

APPENDIX B

Findings from Southern Illinois Farming Survey Farmer Comments on Dixon Springs Agricultural Center

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Findings are based on 194 surveys returned from farmers across 20 counties in Southern Illinois during April and May 2007. Further analysis of survey data is ongoing.

On the importance of Dixon Springs Agricultural Center:

One survey question asked, “How important is the Dixon Springs Agricultural Center to farming and land management in Southern Illinois?” Possible answers ranged from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important).

3.8% indicated “1” (not important)
4.8% indicated “2”
14.0% indicated “3”
29.6% indicated “4”
47.8% indicated “5” (very important)
Mean = 4.13 (range 1-5).

The majority of farmers surveyed (74.4%) indicated that DSAC was important to very important (4-5) to Southern Illinois farming and land management.

Perceptions from Southern Illinois Farmers

The following quotes sum up the overwhelming response we are hearing from Southern Illinois farmers:

“DSAC is integral part of community and region which provides resources and support that would otherwise be inaccessible to residents.”

“[DSAC is] more important than any other thing for Ag in southern IL.”

“The Dixon Springs Ag Center has done more for Pope, Hardin, and Johnson counties than any other entity in Southern IL.”

“The Dixon Springs Agricultural Center is important to all of Southern Illinois counties.”

Key Findings:

There are three key dimensions that are clear from the farming surveys returned to date:

- 1) DSAC provides important information on variety trials and best practices
- 2) DSAC's location in Southern Illinois is critical
- 3) DSAC is a valued resource for information, education, and help for area farmers.

We have included all quotes, including negative or indifferent statements.

The sections below include the raw data (quotes) from the farming surveys.

Information on variety trials and best practices

Variety trials are important to me when it comes to selection

They can try out new methods of farming than I can decide what I need to do after seeing the results

Ag center is a unbiased supply of information on trails that pertain to S. IL as soil types and climate that are unique to any other soils and climate conditions in the state

most of the research done there has been on livestock and fruits and veg.

No-till research in crop production has been very beneficial to Southern Ill farmers. Also, beef cattle research is valued by beef producers

To find out what plants and/or varieties are best for this area

We have to experiment to have new varieties in all things, also to mix different varieties to make better tasting vegetables and stronger plant and disease free

Field days and cattle results informative

We have to experiment to have new varieties in all things, also to mix different varieties to make better tasting vegetables and stronger plant and disease free

To prove what practices work in that area

Research in fertility, insecticides, pesticides, crop management, crop varieties, herbicides

They have also given information on field trials and newest varieties.

Real world trials for area.

I like to look at the yield and herbicide trials to my area. Dixon Springs does a good job wheat variety trials and I look at those every year

I believe the agricultural practices, in both livestock and fruits/vegetables, tested at DSAC are very important for our area for small and larger operations such as myself that intend to supplement our retirement income with something other than row-crop farming

We are able to gain valuable information and harvest of produce to purchase

Local research and information is respected and we use in our beef herd on a regular basis. Also rotational grazing studies and new hay types are used in our farm because of Dixon Springs Station.

Very good source of information esp beef production and crop varieties performance and herbicide trials

I grow grapes, if I have a new bug or problem I call the small fruits people at the ag center for information

Some times they have a new idea that is helpful

Dixon Springs grows varieties that we can see & check on, and they answer any question we ask.

animal and crop production is what we live by and their experimentation allows us to try new things

Information gained from data provided help to plan for future operation

Research for all kind of crops and livestock variety and yield plots for all crops for southern IL. Pesticide plots that the farmer can see and evaluate on field days.

They do trials that are implemented in and not in my farming operation. Although some information is direct, most comes from secondhand

Have adopted several practices from DSAC no till some early weaning, herbicide recommendations, fertility practices. It is a good place to get info on breaking ag practices in the local area

They do a lot of practical experiments in my local area. This way I know that I can apply some of these ideas to my local farm plan to help increase my production

Our farm uses the research information on Beef Production, Hay Production, and Row Crops regularly. The AI studies and early weaning studies are very useful.

Local research and information is respected and we use in our beef herd on a regular basis. Also rotational grazing studies and new hay types are used in our farm because of Dixon Springs Station.

Southern Illinois context important

Provide services and information specific to our area

I feel that local geographic research is vital to the area that it services. Data from northern IL do not apply to southern IL

They do research for southern IL crops and livestock.

Dixon Springs Ag Center has in the past provided and continues to provide information which is more in tune to our southern Illinois farming environment.

Value and impact lies in both quality research and important interaction with So. Illinois producers who wouldn't be reached otherwise. Diversity of ag research from livestock to fruit to row crops is essential in our unique climate/region. This facility must not only be maintained, but also expanded to meet additional needs in this region related to value, addition, marketing, and product development.

Soils and climate match that of local area. Close to our area makes field days easier to attend. Cropping practices closely match those used in local area.

