

Agricultural and Residential Landowners Survey  
Central Platte region, Nebraska

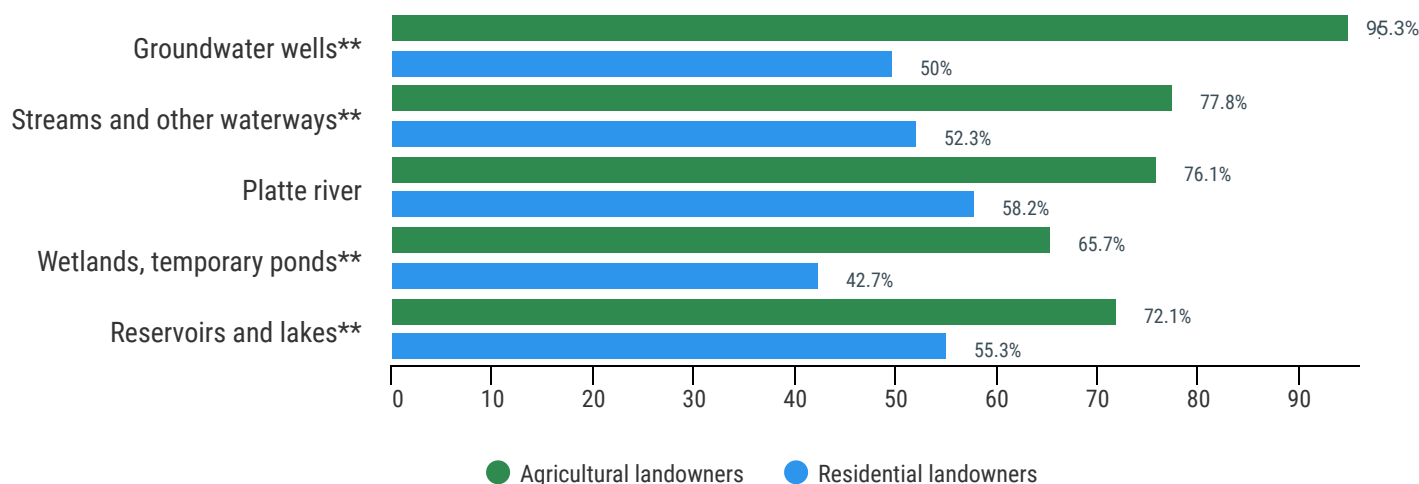


**WATER for  
AGRICULTURE**

# Summary of Results

The Water for Agriculture project conducted a mail survey of both agricultural and residential landowners in the Central Platte region, NE. The mail survey assessed landowner values, beliefs and behaviors related to streams, rivers and groundwater. Addresses for the survey were obtained from publicly available property tax records. A sample of 500 agricultural landowners were sent surveys, and 117 responded (for a response rate of 23.3%). A sample of 503 residential landowners were sent surveys, and 60 responded (11.9%). These numbers are consistent with or above the national average for mail survey responses.

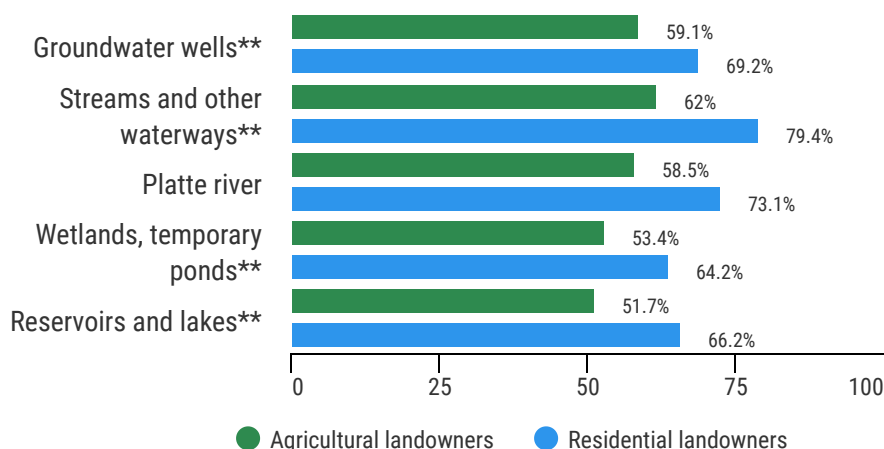
## What percentage of landowners rate water quality in the Central Platte region as "good" or "excellent"?\*



\* Results are a combined percentage of respondents who rated the location's water quality as "good" or "excellent."

\*\* Near the respondent's home.

