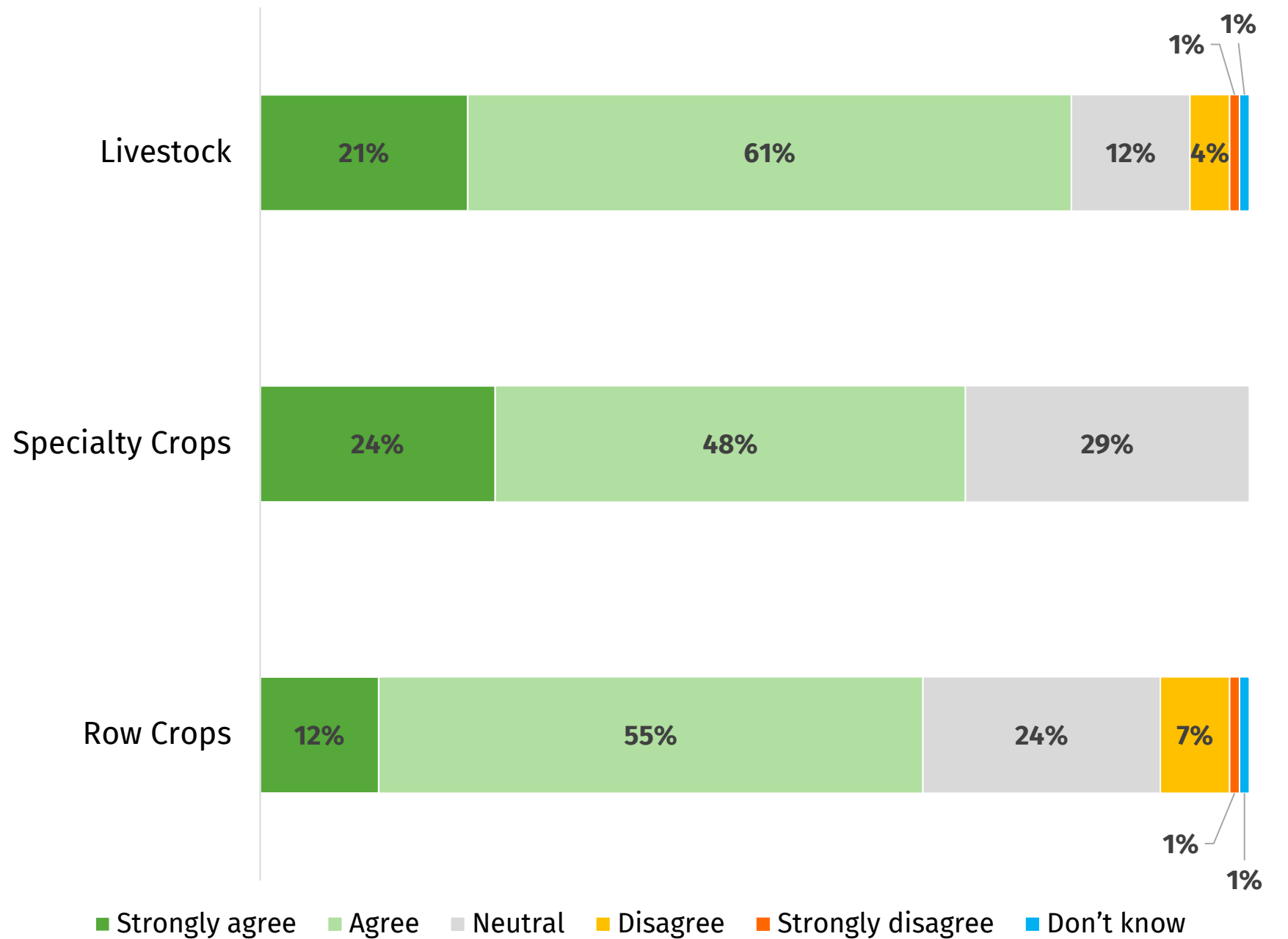
Farmers are supportive of grassland conservation funding.

➔ **78%** of producers surveyed in a nationwide poll of farmers and ranchers told us they support additional funding for programs that help farmers and ranchers restore grasslands on marginal or degraded lands.

