



Iowa Learning Farms Event Evaluations January through December 2010

Compiled and submitted by Jacqueline Comito

INTRODUCTION

Iowa Learning Farms continues to build a *Culture of Conservation* by utilizing sound research (by Iowa State University and ILF partner agencies), in-field application and demonstration, and outreach and education to Iowans of all ages and residencies.

It is clear that Iowa Learning Farms are making a difference. Since 2008, 83% of farmers attending ILF field days have made a change in their behavior:

- **31% of farmers increased surface residue management on 32,087 new acres of strip till or no till**
- **428 = average number of increased acres put into no-till/strip-till**
- **1600 = new acres with cover crops in 2010/2011**
- **68% have installed waterways, buffers or terraces in 2010.***

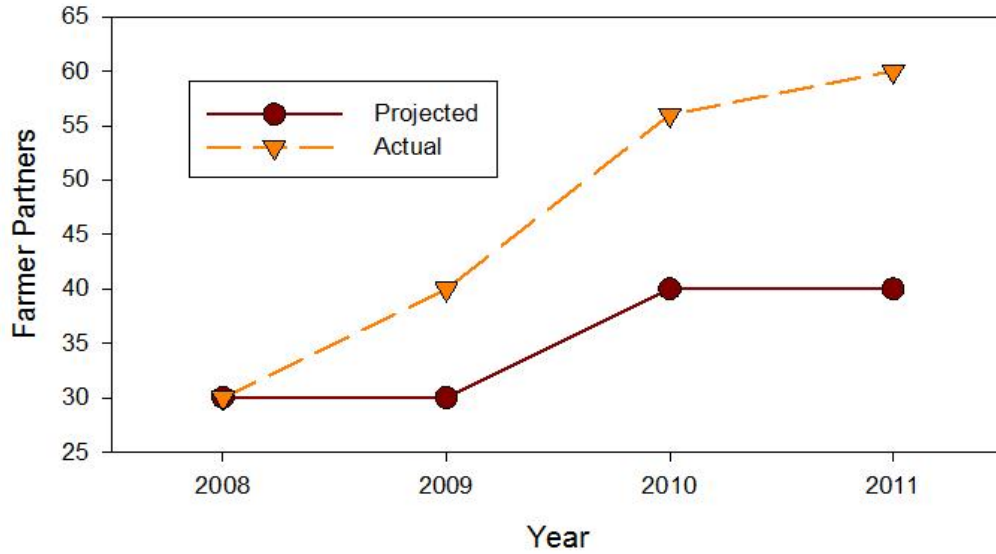
* These numbers are from the ILF follow-up questionnaires. See a year-to-year comparison and more results on page 19 of this report.

Overview of ILF in 2010

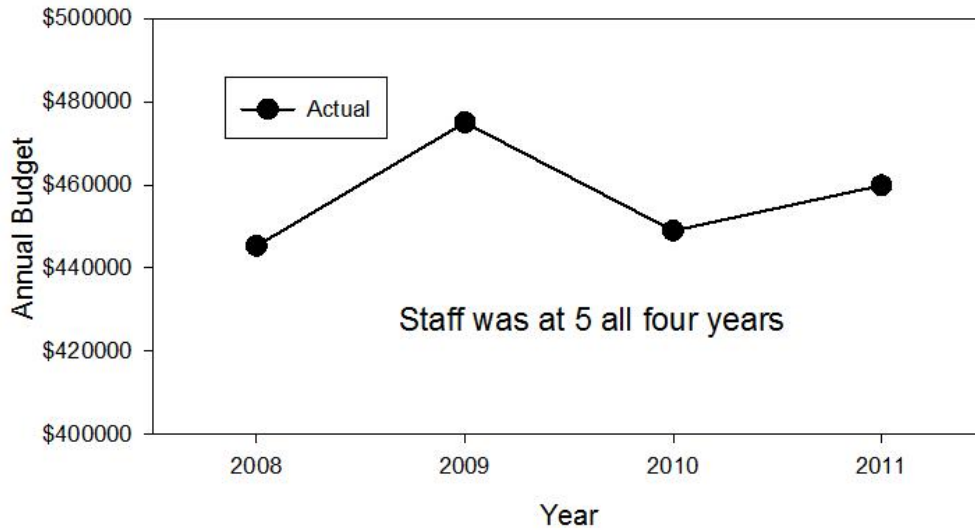
From January to December 2010, the Iowa Learning Farms:

- **Sponsored 15 farmer events (field days and workshops)**
- **Participated at 77 other events, attended by approximately 11,500 people**
- **Traveled more than 10,000 miles visiting 57 of the 99 counties.**

Every year we exceed the goals of farmer partner participation set by the ILF Steering Committee and 2010 is no exception. Sixty farmers are working with us this year in a variety of capacities. Many of our farmer partners present at conferences or local meetings, conduct outreach and education for youth and host field days. Our farmer partners are demonstrating cover crops, no tillage, strip tillage, and other on-farm conservation practices. We stay in monthly contact with our farmer partners through our ILF E-News—an outreach we started in 2010. ILF farmer partners are seen as leaders in their communities and watersheds and are instrumental in encouraging neighbors in ways of optimizing production while enhancing soil quality and improving water quality.



