

4R Non-participant Survey

Code Book and Summary Statistics

May 2015

Abstract: During March 2015 nutrient service providers from Ohio, Indiana and Michigan who were not participating in the voluntary Western Lake Erie Basin 4R Nutrient Stewardship Certification Program were surveyed on their knowledge and attitude toward harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie as well as their expectations of the program should they choose to participate. Non-participants were asked about their estimated fixed and variable costs as well as the benefits they would expect as a result of their participation.

Notes:

Contact: Brian E. Roe, McCormick Professor, Department of AED Economics, Ohio State University.

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Note: The number of respondents (N) for each question is 8 unless otherwise noted.

Note: Variable names do not always correspond to the question number per Qualtrics output code.

Q1: Are you familiar with the 4R Nutrient Stewardship Certification Program for firms like yours that provide soil nutrients and related services to farmers?

1= Yes (75%)

0= No (25%)

Q2: Has your branch gone through a formal decision making process on whether or not to commit to the 4R Program?

1= Yes (25%)

0= No (75%)

Q3: If your branch were to commit to the 4R Program, how difficult does your branch anticipate commitment being?

1= Very Difficult (0%)

2= Difficult (25%)

3= Easy (62.5%)

4= Very Easy (12.5%)

Q4: Has your branch's future outlook (3-5 years) influenced your decision not to join the 4R Program?

1= Yes (0%)

0= No

Q5: If you answered 'yes' to the previous question, what is the primary factor associated with your 3-5 year outlook that has deterred your branch from adopting the 4R Program? (N=0)

Text response

Q6: How have other branch locations of your firm responded to the 4R Program?

1= All other branches have committed (0%)

2= Some but not all branches have committed (0%)

3= Not applicable- we are the only branch (75%)

4= No other branches have committed (25%)

5= Other (0%)

Q6_TEXT: Text answer for "other" response to Q6. (N=0)

Q8: How different are the guidelines and recommended practices of the 4R Program from those that your branch is currently using?

- 1= Identical (12.5%)
- 2= Very Similar (37.5%)
- 3= Somewhat Similar (12.5%)
- 4= Somewhat Different (12.5%)
- 5= Very Different (0%)
- 6= Not Sure (25%)

Q9: How **informed** would you say your branch is about the linkage between farm management practices and harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie?

- 1= Not Informed At All (0%)
- 2= Somewhat Informed (37.5%)
- 3= Very Informed (62.5%)

Q10: How **concerned** would you say your branch is about the linkage between farm management practices and harmful algal blooms in Lake Erie?

- 1= Not At All Concerned (0%)
- 2= Somewhat Concerned (37.5%)
- 3= Very Concerned (62.5%)

Q11: If your branch were to commit to the 4R Program, what impact do you predict your decision will have on the following:

	Negative Impact	No Impact	Positive Impact
Q11_1: Current Client List	1 (25%)	2 (62.5%)	3 (12.5%)
Q11_2: Ability to Attract New Clients	1 (12.5%)	2 (75%)	3 (12.5%)
Q11_3: Total Number of Clients	1 (25%)	2 (62.5%)	3 (12.5%)

Q12: How important would the following factors be in the decision making process that would determine whether or not your branch committed to the 4R Program? Mark the box that is most applicable for each factor listed:

	Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Important	Not Applicable
Q12_1: Finances	1 (12.5%)	2 (25%)	3 (62.5%)	4 (0%)
Q12_2: Corporate Social Responsibility	1 (0%)	2 (25%)	3 (75%)	4 (0%)
Q12_3: Managing Impending Regulations	1 (0%)	2 (0%)	3 (100%)	4 (0%)
Q12_4: Other (N=1)	1	2	3	4 (100%)

Q12_4_TEXT: Text answer for “other” response to Q12_4.

Q13: Does your branch think the three-year progression of responsibilities for firms committed to the 4R Program is: (N=7)

- 1= Too Short (28.6%)
- 2= About Right (71.4%)
- 3= Too Long (0%)

Q14: Would your branch prefer to participate in a voluntary program like the 4R Program to help curb nutrient runoff as an alternative to a government regulated program?

- 1= Yes (75%)
- 2= No (0%)
- 3= Not Sure (25%)

Q15: Which statement best reflects your branch’s views?

"Government regulations similar to those of the 4R program will..."

- 1= Be implemented if the 4R Program is successful (0%)
- 2= Be implemented if the 4R Program is unsuccessful (25%)
- 3= Be implemented regardless of the success of the 4R Program (62.5%)
- 4= Not be implemented regardless of the success of the 4R Program (12.5%)

Q16: About what percent of clients receive nutrient recommendations from you as part of the goods and services you provide to them?

Average = 62.56%, Median = 75%

Q17: How much influence does your firm's nutrient recommendations have on the practices of your clients?

- 1= Very Influential (50%)
- 2= Somewhat Influential (50%)
- 3= Not Very Influential (0%)
- 4= No Influence (0%)

Q18: Would your branch encourage other nutrient service suppliers to enroll in the 4R Program?

- 1= Yes (50%)
- 2= No (0%)
- 3= Not Sure (50%)

Q19: If your branch were to commit to the 4R Program, what change in operating costs would you envision would be associated with the 4R Program?

- 1= Large Increase (0%)
- 2= Small Increase (75%)
- 3= No change (25%)

Q20: If your branch were to commit to the 4R Program, by what percent does your branch envision operating costs will change on average during the following time periods?