- + 82% of livestock producers support additional funding
- + There is little opposition to additional funding for grassland conservation
 - Only 8% of row crop farmers disagreed
 - No specialty crop producers disagreed

➔ Support for additional funding for a voluntary, incentive-based program to promote grassland conservation efforts was **highest among farmers in: Texas, California, Michigan, Missouri, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Montana, Arkansas, Nebraska, and South Dakota**

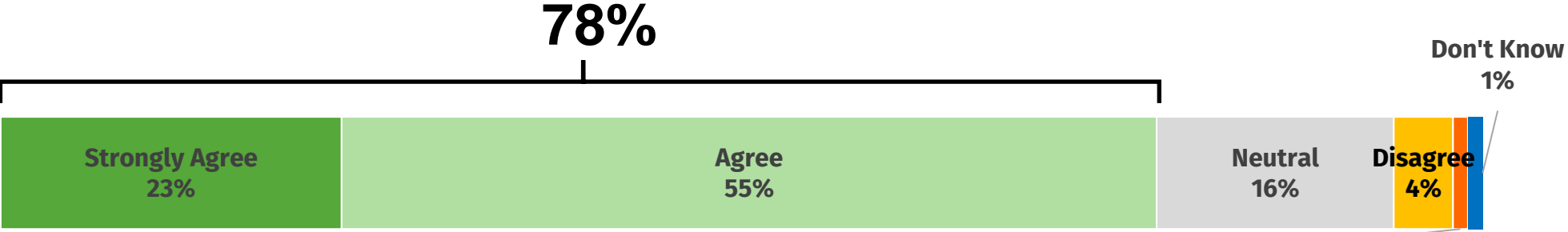
I support additional funding for a voluntary, incentive-based program that would promote partnerships to: Help farmers and ranchers better manage their grasslands.



Farmers are supportive of grassland conservation funding.

“I support additional funding for a voluntary, incentive-based program that would promote partnerships to...

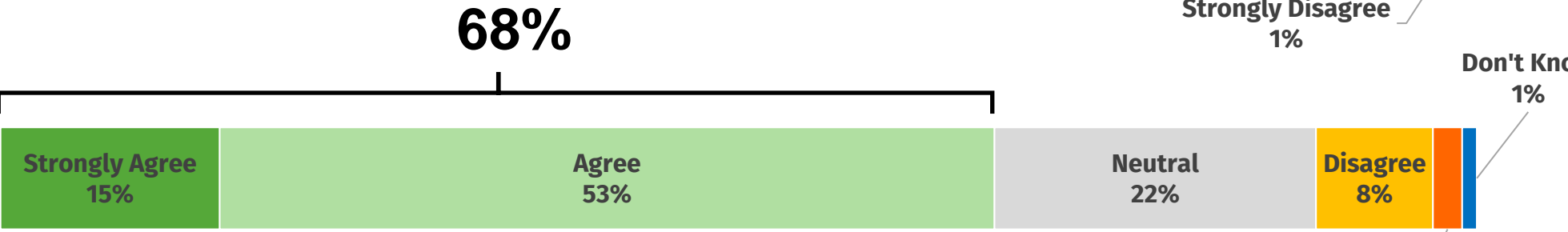
...Help farmers and ranchers **restore grasslands on marginal or degraded lands.**”



...Help farmers and ranchers **better manage their grasslands.**”



...Help farmers and ranchers conserve and protect their grasslands, such as through **conservation easements that pay landowners in exchange for maintaining the land in grass.**”



...**Provide outreach and education activities** like field days, mentorship and peer learning, and outreach on grassland transition planning.”