Every year we have increased our outreach, demonstration and educational goals despite fluctuations and decreases in funding. **In 2010, we increased our outreach, education and demonstrations by 37% while our budget only increased 2% and our staffing remained at the 2008 level.** Under the guidance of the ILF Steering Committee, we refined our priorities and allocated resources to meet and exceed our yearly projections.



2010 ILF ACTIVITY EVALUATIONS

Evaluation occurs at five stages:

- **Event Evaluations** for any event that ILF team members participate. These forms (completed by ILF team members) help us to understand the audience’s level of engagement and help us to improve future outreach activities.
- **Comment Cards** filled out by all participants at an ILF sponsored event in order to gain a better understanding of who they are and why they are there.
- **Mailed Evaluation Questionnaires** to participants in any sponsored “field” event as a part of the ILF program. These questionnaires were sent within three weeks of the event. The questions focus on the clarity and accessibility of the information received and inquired whether participants planned to make any changes in their land management as a result of the event.
- **Follow-up Evaluation Questionnaires** to participants in any sponsored “field” event. This survey is sent in February to see if the participants had made the changes they said they were going to make earlier evaluations.
- **Teacher Evaluations** of Conservation Station or ILF classroom events. These questionnaires were handed to the teachers at the event with a return envelope to help see how these individuals perceived our educational programming.

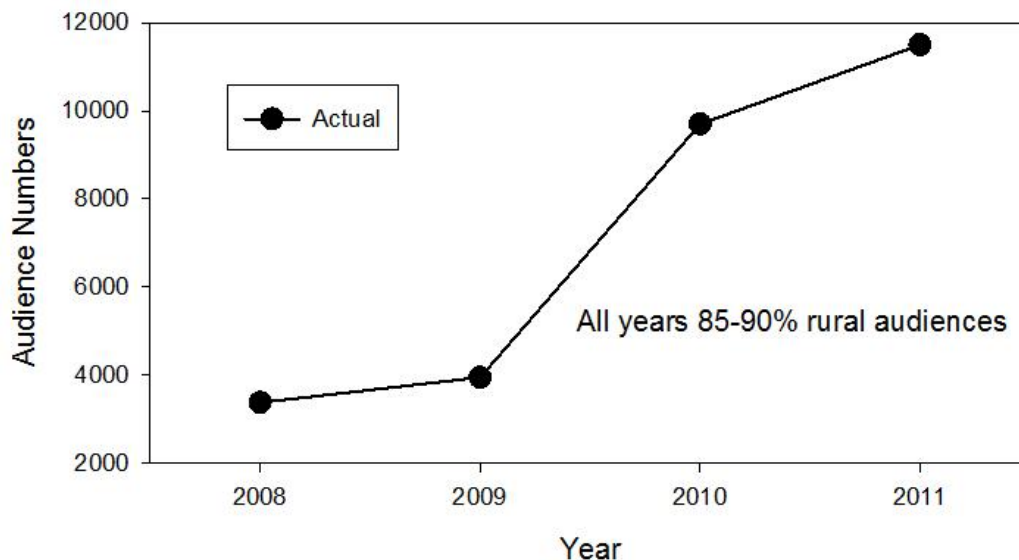
Event Evaluations

Iowa Learning Farms staff complete event evaluation forms for all major presentations including field days. For detailed information of a specific event, see the quarterly and year-end reports.

Month	# of events			
	2007	2008	2009	2010
January			5	1
February			8	3
March			5	14
April	1	2	2	3
May	2	6	3	6
June	8	7	8	14
July	14	17	9	22
August	9	4	6	12
September	8	8	5	11
October	1	3	3	6
November			1	
December			3	
Total	42	46	58	92

Event objectives				
	2007	2008	2009	2010
Community Event	4	5	8	24
Youth Event/Outdoor Class	5	12	6	17
Agency/Organization Event	7	6	9	11
Farmer Events	8	11	20	15
Conference/Clinic	3	2	8	11
Fair/expo	15	10	7	14