	Average Percent Change (%)	N
Q20_1: During the 1st year of commitment	Average = 22.4%, Median = 10%	5
Q20_2: During the 2nd year of commitment	Average = 13%, Median = 10%	5
Q20_3: During the 3rd year of commitment	Average = 10.6%, Median = 10%	5
Q20_4: In years 4 and beyond	Average = 9.2%, Median = 10%	5

Q21_1: If you do expect higher operating costs, do you anticipate these higher costs materializing in Employee Training? (N=6)

- 1= Yes (100%)
- 2= No

Q21_2: If you do expect higher operating costs, do you anticipate these higher costs materializing in Additional Administrative Expenses? (N=6)

- 1= Yes (100%)
- 2= No

Q21_3: If you do expect higher operating costs, do you anticipate these higher costs materializing in New Software/Computers in House? (N=6)

- 1= Yes (16.67%)
- 2= No

Q21_4: If you do expect higher operating costs, do you anticipate these higher costs materializing in New Equipment for Operations? (N=6)

- 1= Yes (33.33%)
- 2= No

Q21_5: If you do expect higher operating costs, do you anticipate these higher costs materializing in New Staff? (N=6)

- 1= Yes (0%)
- 2= No (100%)

Q21_6: If you do expect higher operating costs, do you anticipate these higher costs materializing in Other? (N=6)

- 1= Yes (0%)
- 2= No (100%)

Q21_6_TEXT: Text answer for “other” response to Q21_6. (N=6)

Q22: Beyond any necessary price increases for your services, how do you think that the typical farmer's production costs will change if they fully implement recommendations from a 4R certified nutrient service provider?

- 1= Costs will increase (37.5%)
- 2= Costs will decrease (25%)
- 3= No change in farmers' production costs (37.5%)

Q23: For farmers who strictly follow the recommendations of firms committed to the 4R Program rather than recommendations of firms who are not committed to the 4R Program, do you think crop yields would be...?

- 1= Lower (12.5%)
- 2= About the Same (75%)
- 3= Higher (12.5%)

Q24: How does your branch anticipate public perception of the agriculture sector will change as a result of nutrient service providers **committing** to the 4R Program?

- 1= Improve (62.5%)
- 2= Worsen (0%)
- 3= Stay the Same (37.5%)

Q25: How does your branch anticipate public perception of the agriculture sector will change as a result of nutrient service providers **choosing not to commit** to the 4R Program?

- 1= Improve (12.5%)
- 2= Worsen (25%)
- 3= Stay the Same (62.5%)

Q26: If your branch were to commit to the 4R Program, what kind of impact would you anticipate this having on harmful algal bloom (HAB) occurrences and the overall health of the Western Lake Erie Basin?

- 1= Positive Impact (37.5%)
- 2= Negative Impact (0%)
- 3= No Impact (62.5%)

Q27: How likely is it that farmers will benefit in each of the following categories if they hire a firm that **has** committed to the 4R Program, as opposed to hiring a firm like yours that **has not** committed?

	Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
Q27_1: Experience improved operational efficiencies	1 (0%)	2 (62.5%)	3 (37.5%)	4 (0%)
Q27_2: Improve their reputation in the community	1 (0%)	2 (12.5%)	3 (87.5%)	4 (0%)
Q27_3: Be able to meet regulatory obligations if their watershed is designated as 'distressed'	1 (0%)	2 (12.5%)	3 (62.5%)	4 (25%)
Q27_4: Help reduce the odds of future farm-level regulations	1 (12.5%)	2 (25%)	3 (50%)	4 (12.5%)

Q29: For each of the following reasons, how likely is it that a farmer might choose an uncertified nutrient service provider like your firm over a 4R certified competitor?

	Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely
Q29_1: Uncertified firms can be more flexible in the timing of nutrient applications	1 (0%)	2 (25%)	3 (62.5%)	4 (12.5%)
Q29_2: Uncertified firms have less paperwork that needs to be filled out by farmers	1 (0%)	2 (37.5%)	3 (50%)	4 (12.5%)
Q29_3: Uncertified firms can charge a lower price	1 (0%)	2 (37.5%)	3 (37.5%)	4 (25%)

Q30: If your branch were to commit to the 4R Program, does your branch envision that the 4R Program would be more likely to:

- 1= Streamline your business practices (12.5%)
- 2= Complicate your business practices (50%)
- 3= Have no substantial effect on business practices (37.5%)

Q33: How many full time equivalent (FTE) employees does your branch currently have?

Average = 11.38
Median = 10

Q31: How many years has your branch been in business?

Average = 38.13

Median = 37.5

Q32: How many branch locations does your company have?

1= Single branch (75%)

2= Between 2 and 5 branches (25%)

3= More than 5 branches (0%)

VAR65: What is the legal organization of the company your branch belongs to?

1= Cooperative (25%)

2= Private corporation (75%)

3= Public corporation (0%)

4= Other (0%)

Q36_TEXT: Text answer for “other” response to VAR65. (N=0)

VAR67: Which counties are your branch's clients located in?

Shelby, Darke, Van Wert, Auglaize, Allen, Paulding, Mercer, Wayne, Holmes, Ashland, Richland, Morrow, Knox, Huron, Lawrence, Crawford, Butler (PA), Licking, Coshocton

Q34: In the last fiscal year, how many acres of farmland did your branch service? (N=6)

Average = 45,833

Median = 32,500

Q35: In the last fiscal year, for these farm land acres, what was your branch’s estimated:

	Average	Median	N
Q35_1_1_TEXT: Gross Revenues (\$)	5 million	6.25 million	4
Q35_2_1_TEXT: Total Costs (\$)	2.25 million	2.25 million	2