## What percentage of landowners are "somewhat" or "very" concerned about water quality in the Central Platte region?\*



\* Results are a combined percentage of respondents who were "moderately" or "very" concerned about a location's water quality.

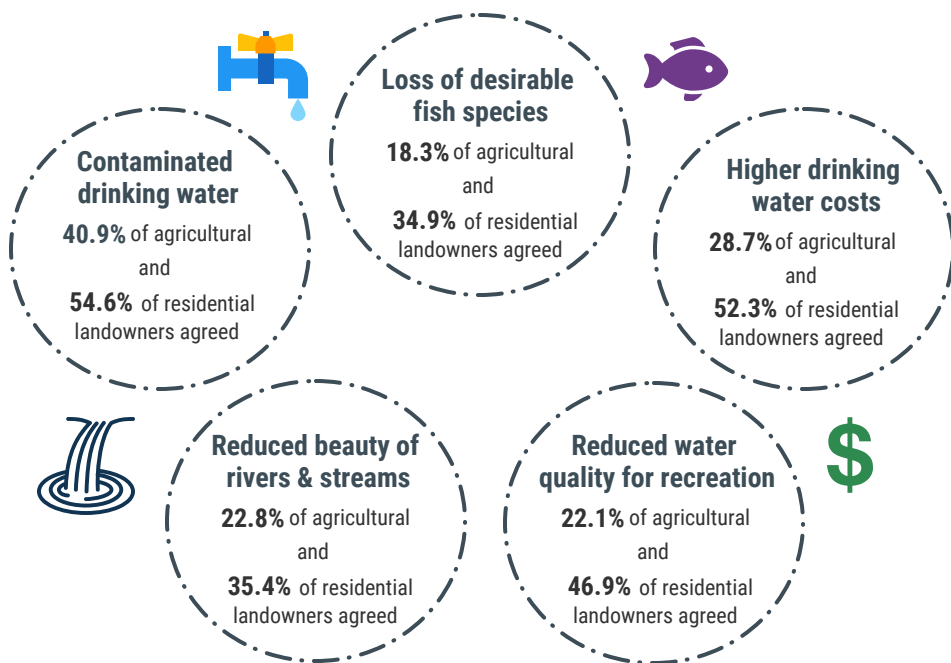
\*\* Near the respondent's home.



### Why this survey?

The survey was developed by Penn State in conjunction with the Water for Agriculture program's North Platte region Local Leadership Team to better understand the perspectives of landowners in the North Platte region regarding ground and surface water issues. Our leadership team and its partners will use these results to inform and prioritize its activities to meet the most critical water and agricultural needs facing these watersheds. To learn more, visit <http://water4ag.psu.edu> or contact Mark Burbach at 402-472-8210 or [mburbach1@unl.edu](mailto:mburbach1@unl.edu)

# What are the biggest quality of life impacts related to water problems in the Central Platte region?



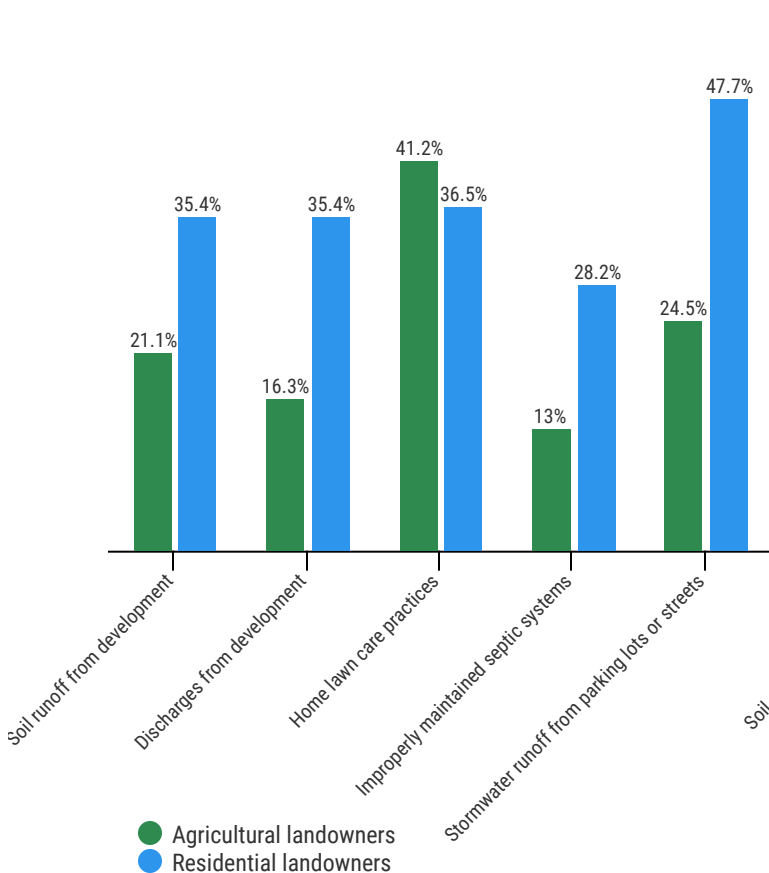
### Groundwater, River & Stream Contaminants