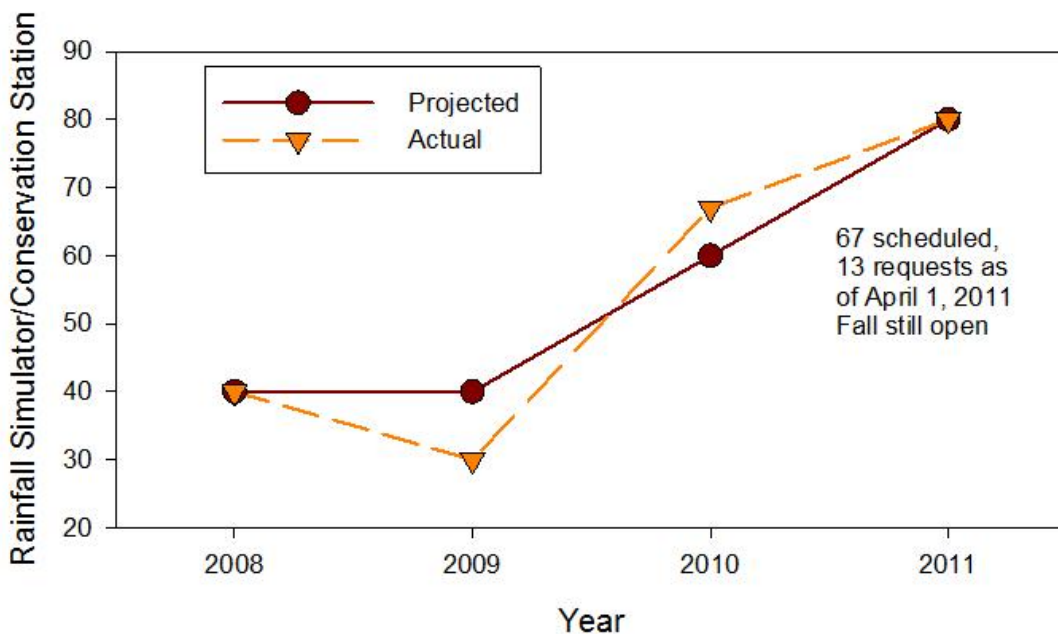
While we now include urban venues in our outreach, our primary audiences are rural, with **53% of ILF activities focused on farmers**. In 2009, we expanded our audience to include youth and rural communities at the request of Soil and Water Conservation District commissioners. Research shows that farmers whose main social connections are other farmers are more likely to be satisfied that the conservation measures on their land are adequate and stick to status quo. Farmers whose social connections include more non-farm friends and neighbors are significantly more likely not to be satisfied with their current conservation measures (Getting to Better Water Quality Outcomes: The Promise and Challenge of the Citizen Effect. Lois Wright Morton and Chih Yuan Weng. *Agriculture and Human Values* (2009) 26:91). **The more we educate the non-farm friends and neighbors of farmers and facilitate farmer to non-farmer dialogues, the more likely we will see an increase in conservation on the land.**



Description of Audiences		2007	2008	2009	2010
Number of events		43	46	58	92
Total numbers for events		3,373	3,945	9,700	11,500
Age groups					
<i>Primarily youth</i>		14%	26%	10%	24%
<i>All ages</i>		42%	35%	21%	27%
<i>Primarily adults</i>		44%	44%	69%	49%
Background					
<i>Rural</i>		56%	54%	47%	52%
<i>Urban</i>		7%	11%	2%	14%
<i>Rural/urban</i>		37%	35%	52%	34%
Level of engagement					
<i>High</i>		77%	83%	81%	78%
<i>Average</i>		18%	13%	14%	15%
<i>Low</i>		5%	4%	5%	7%

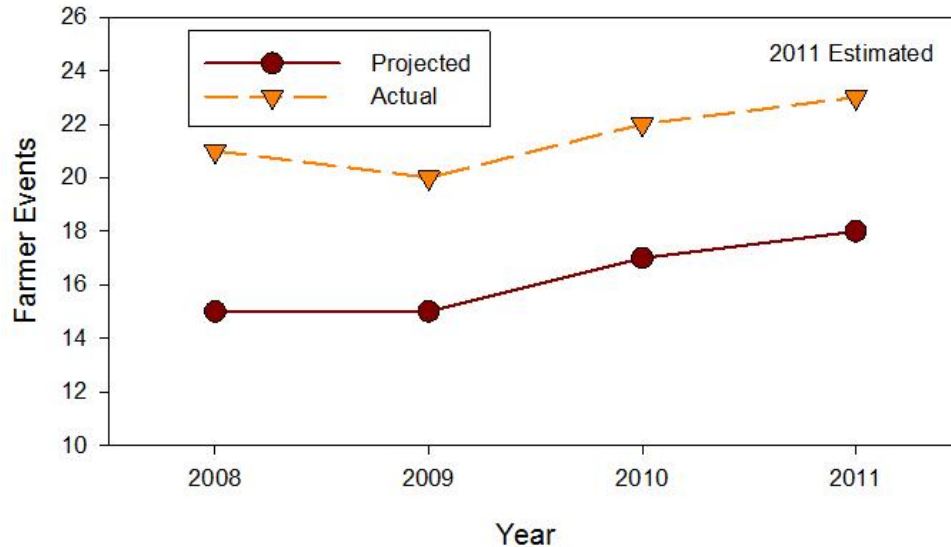
Conservation Station/Rainfall Simulator Events

The Conservation Station, launched in May of 2010, brought an increased enthusiasm toward Iowa Learning Farms and our conservation message. Building from the success of the Rainfall Simulator (launched 2007), the Conservation Station continues to reach a variety of audiences. As of April 1, 2011, we have 67 events scheduled and 13 additional event requests for summer. We anticipate participating in 80 events by the end of August, with an additional 20 by the end of October. Evaluation of the Conservation Station at our field days is included in this report as well as teacher evaluations from fall outdoor classrooms.