Percent of Producers (520 respondents)

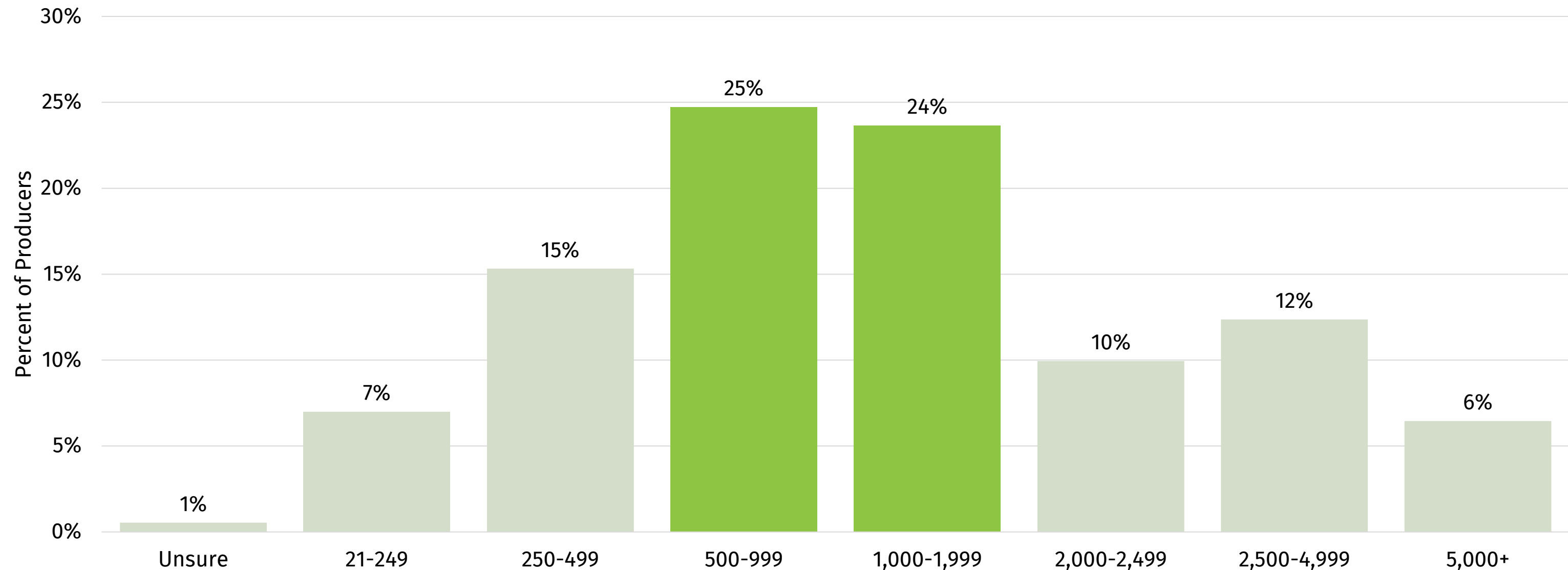


Appendix

Appendix: Respondent Operation Detail - Acreage

Final Poll Results

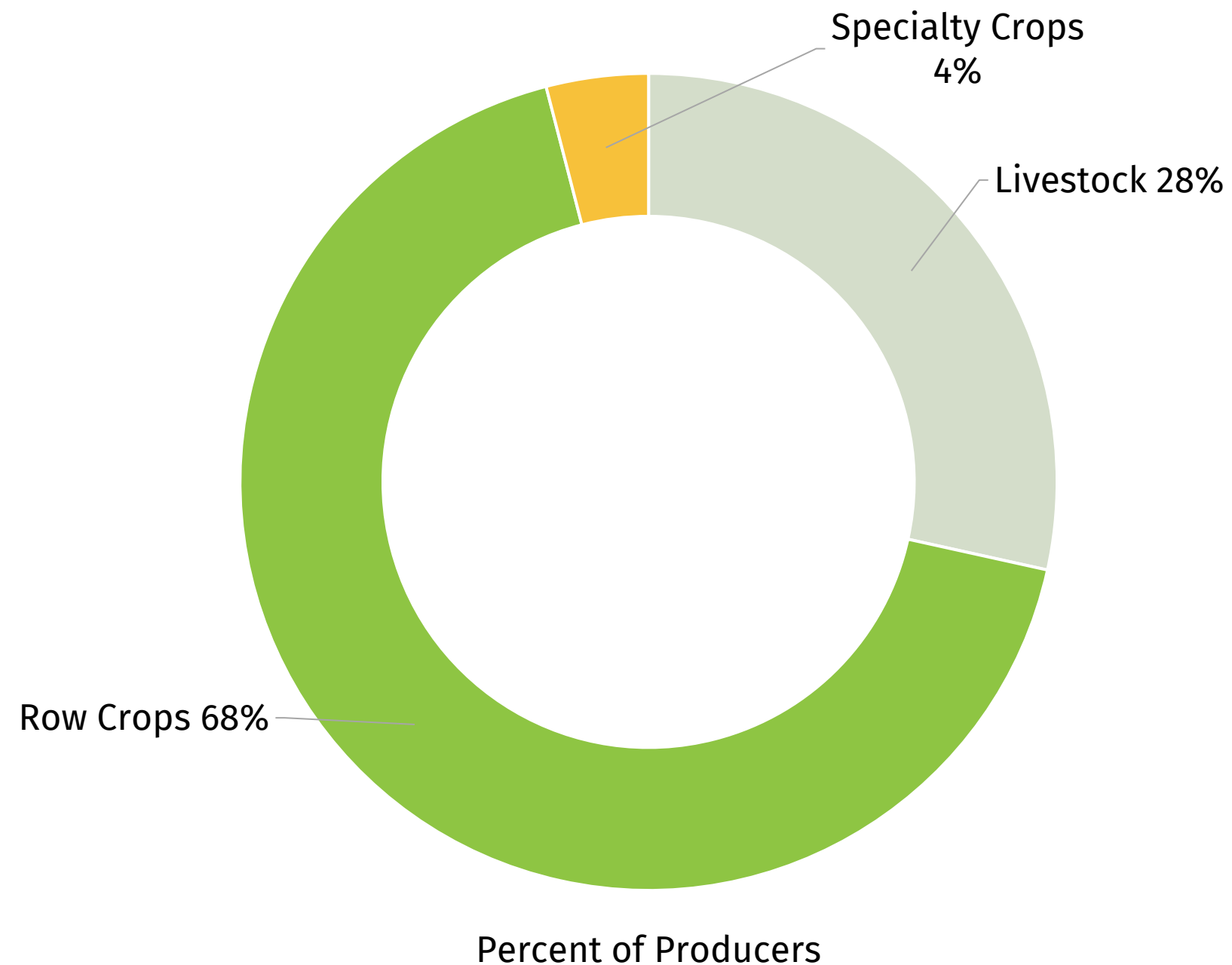
What is the approximate total acreage of your operation, including all crops?