The soil and climate in southern Illinois is not the same as other research areas

It is an excellent resource for information pertinent to southern IL, not central or northern IL.

Research that comes from the DSAC are more accurate to our local conditions

Research is needed to see how well plants will grow in the area

Research in local environment

Southern Illinois needs research based locally not 150-175 miles away

Soils, rainfall patterns, weed species and seasonal weather at DSAC are more in line than other research stations in IL

Information from Dixon Springs is locally generated and valuable

Has similar soils and weather conditions

It is the most important research facility for agriculture in Southern Illinois

It is a real help to have this kind of active research being done that is both accessible and applicable in southern Illinois

The research they do practically takes place in my backyard and I find this very helpful in my farming operation

Because of soil type (clay) and climate (hot). Information availability

The info is vital to southern IL producers. Most research at the university or other sites is not applicable to our soils, plus Dixon Springs has the oldest no till plot in the state. We in southern IL feel the university doesn't see us as an important role in Illinois agriculture; only central and northern IL.

because it is in our local climate and circumstances

They can do research on the types of soil we have in our area.

The soil types are different down here, but with the right research and management practice our views are just as good as the central part of the state. No till started at DSAC.

Dixon Springs is the closest in research to what we face in our area. Most other places are so far away that the research in no good to us. We plant 116-120 day corn and let 4 to group 5 soybeans. The weed species and pest are different. Double crop soybeans are very important etc.

The ag center does a lot of research on plants and livestock that is usual in this area. The information from the center is critical to the economic growth of the entire area.

Where will answers to research questions come from? this area is different than central IL (u of i)

Research done at Dixon Springs is on soil and ground types totally different from research done in central and northern Illinois. Farming in central and northern Illinois is totally different from the southern part of Illinois

The research at Dixon Springs is very important because of climate, soil type, insect pressures than other parts of the state. New techniques and advances are being made in agriculture it would be a major loss to southern Illinois without Dixon Springs

R and D fits in very well with our soil types

Studies an Urbana, or "up north," usually do not pertain to deep Southern Illinois

The soils and weather conditions are more appropriate to southern Illinois than at U of I at Urbana

To have research facility in southern Illinois.

The center works with land that is like mine.

My "community" is not like central IL, Dixon Springs 1st to have no till.

Dixon Springs is the only extension center which compares to our farm in climate and soil types.

Dixon Springs was the location of some of the earliest work in no-till crop production. Research done further north has limited use in applying to our area. Dixon Springs presents one of the few visible signs of the University of Illinois in this part of the state.

I think it is very important to have long term research in my area, on comparable soils and climate. Central IL is a whole different geography and climate then southern IL.

Dixon Springs Research has both upland and bottomland ground soils, like so many other S IL counties, including ours. That makes its results much more applicable to our area than research at Brownstown or Urbana or even Carbondale

In the past I relied on DS research cattle and sheep

They conduct experiments on the same type farming done in So. IL and that I do. Their information is very beneficial in making decisions on my farming operation.

To prove what practices work in that area

Research done in Southern Illinois is more relevant to my crop production than that done elsewhere.

Dixon Springs has the soil and climate that better matches our farm.

Key source of information/education/help

*without these services the education and knowledge would not be available as easy
It is the most important research facility for agriculture in Southern Illinois*

May help new farm without family support. But why would anybody want to be a farmer if you could buy a farm.

It provides a unique educational opportunity and resource to all of So. IL

The workshops are well attended. The research farm is well run and the personnel are informed and go out of their way to help southern IL residents no matter how large or small their operation is.

I farm in deep Southern Illinois-Dixon Springs is the only U of I Agriculture center doing research of crops that I grow. Ron Hines does a great job getting information out to farmers

It represents farming techniques for Southern Ill

They can train in the field instead of a lab or computer matrix. They do real research.

I ready horses, the grazing seminars have greatly improved the usefulness of my rented ground, also educated me to science as agility. I did not learn as sciences or take them in school. Its never to late to learn.

I grow grapes, if I have a new bug or problem I call the small fruits people at the ag center for information

When I had a truck patch it was very important to me

We need it for jobs in the area and for the education

Only place to get factual information

past history-no-till, have used beef info

Have learned more about no-till practices and sustainable farming

They have the time and expertise to do research on grain production and pest control. Thus learning the procedure from that.