Farmer Events

In 2010, we exceeded the projected number of farmer events by 23%. Farmer events include field days and workshops that are specifically geared toward introducing farmers to the latest conservation technological and management data.



2010 Field Day Evaluation

This report includes evaluation of those field days that ILF both sponsored and organized.

We asked participants to share their experience in three ways:

- **comment cards** (filled out at the event, one per household)
- **evaluation questionnaires** (sent via mail two weeks after the field day to all those who filled out a comment card), and
- **follow-up evaluation questionnaires** (sent via mail in February).

2010 ILF Field Day/Workshop Audience Participation in Evaluation

Attendance at ILF Field Days was up by 15% over 2009 and up by 67% since 2008. Size of attendance does not directly correlate into a successful field day. Since 2008, we have tried to increase the number of field days with audiences under 100. **ILF field day evaluation results over the last six years suggest that the optimal learning conditions for farmers to truly engage with each other and the presenters and be motivated to change behavior is an audience of about 50.** If participants can't hear or engage in what is being discussed, it greatly diminishes the level to which they are able to learn and change from the material presented.



	#Attendees	#Comment Cards	#Returned Evaluations	#Returned Follow-up Evaluations
Pokorny Farm Field Day	35	19	11	9
Hoffman Farm Field Day	85	38	12	12
Vaske Farm Field Day	65	33	15	13
ILF/CIG Strip-Till Field Day	235	79	None sent	None sent
Black Hawk Watershed	50	24	12	10
Walnut Creek Watershed	80	38	13	17
Middle West Fork of Crooked Creek Watershed	30	15	9	10
Smeltzer Trust Farm	120	None	None sent	None sent
Castana Research Farm	80	22	8	12
Iowa Lakes Comm. College	83	53	12	13
Total	863	321	92*	96+

*This is a 38% response rate to mailed questionnaire--a normal response to one mailing.

+This is a 40% response rate.

**Summary of Comment Cards
(filled out by attendees at the field day)**

<i>Which statement best describes you?</i>	
Farmer	61%
Landowner	34%
Government employee	11%
Student	9%
Other	13%
Individuals could choose more than one category.	

<i>How did you hear about the field day?</i>	
Neighbor	13%
ISU Extension Staff	27%
DNR/NRCS Staff	21%
Website	6%
Radio	12%
Newspaper	19%
School	8%
Mailing	7%
Other	4%



<i>Write in your reason for attending (summary of comments) 70% wrote in comments</i>	
Looking for specific information being presented	59%
Learn about new directions	23%
College Class	5%
Other (involved in program or family or sponsor)	12%

INDIVIDUAL ILF FIELD DAY EVALUATIONS

June 2: Practical Farmers of Iowa/Iowa Learning Farms

Pokorny Farm Cover Crop Field Day, n=11

Host Farmer: Mark Pokorny, ILF farmer-partner

Speakers: Mark Pokorny, Jeremy Singer (USDA/ARS cover crop management researcher), John Sawyer (ISU Extension Soil Fertility Specialist), Mark Hanna (ISU Extension Ag Engineer)

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following (circle the number):

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Overall quality of field day	7	4	0	0	5
Effectiveness of group discussion format (rather than formal "expert" presentations)	1	9	1	0	0
Quality of information exchanged during presentations and discussion	1	9	1	0	0

Please describe at least one way you will integrate what you learned from this field day into your farming operation and management choices (Place "X" in front of all that apply):

 9 I am considering use of fall-seeded rye or other cover crop on some (or more) of my acres in fall 2010

 2 (Renters) I will discuss positives and negatives of including fall-seeded cover crops as part of my crop rotation with my landowners

 6 I am networking conservation ideas with other farmers

 1 I am considering purchase of a grain drill or other seeding equipment, joint purchase of seeding equipment with neighbors, leasing equipment from a local ag supplier or co-op, or contracting for aerial seeding of fall 2010 cover crops

 0 I do not plan to make any changes in my current management practices

Conservation Station	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Didn't See
Rainfall Simulator effectively demonstrated connection between residue, tillage and soil erosion.	3	8	0	0	0



Learning Lab Wetlands Display was understandable and engaging.	1	7	1	1	1
Educators were knowledgeable and concerned that you understood the material.	2	9	0	0	0

What was the most important thing you learned from the June 2nd ILF field day at Pokorny's farm?
n=7

- Rainfall simulator
- Will do late summer annual rye aerial seeded over corn fields, does not rent ground, attending no-till farmers conference, learning lab- small room with posters and pics, seed cover crops as early as possible, disappointed tillage...was not covered in more detail, several farmers I know are using annual rye grass because it has a much denser root structure than rye and will not grow as tall in the spring, both are great advantages yet ISU believes annual rye winter kills to easy, just seed it in standing crops! Want to pass farms on in better condition than I started with it
- Choice of cover crop species/variety depends largely on goal to be accomplished in farm's management system and the crop to follow
- Cover crops isn't the total answer, need to work at it
- Seeding of rye as a cover crop
- This is the first time I had ever seen a cover crop used with a row crop
- Wanted to see cover crop and soil condition