Appendix: Respondent Operation Detail - Commodities

Final Poll Results

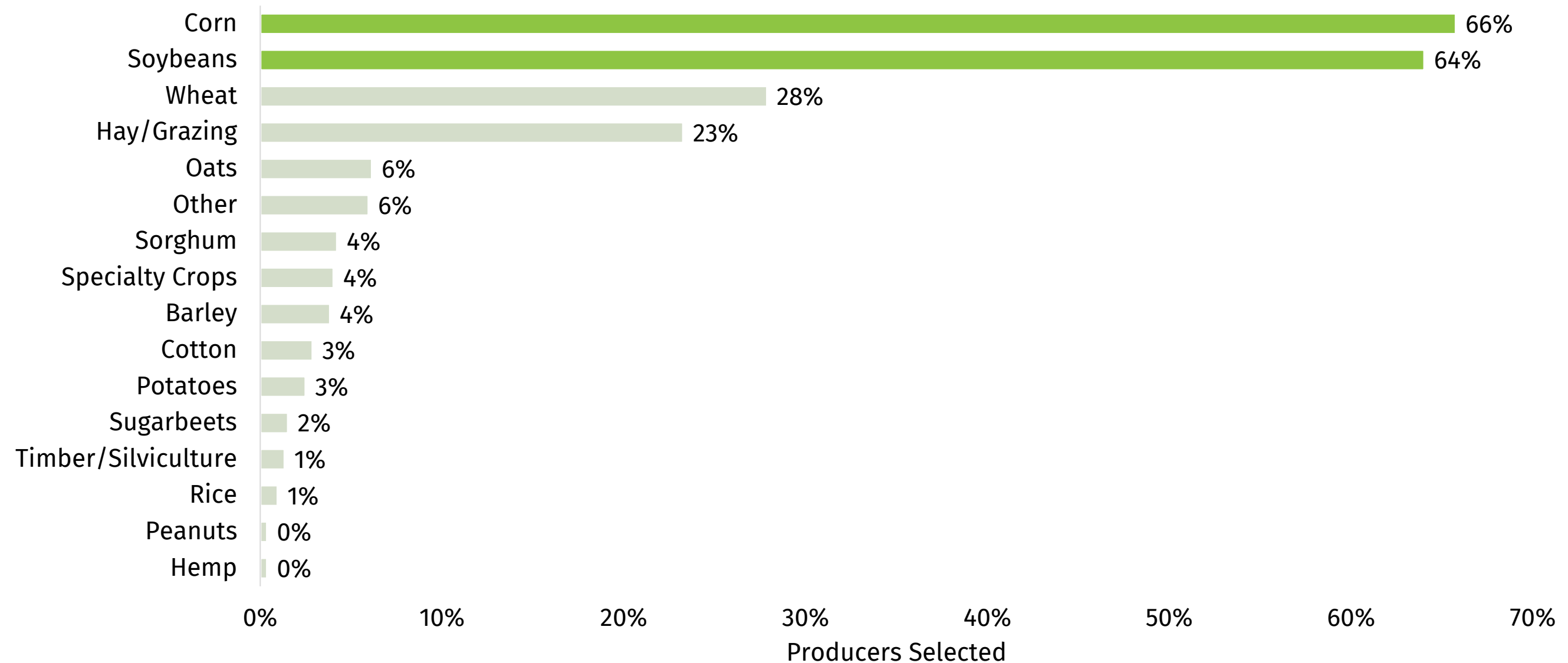
Which of the following makes up the largest portion of your gross farm income?



