NEW PARADIGM FOR CONSERVATION

FARM FOUNDATION FORUM

Jonathan Coppess
Gardner Ag Policy Program
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THINKING ABOUT CONSERVATION PARADIGMS.

DEVASTATION IN THE DUST BOWL ERA
- Homesteading and WWI expansion for wheat in the Plains
- Depression + Dust = Conservation + Acreage Reduction + Price Support

EROSION IN THE TARGET PRICE ERA
- Chasing high prices and exports, from fencerow-to-fencerow
- Crisis + Erosion = target prices + CRP + compliance

NUTRIENT LOSS IN THE RFS ERA
- Yields (GE) + Acres (RFS & high prices) = nutrient loss
- Working lands challenges on a massive scale; EQIP, CSP, RCPP...?
Budget rules and CBO baseline creates ‘zero-sum’ policy effort.

Adding funds to one title must come out of others.

Expanding CRP acres would require offsets, possibly working lands.
Conservation and Farm (Risk) Perspectives

- Lower crop prices + costs slow to adjust = farm income squeeze.
- Conservation risks being a “nice to have” item when times are good, abandoned in the squeeze.
- Example: cover crops at $25 to $30 per acre.
- Nutrient loss requires conservation that is relevant to farming, risk & finances.
Thinking about a New Paradigm

- Farming’s twin risks.
- Conservation and relevance.
- In a baseline-challenged (zero-sum) effort.

Corn Prices and Yields

[Graph showing corn prices and yields from 2005 to 2016 with different lines representing yield, projected, harvest, 5yr OMA-MYA, Reference, and Loan.]

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THANK YOU!

Jonathan Coppess
Gardner Agriculture Policy Program
University of Illinois
jwcoppes@illinois.edu