June 8: Brian Hoffman Farm Field Day, n=15

Host farmer: Brian Hoffman, ILF farmer-partner

Speakers: Brian Hoffman, Paul Kassel (ISU Extension Field Agronomist)

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following (circle the number):

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Overall quality of field day	4	9	0	0	0
Effectiveness of the group discussion format and multiple learning stations (rather than formal "expert" presentations)	2	9	3	0	0
Quality of information exchanged during discussion	6	5	2	0	0

Please describe at least one way you will integrate what you learned from this field day into your farming operation and management choices (Place "X" in front of all that apply):

 8 I am considering use of no-till management on some (or more) of my acres for Crop Year 2011

 6 (Renters) I will discuss positives and negatives of adopting no-till with my landowners

 8 I am networking conservation ideas with other farmers



ILF Evaluation (2010 Events)

 2 I am considering no-till planting soybeans into undisturbed cornstalks CY2011

 1 I do not plan to make any changes in my current management practices

Conservation Station	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Didn't See
Rainfall Simulator effectively demonstrated connection between residue, tillage and soil erosion.	7	6	0	0	2
Learning Lab Wetlands Display was understandable and engaging.	1	9	1	0	4
Educators were knowledgeable and concerned that you understood the material.	7	7	0	0	1

What was the most important thing you learned from the June 8 ILF field day at Brian Hoffman's farm? n=10

- The rationale Brian stated was 'lack of manpower'. Never thought of strip till in those terms
- Now- strip till corn and no-till beans
- I no-till now
- It is interesting to see other methods to farm
- No-till will work

June 17: Tom Vaske Farm Field Day, n=12

Host farmer: Tom Vaske, ILF farmer-partner

Speakers: Tom Vaske, Bob Vobora (Iowa NRCS Soil Scientist), Keith Krause (Delaware Co. NRCS)

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following (circle the number):

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Overall quality of field day	2	8	1	0	0
Effectiveness of the group discussion format and multiple learning stations (rather than formal "expert" presentations)	4	5	2	0	0
Quality of information exchanged during discussion	2	7	2	0	0

Please describe at least one way you will integrate what you learned from this field day into your farming operation and management choices (Place "X" in front of all that apply):

 3 I am considering use of high-surface residue (no-till or strip-till) management on some (or more) of my acres in 2011

1 (Renters) I will discuss positives and negatives of adopting no-till with my landowners

2 I am networking conservation ideas with other farmers

4 I am considering the purchase of strip-till equipment, joint purchase of strip-till equipment with neighbors, or leasing equipment from a local ag supplier or co-op

5 I do not plan to make any changes in my current management practices

Conservation Station	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Didn't See
Rainfall Simulator effectively demonstrated connection between residue, tillage and soil erosion.	3	7	0	0	2
Learning Lab Wetlands Display was understandable and engaging.	2	5	0	0	5
Educators were knowledgeable and concerned that you understood the material.	3	7	0	0	2

What was the most important thing you learned from the June 17 ILF field day at Tom Vaske's farm?
n=7

- The most important thing I learned was that if you don't specifically target your audience your presentation will be not as effective as you want. The display in the trailer about wetlands seemed to be for general audiences – the farmer I was with had glazed eyes and ears because they had heard that all before and it didn't have significant relevance to them. Also the rainfall simulator wasn't quite working right – It was a good idea though.
- The information was not clear to me that there was a set schedule for presentations
- Compaction really can be as simple as one pass of tractor
- We've got to somehow start using practices to conserve our resources
- Rainfall simulator, compaction
- No-till and strip till information
- How to place P and K fertilizer in the strip till method
- We've been strip tilling for about 15 years, we haven't seen everything, we have already been through everything Tom spoke about
- A lot of soil could be saved by using strip till or no-till
- How water travels through no-till soil, not run off like the tilled soil



July 1: Black Hawk Lake Watershed, n=12

Speakers: Matt Helmers, Jacqueline Comito, Tom Duncan (ISU Extension), Jim Frederick (Sac SWCD commissioner)

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following (circle the number):

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Overall quality of "Troubled Waters" event	1	10	1	0	0
Effectiveness of the presentations	1	10	1	0	0
Effectiveness of video "Troubled Waters"	4	4	3	0	0
Quality of information exchanged during discussion	3	7	2	0	0

Please describe at least one way you will integrate what you learned from this watershed group meeting into your lives (Place "X" in front of all that apply):

- 2** I am considering becoming an IOWATER monitor.
- 4** I plan to be an active member of the Blackhawk watershed group
- 4** I am networking conservation ideas with other residents of Blackhawk watershed
- 4** I am working cooperatively with neighboring farmers and landowners to make best use of conservation structures within our local watershed
- 0** I do not plan to make any changes in my current management practices