I find it very educational attending these conferences

Over a 40 year career DSAC has been one of the principal if not the primary sources of information we used in managing a large grain and livestock operation

Have adopted several practices from DSAC no till some early weeding, herbicide recommendations, fertility practices. It is a good place to get info on breaking ag practices in the local area

They do a lot of practical experiments in my local area. This way I know that I can apply some of these ideas to my local farm plan to help increase my production

*Anytime I find a bug or mold I can call Bronwyn Aly if I can't describe it. She'll come over and look. She's also very helpful with her knowledge on vine training and pruning.
good cattle programs
non-biased research*

I believe they get credit for no-till. Field days are interesting, but it seems not the complete answer. Agronomy personnel excellent but very difficult to reach and limited time- no work conference for me. Can there be leadership for getting small farmers into joint cooperative production enterprises instead of govt subsidy because it is in our local climate and circumstances

It could serve as a leading vehicle for agricultural development marketing and other brochure... I'm not sure it has up to now, but the option is there

The information and training programs have been helpful

It could serve as a leading vehicle for agricultural development marketing and other brochure...im not sure it has up to now, but the option is there

In the past I relied on DS research cattle and sheep

The research done on cattle is very important to me

May help new farm without family support. But why would anybody want to be a farmer if you could buy a farm.

The Ag Center has played a major role in forestry, which is my main line of work. Their leadership in fruits, berries, and vegetables is also very important

Could provide a very important leadership role to diversity AG production such as organic production in grains, vegetables, chickens, etc.

Have learned more about no-till practices and sustainable farming value and impact lies in both quality research and important interaction with Southern Illinois producers who wouldn't be reached otherwise. diversity of ag research from livestock to fruit to row crops is essential in our unique climate/region. This facility must not only be maintained, but also expanded to meet additional needs in this region related to value, addition, marketing, and product development

Can go there or call anytime and get information that is of vital importance in what you are growing or what you are thinking of growing. Over the years they have went out of their way to be accommodating.

*Exceptional research on cattle management and production. *Frank Ireland*!!*

Frank Ireland has research projects which help with my strategies (costs/profits), farm materials, cattle efficiency, forage material, up-to-date trends both national and international. Frank is very willing to help the cattlemen!

Some information obtained by field trips and surveys and by mail

I get update on cattle tagging and sprat dope also go there for ant problem on the farm.

Attend all available workshops and field days. At dixon springs, contact specialists if any questions arise

Research and employment for Southern IL residents.

Without these services the education and knowledge would not be available or as easy

I enjoy the visits to Dixon Springs. i like the cattle research and fruit research. I have learned very many things from the Dixon Springs Ag Research.

Our farm uses the research information on Beef Production, Hay Production, and Row Crops regularly. The AI studies and early weaning studies are very useful.

I am interested in info from grape growing

I have visited the site and viewed their practices

Any unbiased research is important

I use their research work-very useful information

Observe practices at Dixon Springs

The workshops are well attended. The research farm is well run and the personnel are informed and go out of their way to help southern IL residents no matter how large or small their operation is.

Dixon Springs is on the cutting edge and is so helpful to farmers through their meetings, phone calls, and general information

They can train in the field instead of a lab or computer matrix. They do real research. information from Dixon Springs is locally generated and valuable

I really like the field day. I haven't used any other resources because I don't know what is offered.

Employees of Dixon Spring come to speak at grape workshops.

The results of research and answers to my questions are helpful. You can give them a call and usually get an answer to your question.

Dixon Springs does not affect me too much directly but a lot of your research filters down such as the early days of no-till

Good cattle programs

Because of the need for more research in difficult area of agriculture

Very important especially the programs on cattle management etc.

We rely on DSAC to answer our questions and provide us with in G through their field days, special programs, and availability of their staff.

The information from the research performed at DSAC is quite valuable. However, losses in recent years, of lands used for research, as well as losses in key personnel, may preclude further research.

Very important for maintaining good farming practices and profitability.

I observe practices at Dixon Springs

The research done on cattle is very important to me

There are a lot of new feed stuff and alternative feeds we need information about also I just attended a Artificial Insemination class at Dixon Springs in April which was very informative.

Could provide a very important leadership role to diversity AG production such as organic production in grains, vegetables, chickens, etc.

I went 2 times or 3 in the last 5 years. 1 time for my grapevines and one for my strawberries and questions about gardening

You get to see hands on

The Agricultural Center is a good source of information on: pasture improvement, spraying, land management, and livestock production

Negative or indifferent comments

Never heard of it

They haven't done a darn thing interesting in the last 15 years. Or they keep to themselves.

Didn't know it existed. don't know what it is

SIU research on the farm study and practices are more practical

We need more information

The information from the research performed at DSAC is quite valuable. However, losses in recent years, of lands used for research, as well as losses in key personnel, may preclude further research.

I have not been involved with the center

What is it?

Too far away from me.

I have only minor knowledge about Dixon Springs

I am not aware of much research info pertinent to my operation that originated from DSAC. The forest resource center has not really functioned as a source of forestry related info for several years.

Unfortunately, I receive no information unless I read about Dixon Springs in the newspaper, I have no concept of what happens. Also, I have listened to several presentations from D.S. staff, but I never knew about visitations or other projects. Give it to S.I.U., I think they will provide better services to So. IL

about all the things they do, we already do

We grow grapes in southern IL. Most of our support comes from Brad Taylor at SIU

There is lots of other interesting research that could be down here.

Do not get much info from Dixon Springs

No experience with them – can't really say