Purina and Farm Journal Intelligence Release Insights from Future American Farm Leaders on Regenerative Agriculture Perceptions & Key Adoption Barriers

New proprietary research finds that future farm leaders show strong interest in regenerative agriculture but need a better business case to turn interest into action

ST. LOUIS, Nov. 16, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- New research shows that the majority of future farm leaders are open to regenerative agriculture practices but looking for more proof that adoption will have a positive impact on their business. Farmers under age 45 are experienced decision-makers running large operations, yet they are less likely than older farmers to be enrolled in a regenerative or conservation agriculture program (46 percent of farmers under 45 vs. 54 percent of farmers over 45), according to new proprietary research commissioned by Nestlé Purina PetCare and conducted by Farm Journal Intelligence to better understand farmer sentiment toward regenerative agriculture practices.

The survey, which asked 510 U.S. farmers with at least 250 acres of corn, rice, soy or wheat about regenerative or conservation practices, found that although farmers of all ages and experience levels are adopting regenerative practices at similar rates, younger commercial row-crop farmers were somewhat more likely to say they adopted or continued some, but not all, or none of the regenerative practices they wanted to adopt this year (38 percent of farmers under 45 vs. 29 percent of farmers over 45), indicating there are obstacles to the realization of their goals.

The majority of U.S. producers surveyed reported positive views of regenerative agriculture practices (88 percent of producers under age 45 vs. 92 percent of producers over age 45). The research found that farmers of all ages show strong interest in specific conservation outcomes such as soil health, nutrient management and resilience to extreme weather. But if regenerative agriculture programs that support these practices do not fit the current realities of running an operation now, it may become harder to sustain younger farmers' participation and expand adoption over time.

For food-focused companies like Purina that depend on agricultural production, long-term farmer participation in regenerative practices is essential to building food system resilience. Understanding and supporting the business needs and priorities of farmers may help increase adoption of practices that will ultimately make their operations more sustainable.

"Regenerative agriculture scales most effectively when it delivers near-term value for farmers while supporting the long-term health of their operations," said Gopi Sandhu, vice president of sustainability at Purina. "Building lasting relationships and unlocking practical value for farmers, especially the next generation of farm decision-makers, is essential to achieve the food industry's long-term goals."

A clear farm-level business case can help turn interest into action

While lack of time was a key barrier for the 33 percent of surveyed farmers who did not add or continue regenerative methods, several near-term economic pressures can prompt farmers to reconsider their practices. Rising crop input prices and crop underperformance were each cited by 65 percent of all farmers surveyed as events that would make them seriously consider changing a practice, while 51 percent cited market drops.

Most notably, the research suggests that, for farmers weighing a change, evidence needs to be relevant to

Most notably, the research suggests that, for farmers weighing a change, evidence needs to be relevant to farm economics and provide a clear picture of how regenerative practices may affect their operations both in the near term and the years ahead. When asked to select the option that most closely reflects their view toward conservation agriculture practices, surveyed farmers chose the following perspectives:

- Nearly half of farmers (45 percent) say they adopt conservation practices when they can see a return on investment.
- More than one quarter (26 percent) of farmers surveyed prioritize conservation agriculture practices due to a moral obligation to be a good steward of natural resources.
- 12 percent take on conservation agriculture practices that offer their operation a competitive edge.
- Nine percent of farmers said they would be motivated by changes that offer new revenue streams.

For many, seeing case studies with clear business benefits and success stories from other farmers is key to moving them from interest into action. Forty-one percent of farmers report that seeing positive results from operations similar to their own would convince them to adopt or expand a conservation agriculture practice. Real-world examples from a variety of farm types can help show how specific practices affect input costs, yields and other farm outcomes. While seeing initial business impacts from others can help inform immediate decisions, having access to long-term results and learnings can help farmers assess potential implications for soil health, resilience and overall farm performance to drive sustained adoption of regenerative practices.

"Farmers are balancing their interest in regenerative and conservation practices with the realities of running an operation today, from uncertain markets to the cost of trying something new," said Emily Johannes, senior vice president of Farm Journal's Trust in Food™ initiative. "Purina's partnership in this research identifies the specific insights that help food and agriculture companies continue to tailor support around farmers' operational needs by focusing on the business benefits in addition to the benefits to the planet."

Centering farmer experiences can build confidence in regenerative practices

Farmers look to their peers when considering a new practice. Seventy percent of farmers said they try new practices only "after a handful of other farmers have done so," and peers were the most trusted source of advice across age groups. For farmers under 45, seeing results from operations similar to their own was a leading motivator for regenerative agriculture adoption.

These findings point to the value of sharing more detailed farmer experiences from a range of operations. Farm size may shape what is most useful: Among farmers who operate 4,000 acres or more, seeing results on their own test acreage was the top motivator for considering a conservation practice, ranking ahead of financial incentives.

"It's clear that farmers value many inputs, including seeing results from other operations like their own and learning from one another," said Kelsey Ryan, regenerative agriculture lead for Purina North America. "Adoption happens farm by farm. That's why Purina's approach to scaling regenerative agriculture leaves room for farmers to make decisions that feel right for their operation."

How Purina supports U.S. row-crop farmers through regenerative agriculture programs

The ingredients that nourish people and pets start on farms, making environmental health essential to a strong food system. Purina invests in programs that support row-crop farmers in the Midwest and Mississippi Delta as they transition to regenerative agriculture practices such as cover cropping, reduced

Mississippi Delta as they transition to regenerative agriculture practices such as cover cropping, reduced and no-till systems, crop rotation, nutrient management planning and alternate wetting and drying for rice.

To learn more about Purina's commitment to regenerative agriculture, visit purina.com.

About Nestlé Purina PetCare

Nestlé Purina PetCare creates richer lives for pets and the people who love them. Founded in 1894, Purina has helped dogs and cats live longer, healthier lives by offering scientifically based nutritional innovations.

Purina manufactures some of the world's most trusted and popular pet care products, including Purina ONE, Pro Plan, Friskies and Tidy Cats. Our more than 11,000 U.S. associates take pride in our trusted pet food, treat and litter brands that feed 46 million dogs and 68 million cats every year. Nearly 500 Purina scientists, veterinarians, and pet care experts ensure our commitment to unsurpassed quality and nutrition.

Over the past five years, Purina has contributed more than $150 million towards organizations that bring, and keep, people and pets together, as well as those that help our communities and environment thrive.

Purina is part of Nestlé, a global leader in Nutrition, Health and Wellness. For more information, visit purina.com or subscribe here to get the latest Purina news.

About the Research

Farm Journal's Intelligence group surveyed 510 U.S. farmers operating at least 250 acres of corn, rice, soy or wheat from Aug. 31 to Sept. 16, 2026, with the support of Purina as the sponsoring partner.

Farm Journal is the nation's leading business information and media company serving the agricultural market. The company serves the row crop, livestock, produce and retail sectors through branded websites, eNewsletters and phone apps; business magazines; live events including conferences and trade shows; nationally broadcast television and radio programs; and an array of data-driven, paid information products. Trust in Food™ is a Farm Journal initiative dedicated to accelerating the adoption of conservation practices and regenerative agriculture in ways that work for producers and enhance connection to consumers. For more information, visit farmjournal.com/segments-sustainability or farmjournal.com.

SOURCE Purina

For further information: Lindsey Shipley, lindsey.shipley@purina.nestle.com

---

Additional assets available online: Photos (3)