Agricultural and residential landowners surveyed differed only slightly on perceptions of sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus, chemicals and E. Coli being problematic contaminants for groundwater, streams and rivers in the Central Platte region.

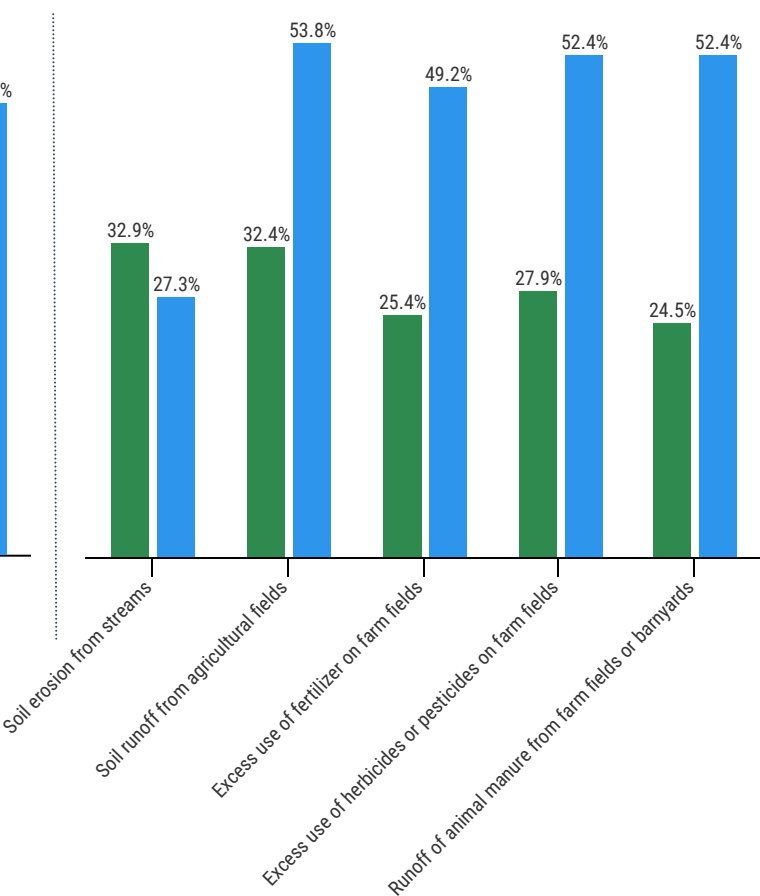
Residential landowners were most concerned with excess nitrogen, nitrates, E. Coli, and more concerned with contaminants overall. Between 30-45% of agricultural landowners were concerned with all listed contaminants.

## How much of a problem are these sources of contamination for water quality in the Central Platte region?\*

Residential Contaminants



Agricultural Contaminants



\* Results are a combined percentage of respondents who rated the contaminant as "moderately" or "very" concerning.