Conservation Station	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Didn't See
Rainfall Simulator effectively demonstrated connection between residue, tillage and soil erosion.	7	4	0	0	1
Learning Lab Conservation Dog Display was understandable and engaging.	10	0	0	0	2
Educators were knowledgeable and concerned that you understood the material.	1	2	3	4	5

What was the most important thing you learned from the July 1 ILF watershed event? n=10

- Black Hawk Lake was and is a shallow lake. The phosphorus level appears to be a consistent problem and will be with a shallow lake unless it is removed. According to what we hear, it will not go away naturally. Have Hallittle dig a gravel pit on the inlet to be used as a settling basin.
- The value of caring about our environment
- I don't really know because I was already fairly savvy to the problems are. I am doing all I can to relay information gained. Some well meaning advice: this excellent event would have



been better attended if people had been educated better beforehand about what it would entail. I read the news release, but did not understand what was in store. It was a shame that so many missed out. Bill Farley has expressed an interest in becoming a monitor. If he has not already contacted Tom, please call him at 712-657-2926

- That we need more people to attend these presentations and care about their lake and watershed!
- The DNR private land bio sits in an office in Sioux City waiting for contact from farmers in Sac Co. Black Hawk watershed is a waste of time. This person needs to be contacting farmers in the watershed with extension people along with game wardens and sell the program!!!!
- I found out our lake has a lot of work to do to clean up around the lake. I just don't know if enough of the right people know how to accomplish the end product, a clean lake.
- Where the problem starts – drainage and runoff, long been a problem in hog and cattle confinement areas in Iowa
- Reiteration of the slow moving governmental hurdle clearing necessary for corrective actions
- More people need to know this – those who have the land involved

July 7: Walnut Creek Watershed, n=13

Host farmer: Dan Case (Walnut Creek Watershed Coordinator)

Speakers: Dan Case, Sarah Carlson (PFI), Matt Helmers, Mike Duffy

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following (circle the number):

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Overall quality of field day	8	5	0	0	0
Effectiveness of the “expert” presentations	7	5	0	1	0
Quality of information exchanged during discussion	7	4	2	0	0

Please describe at least one way you will integrate what you learned from this field day into your farming operation and management choices (Place “X” in front of all that apply):

 6 I am considering use of high-surface residue (no-till or strip-till) management on some (or more) of my acres in 2011

 1 (Renters) I will discuss positives and negatives of adopting no-till with my landowners

 1 I am networking conservation ideas with other farmers

 9 I am considering installing (or improving existing) grassed waterways, buffers, and/or terraces on some of my acres

 4 I am working cooperatively with neighboring farmers and landowners to make best use of conservation structures within our local watershed

 2 I do not plan to make any changes in my current management practices

Conservation Station	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Didn't See
Rainfall Simulator effectively demonstrated connection between residue, tillage and soil erosion.	8	5	0	0	0
Learning Lab Soils Display was understandable and engaging.	7	6	0	0	0
Educators were knowledgeable and concerned that you understood the material.	9	4	0	0	0

What was the most important thing you learned from the July 7 ILF field day? n=9

- I learned how important it is to get all farmers involved
- Just how much residue means when trying to keep our soil intact
- Available programs for my area to help pay for construction of structures
- Source of agronomic manuals
- The rain simulator really showed how important residue is
- I disagreed with the reason given for low pheasant counts are being not enough habitat. The real reason in our area for low pheasants is predators, especially nest raiders; skunks, raccoons, possums, feral cats, coyotes, foxes, etc.
- Cover crop information

July 13: Middle West Fork of Crooked Creek Watershed, n=9

Host Farmer: Jim Cuddeback, Rob Stout

Speakers: Jim Fawcett (ISU Extension Field Agronomist), Greg Brenneman (ISU Extension Ag Engineer), Todd Sutphin (IA Soybean Assn.), Jamie Benning (Leadership and Performance-based Watershed Management project)

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following (circle the number):

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Overall quality of field day	3	5	1	0	0
Effectiveness of the "expert" presentations	3	4	1	1	0
Quality of information exchanged during discussion	2	3	3	1	0

Please describe at least one way you will integrate what you learned from this field day into your farming operation and management choices (Place "X" in front of all that apply):

 5 I am considering or will use the Fall Stalk Nitrate Test to evaluate my nitrogen application for the 2010 growing season.