Appendix: Respondent Operation Detail - Crops

Final Poll Results

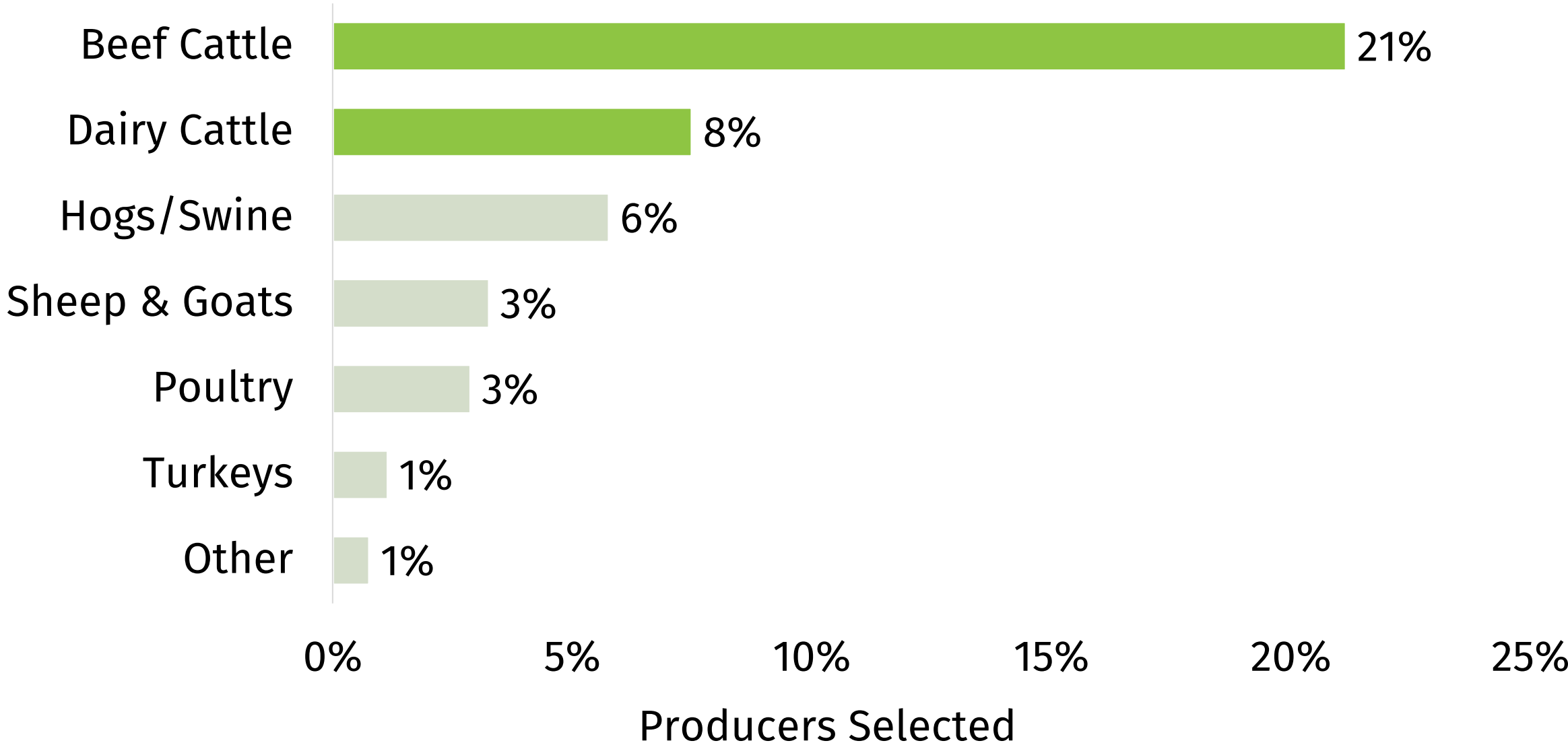
Which of the following crops do you grow?
Select all that apply.