## Landowner attitudes about efforts to address water quality\*:

**90%** think that it is their personal responsibility to help protect water quality.

**87.2%** think the quality of life in their community depends on good quality surface and groundwater.

**75%** think that people near them would expect them to protect water quality.

**63.7%** would be willing to change their land management practices to improve water quality and quantity.

**56.8%** are eager to learn more about opportunities to address water quality issues in their communities.

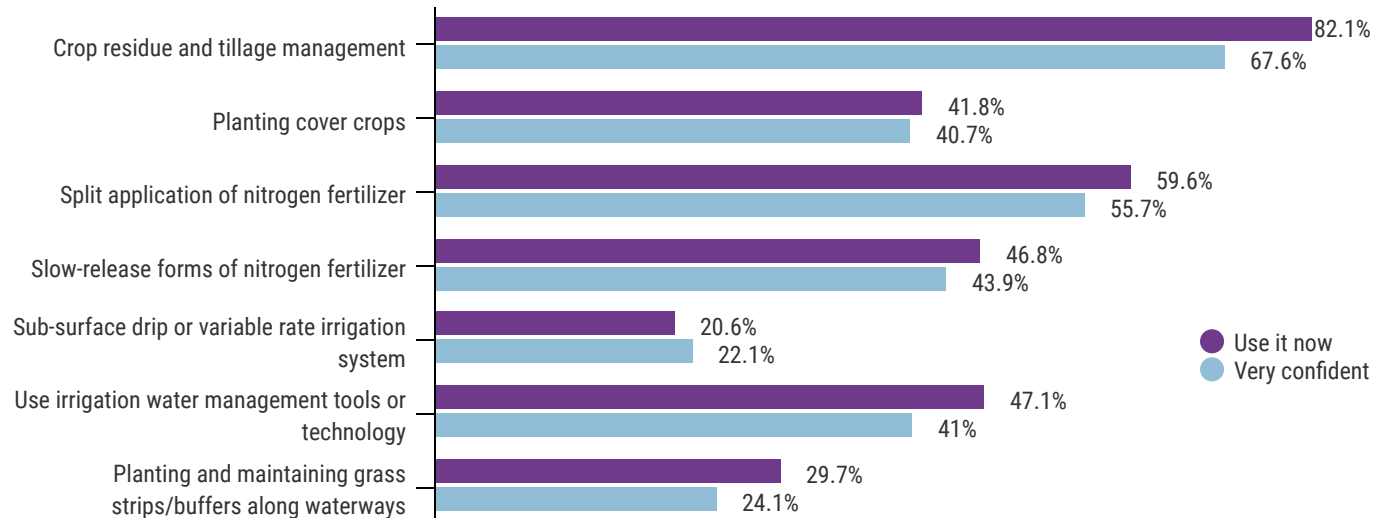
**50.6%** think investing in water quality protection puts local farms & businesses at an economic disadvantage.

**26%** think they are able to influence how local water quality and quantity issues are addressed.

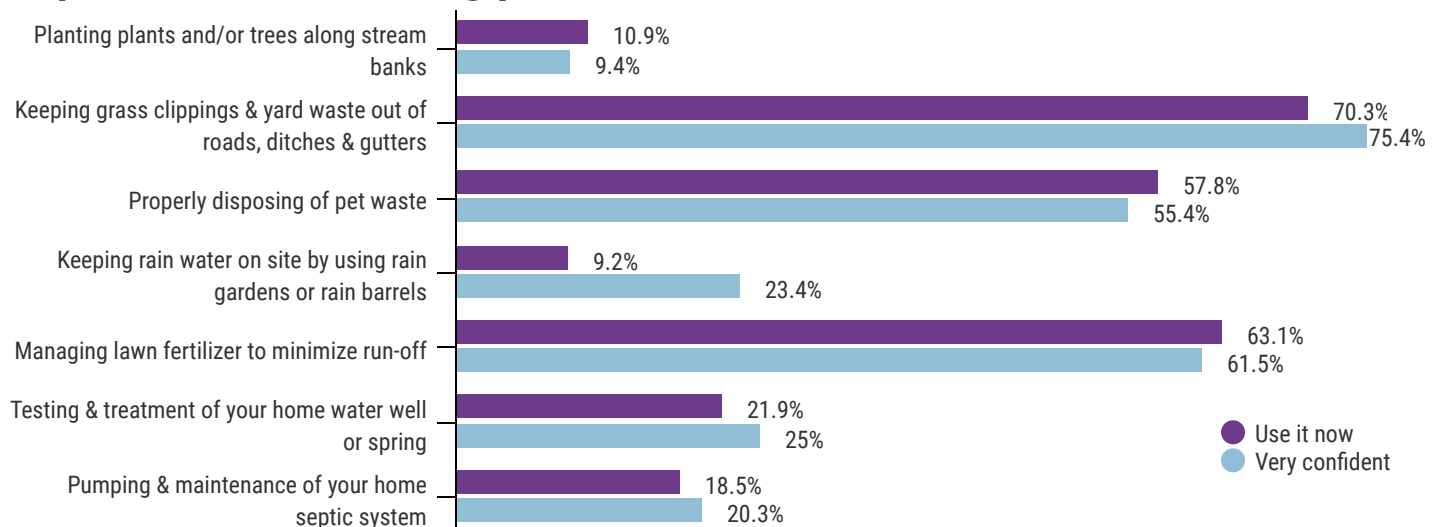
**13.1%** think that taking action to improve water quality is too expensive for them.

\* Results are a combined percentage of respondents who "agree" or "strongly agree" with the statement.