 7 I plan to attend future Middle West Fork of Crooked Creek Watershed meetings and events.



ILF Evaluation (2010 Events)

5 I am have discussed conservation and water quality improvement ideas with other farmers

4 I am considering installing (or improving existing) grassed waterways, buffers, and/or terraces on some of my acres

1 I am working cooperatively with neighboring farmers and landowners to make best use of conservation structures within our local watershed

1 I do not plan to make any changes in my current management practices

Conservation Station	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Didn't See
Rainfall Simulator effectively demonstrated connection between residue, tillage and soil erosion.	6	3	0	0	0
Learning Lab Wetlands Display was understandable and engaging.	5	4	0	0	0
Educators were knowledgeable and concerned that you understood the material.	7	2	0	0	0

What was the most important thing you learned from the July 13 ILF field day? **n=1**

- Connections for involving students in the watershed improvement project

August 25: ISU Western Research Farm, Castana

Speakers: Joel DeJong (ISU Extension Field Agronomist), Rich Pope (ISU Agronomist), Wayne Roush (ISU Western Research Farm), Matt Helmers and Mark Hanna

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following (circle the number):

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Overall quality of field day	5	3	0	0	0
Effectiveness of the group discussion format and multiple learning stations (rather than formal "expert" presentations)	5	3	0	0	0
Quality of information exchanged during discussion	4	3	1	0	0

Please describe at least one way you will integrate what you learned from this field day into your farming operation and management choices (Place "X" in front of all that apply):

4 I am considering use of no-till management on some (or more) of my acres for Crop Year 2011

1 (Renters) I will discuss positives and negatives of adopting no-till with my landowners

1 I am networking conservation ideas with other farmers

7 The root pit discussions make me more aware of the importance of preserving soil tilth and soil quality to enhance crop root growth.

3 I do not plan to make any changes in my current management practices

Conservation Station	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Didn't See
Rainfall Simulator effectively demonstrated connection between residue, tillage and soil erosion.	4	4	0	0	0
Learning Lab Water Display was understandable and engaging.	3	4	0	0	1
Educators were knowledgeable and concerned that you understood the material.	3	5	0	0	0

What was the most important thing you learned from the August 25th field day at Castana? n=6

- The importance of residue to water absorption by the soil
- Water use
- Soil erosion, different tillage practices, crop root growth
- Seeing the rainfall simulator really brought to my attention the use of residue to help control erosion
- Severe difference in no-till coulters
- Seeing the soil pit



**August 26: Practical Farmers of Iowa/Iowa Learning Farms
Iowa Lakes Community College student farm Cover Crop Field Day, n=11**

Host Farmer: Tom Quastad (Iowa Lakes Community College Ag Instructor)
Speakers: Jeremy Singer (USDA/ARS cover crops researcher), John Sawyer (ISU Extension Soil Fertility Specialist), Mark Hanna (ISU Ag Engineer), Jeremy Thilges and Don Hagen (Palo Alto County NRCS)

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following (circle the number):

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Overall quality of field day	2	6	3	0	0
Effectiveness of group discussion format (rather than formal "expert" presentations)	3	6	2	0	0
Quality of information exchanged during presentations and discussion	3	4	4	0	0

Please describe at least one way you will integrate what you learned from this field day into your farming operation and management choices (Place "X" in front of all that apply):

 4 I am considering use of fall-seeded rye or other cover crop on some (or more) of my acres in fall 2010

 0 (Renters) I will discuss positives and negatives of including fall-seeded cover crops as part of my crop rotation with my landowners

 3 I am networking conservation ideas with other farmers

 0 I am considering purchase of a grain drill or other seeding equipment, joint purchase of seeding equipment with neighbors, leasing equipment from a local ag supplier or co-op, or contracting for aerial seeding of fall 2010 cover crops

 4 I do not plan to make any changes in my current management practices

Conservation Station	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Didn't See
Rainfall Simulator effectively demonstrated connection between residue, tillage and soil erosion.	2	9	0	0	0
Learning Lab Wetlands Display was understandable and engaging.	2	5	1	0	2
Educators were knowledgeable and concerned that you understood the material.	1	9	0	0	0



What was the most important thing you learned from the August 26th PFI/ILF field day? n=8

- I learned about the incentives offered from the government
- Info on cover crops
- Equipment information, farmer experiences
- Fall seeding, different crops: rye/wheat
- Not to assume since this was being held at a community college that there would be field demonstration. Actual seeded cover crop would be a great promotion
- Cost sharing is available. Cover crop must be emerged by 150 day? Expectations: 1 expected Learning Farm to have cover crops to view or have results of growing cover crops for several years, 2 expected to listen to growers experiences with cover crops, farmers will not convert to cover crops unless profitable
- I do not farm. I am a retired soil conservation service employee
- How to manage cover crops in the spring, before planting row crops

SUMMARY OF FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES

(sent by mail in February 2010 to all those who filled out comment cards)

Please describe at least one way you will integrate what you learned at this meeting into your farming:

	Feb 2011 Follow-up n=96	Feb 2010 Follow-up n=130	Feb 2009 Follow-up n=69
Increased use of surface residue management (no-till or strip-till) on some of my acres (n=85)*	32%	30%	32%
List # of acres	8,983	12,558	10,546
Average # of acres per respondent who said they were putting more acres into no-till or strip-till	428	370	586
Sought additional information via web, state agencies or ISU employees	22%	36%	42%
I discussed +/- of using no-till or strip-till with my landowners (n=74)	27%	33%	39%
I discussed conservation ideas with other farmers in my area (n=85)	61%	72%	70%
I am working cooperatively with neighboring farmers and landowners to make best use of conservation structures within our local watershed (n=36)	35%~	28%~	Not asked
I purchased strip-till equipment, made a joint purchase of strip-till equipment with my neighbors, or leased equipment from a local ag supplier or co-op or Contracted for aerial seeding of cover crops (n=57)	8%	Not asked	14%
Using fall seeded rye or other cover crops (n=21)	47% (1,599 new acres)	23%	Not asked
Installed waterways, buffers and/or terraces (n=27)	68%	44%	Not asked
I did not make any changes	16%	18%	18%

*These are the number of possible respondents for each question for 2010 field days. Those without a smaller number after the question were asked for all the field days.