Appendix: Respondent Operation Detail - Livestock

Final Poll Results

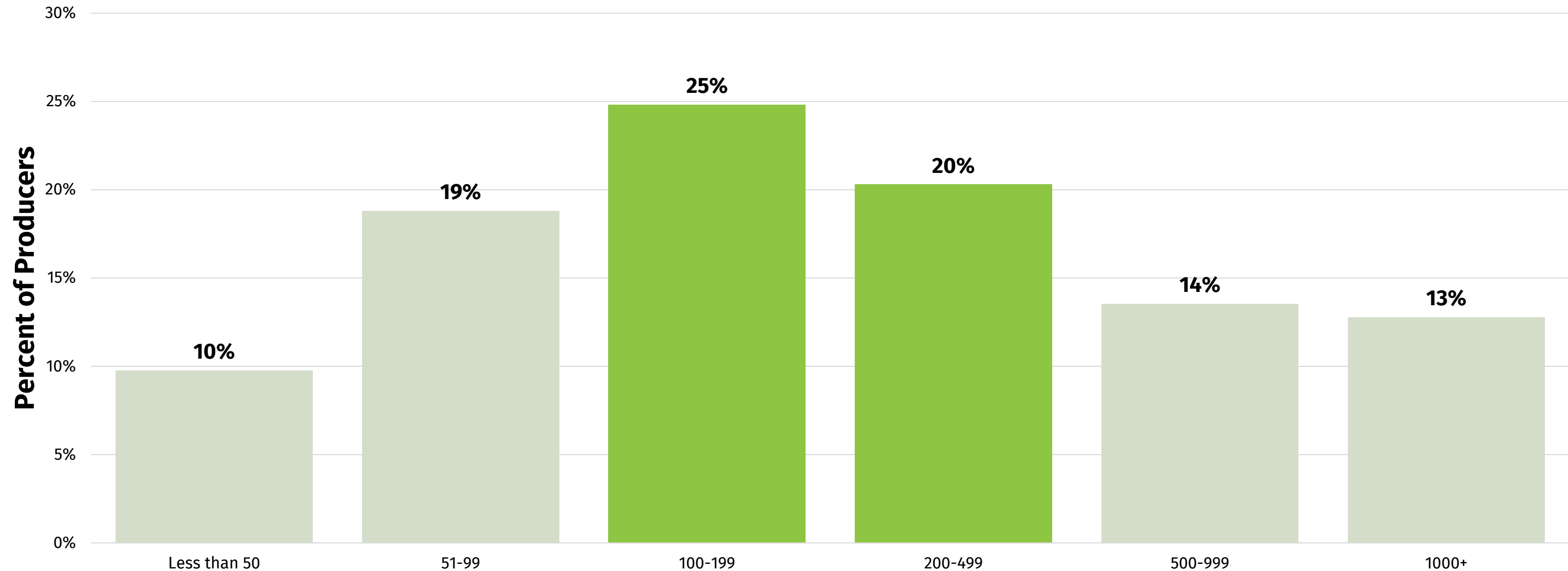
What types of livestock do you raise on your operation?
Select all that apply.