## Agricultural landowners' use of and confidence in their ability to implement the following practices\*:



## Residential landowners' use of and confidence in their ability to implement the following practices\*:



\* Results indicate the percentage of respondents who "use [the practice] now" and are "very confident" that [they] could use [the practice] on the majority of [their] fields/lawn in the next 1-3 years.

## Landowner-specific information



Total number of acres owned or leased by agricultural landowner respondents:

166,947



Average number of acres managed by agricultural landowner respondents:

1,620.85



% of agricultural landowners who have off-farm employment:

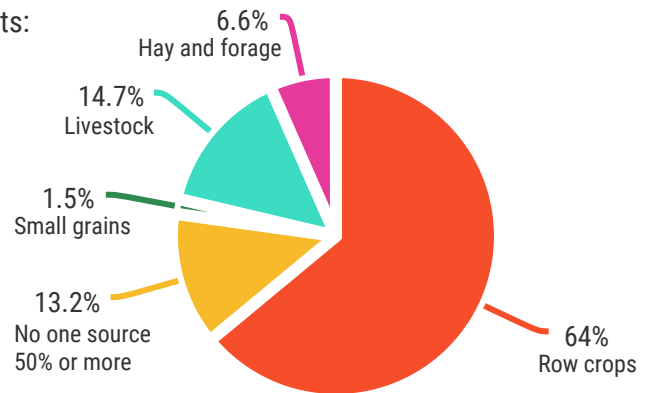
33.6%



Average approximate size of residential landowners' property (in acres)

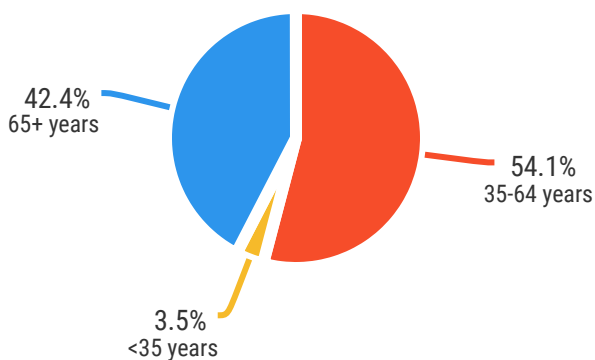
1/4 acre or less

Type of farm

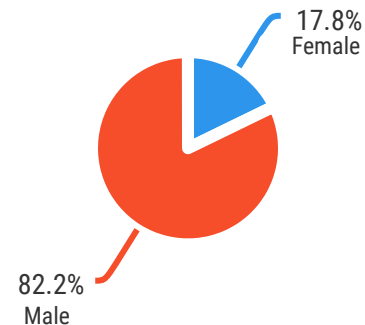


## Survey respondent demographics

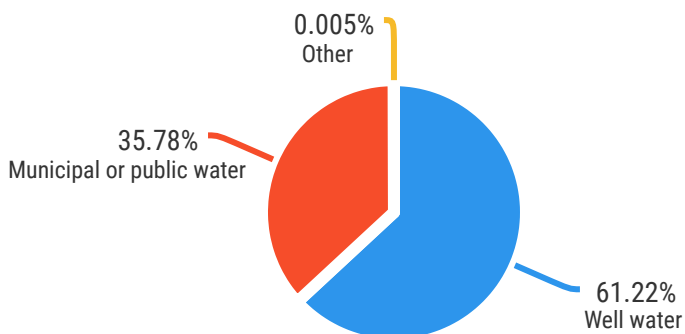
Age



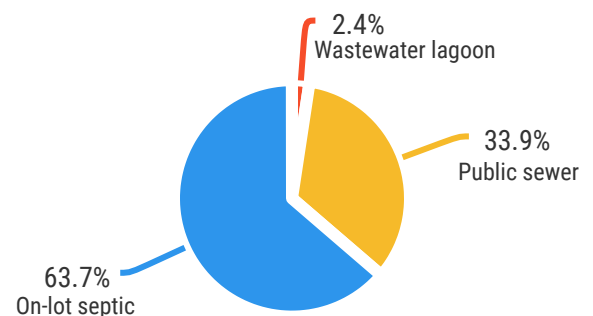
Gender



Type of drinking water source



Type of wastewater treatment



\*This summary report was designed by Hannah Whitley with assistance from Lydia Carey.

\*This study was led by the Penn State supported Water for Agriculture project in collaboration with local agencies and organizations. Project partners include Pennsylvania State University, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Arizona State University. Project funding was provided by the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Water for Agriculture grant no. 2017-68007-26584/project accession no. 1013079 from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. For more information about the study, contact Walt Whitmer at [wew2@psu.edu](mailto:wew2@psu.edu).