The final four questions were only asked on the follow-up questionnaire:

In general, plowing, mixing and tilling soil contributes to an overall decrease in soil quality?

71% I AGREE 29% I DISAGREE

Do you think, in general, we are moving toward increased or decreased implementation of soil conservation practices (check best answer)?

77% INCREASED 23% DECREASED

Is there a water quality problem in Iowa?

77% YES 13% NO 4% UNSURE

Is there a water quality problem in your county?

66% YES 20% NO 4% UNSURE

Outdoor Classroom Evaluations from Teachers, n=24

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following (circle the number):

	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
Overall quality of ILF Conservation Station activities	79%	21%	--	--	--
Effectiveness of the hands-on watershed activity	75%	25%	--	--	--
Effectiveness of water quality and conservation lesson	71%	25%	4%	--	--
Effectiveness of Rainfall Simulator at demonstrating connection between land management choices, soil erosion, and water quality	82%	13%	5%	--	--
Engagement of educators – knowledgeable and concerned that students understood the material	83%	17%	--	--	--

What impact do you think the Conservation Station had on the students? n=22

September 21 – Lyon County

- It was a neat way to get kids involved with water conservation. I will use their DVDs and ideas when we begin our water conservation unit in science
- It had a very strong effect. Students loved the puzzle piece watershed activity. The rainfall simulator was interesting, but could have been explained better.
- I don't teach science

September 23 – Decorah Middle School

- This was a great activity. I was fortunate that, after the original plan was changed, the Conservation Station [instructors] came to my classroom. The watershed activity fit in perfectly with the watershed lesson we had already done with the Enviroscape. The students could apply terms and concepts again and every student was engaged in the activity. I think the impact was that it re-enforced previous knowledge and raised awareness of the importance of the topic.

September 24 – Borlaug Harvest Fest

- It was great that kids could 'see' erosion/rainfall experiments!
- Kids seemed most surprised that the materials we put down our drains could be re-filtered
- This was a great hands-on visuals for our 200+ 5th graders. Wonderful – love to have you back same day next year

October 1 – Pekin Homecoming Day

- As the Ag Ed Instructor and FFA Advisor, I coordinated this activity with our elementary teachers. The feedback I got from them was very positive. I believe that they signed up to visit the CS so they could get a little field trip in. What they got was some outstanding natural resource education for the students. What impressed me the most about your crew was how they could be so effective with every age group that they presented to! From 1st graders up the high school kids – they knew how to teach each group! WOW! I was very impressed with the ability of the teachers and the station itself (including the rainfall simulator). Great job!
- Great learning lessons and examples to see visually
- They seemed excited and the connection to 'pack' and 3 dogs was a good idea
- Made them 'think' about things they usually take for granted
- Help them become more aware of their environment and the impact they can have on it
- I brought 10th and 12th grade students – the 10th graders were not as attentive but that was not the fault of the presenter. The material presented will be useful for my bio students
- They learned about land and water conservation. They discussed tree planting which they have all done here at school. We are departmentalized – I will talk to the other 4th grade teacher who teaches science about using this!

- They love visual things, so they learned a lot more than if we would have read it out of a book
- Makes us stop and think about water, soil and our responsibility to preserve
- Become more aware of the environment

October 5 and 7 – Boone County

- They could visualize the problems that arise when people do not communicate with each other and maybe the selfishness of creating their ‘own space’
- I think my students understood our impact on overall water quality after this presentation
- It will make students more conscious of protecting the waters around Boone Co. They may likely talk to their parents and share advice with family members about what they learned and hopefully make wiser decisions in the future.
- I really feel that they were able to grasp the information especially through the use of the puzzle pieces and then being able to actually see what goes on in a watershed.

October 14 – Cherokee County

- They actually see how pollution and erosion affect our water supply and rivers and lakes.

Please describe at least one way you will integrate the Iowa Learning Farms conservation material in your classroom (Place “X” in front of all that apply):

(NOTE: several of the teachers at outdoor classrooms taught other subjects and told us they would pass on the materials to the science teacher.)

71% I will follow-up the Conservation Station with future discussion of watersheds and teamwork.

75% I will use the enclosed Conservation Pack worksheets and certificates as a follow-up to the outdoor classroom.

58% I will use the videos (Culture of Conservation and Troubled Waters) as a follow-up to the outdoor classroom.

4% I do not plan to use the Iowa Learning Farms materials in my classroom.