Appendix: Respondent Operation Detail – Herd Size

Final Poll Results

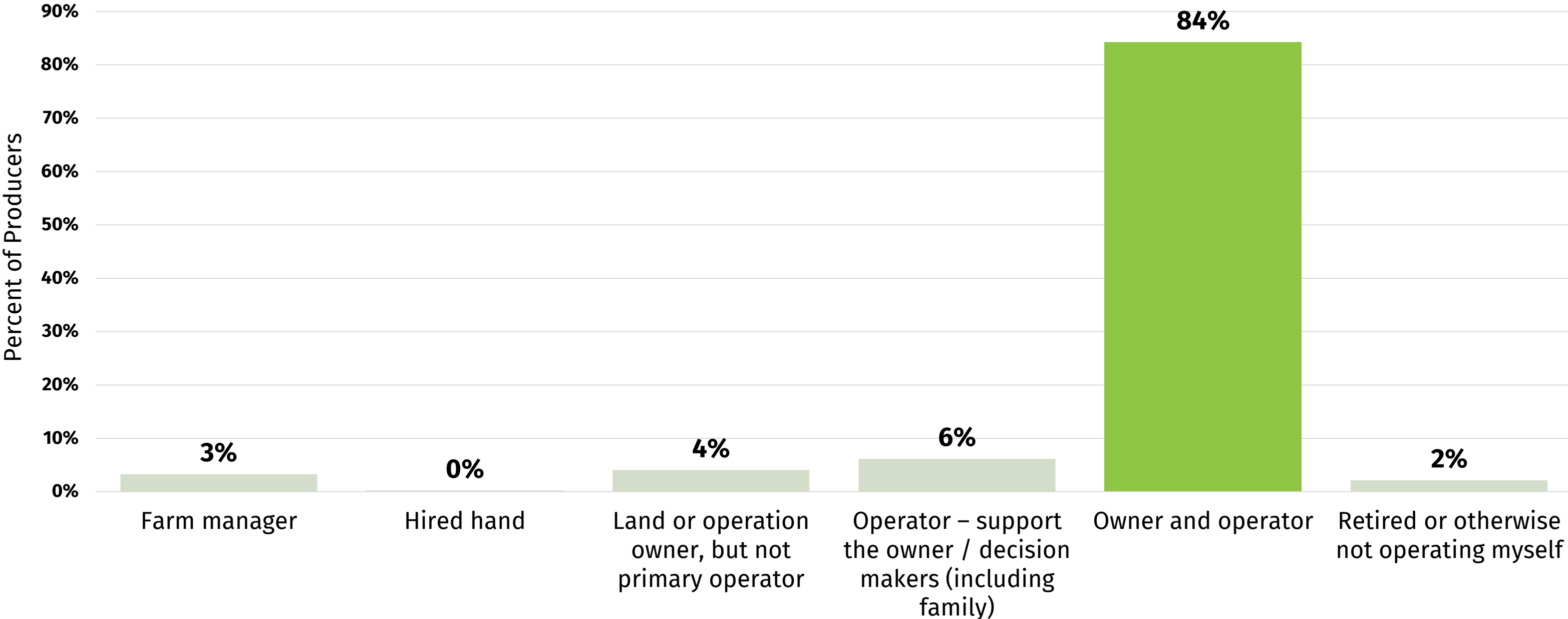
How many head of cattle do you currently have?



Appendix: Respondent Operation Detail – Role

Final Poll Results

Which of the following best describes your role in your operation?



Appendix: Respondent Operation Detail – Generation

Final Poll Results

How many generations of farmers are there in your family, including yourself?

