

IOWA FARMER DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY

Trust Psychology + Right Incentives = Data for Cargill

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IOWA FARMER PSYCHOLOGY

Why they hide crop data

#	Factor	Description
1	Neighbor competition	If a neighbor knows your yield, they know how you're doing. Crop data = salary.
2	Fear of price manipulation	"If Cargill knows my yield, they'll lower the purchase price." Grain buyer = potential adversary.
3	Distrust of corporations	Cargill = Big Ag. Farmers have seen data used against them (insurance, loans, land prices).
4	Cultural tradition of secrecy	Father didn't share, grandfather didn't share. "None of your business" is a Midwest cultural norm.
5	Tech skepticism	Average Iowa farmer age is 57. Forms, apps, logins = barriers they don't want to deal with.
6	No time	Harvest season = 16-hour days. Any survey = "leave me alone."

1 TROJAN HORSE — GIVE BEFORE YOU ASK

Reciprocity principle: people give to those who gave first

A) Free Weather + Soil Dashboard

Offer farmers a **free app** with weather forecasts, soil moisture, GDD (Growing Degree Days) for their county. After 2-3 weeks of use, **gently ask for data**: "To improve forecasts for YOUR field, tell us what you grow." **Key**: Data is collected gradually, in small portions — not all at once.

[Reciprocity] | [Requires development]

B) Benchmark Report — "How You Compare to Your County"

Top currency: **"How much are neighbors getting?"** Farmers are dying of curiosity but will never ask a neighbor directly. Offer: **"Enter your yield and get an anonymous report: your yield vs county/state average."** **Psychology**: Curiosity > Privacy. People give data to learn how they compare.

[Curiosity gap] | [STRONGEST TECHNIQUE]

C) Free Profit Calculator

Simple tool: **enter yield + acres + input costs and see P&L per acre, break-even price, optimal sell time**. Farmer enters real data for themselves; we **aggregate it anonymously**. They get value, we get data. **Bonus**: Calculator from Cargill = Cargill as helper, not enemy.

[Utility exchange] | [Win-win]

2 SOCIAL PROOF & COMMUNITY

Farmers do what other farmers do

A) County Leaderboard (Anonymous)

"Polk County: 47 farmers already shared. Story County: 23." Competition between counties. Farmers don't want to be the "lagging county." Neighboring county already participates = FOMO. **Reward:** County with most participation gets a free agronomy seminar from Cargill.

[FOMO + Competition] | [Community reward]

B) Local Champions (Ambassadors)

Hire **5-10 respected farmers** (retired, Farm Bureau leaders) as Ambassadors. Pay \$500/month. They visit neighbors in person: **"I already filled it out. Here's my report. You should try it too."** **Key:** A farmer trusts a neighbor, not a corporation. Peer-to-peer works 5x better than cold outreach.

[Trust transfer] | [MUST HAVE]

C) Coffee Mornings at the Elevator

Once a month — **free breakfast** at the Cargill elevator. Coffee, donuts, market update from an analyst. At the end: **"Help us help you — fill out this 3-minute survey on the tablet while you have your coffee."** Tablet with the form. Staff member nearby to help. Barrier = 0.

[Face-to-face] | [Free food]

3 INDIRECT COLLECTION — DATA WITHOUT ASKING

The best data = data you don't have to ask for

A) Satellite + USDA Open Data

USDA CropScape — free satellite data: which crop on which field, county-level yield estimates. **NASS Quick Stats** — yield by county, planted acreage. **No farmer consent needed.** Supplement with surveys for ground truth.

[\[Public data\]](#) | [\[Free\]](#)

B) Cargill Elevator Data (Internal)

Cargill ALREADY HAS data! Every delivery = **ticket, weight, moisture, grade, date, farmer.** Need: aggregate delivery data by county/season. **80% of needed information is already in the system.** Survey only needed for: acres, challenges, sell plans (what's not in delivery data).

[\[START HERE\]](#) | [\[Internal data\]](#)

C) Grain Bid as Bait

Mobile page with **live grain prices from nearby elevators.** Farmers check prices every day. To get **personalized bid alerts**, they must specify: what they grow, volume, county. **Farmer voluntarily gives data** in exchange for prices. Not a survey — a service.

[\[Value exchange\]](#) | [\[Daily engagement\]](#)

4 INCENTIVES — WHAT WORKS IN THE MIDWEST

A farmer won't fill out a form for a "thank you"

A) \$25 Casey's Gift Card

Casey's General Store — gas stations + pizza, in every Iowa small town. Better than Amazon for farmers. Fill out survey = get \$25 at Casey's. **Conversion: 40-60%** (proven by analogues). Budget: 1,000 farmers x \$25 = **\$25K** — pocket change for Cargill.

[Direct reward] | [Locally relevant]

B) Big Prize Drawing

"Fill out the survey and enter to win a John Deere Gator (UTV, ~\$15K)." Or: 1 year free seed treatment, or \$5K toward input costs. Combine: \$25 Casey's (guaranteed) + chance at a Gator (excitement).

[Lottery effect] | [High perceived value]

C) Premium Pricing for Data

"Program participants receive +\$0.02/bu premium when selling at Cargill elevators." On 50K bu of corn = \$1,000 bonus. **That's real money.** Cargill gets loyal supplier + data. Farmer gets better price. **Most powerful long-term incentive.**

[KILLER INCENTIVE] | [Financial]

5 COMMUNICATION RULES

How to talk — and how NOT to talk — to a farmer

DO
+ "Help us help Iowa agriculture" — common good, not Cargill
+ "Your data is anonymous" — always emphasize anonymity
+ "Takes 3 minutes" — always state exact time
+ Show social proof: "47 farmers in your county already participated"
+ Give first: report, calculator, forecast — then ask
+ Ask little: 5-7 questions max. Each extra question = -15% conversion
+ Ask for ranges: "100-200 ac" instead of exact numbers. Less scary.
+ SMS-first: farmers read texts. They ignore email.

DON'T
- DON'T say "Cargill wants to know your yield" — sounds like surveillance
- DON'T ask for SSN, exact address, or financial data
- DON'T make long forms — more than 8 questions = abandonment
- DON'T send email-only — 70% of farmers don't check email regularly
- DON'T use corporate language: "data collection," "survey," "compliance"
- DON'T require login/signup — instant loss of 80% of audience
- DON'T call during harvest season (Sept-Nov) — farmer isn't home and is angry
- DON'T share data by name — a leak = end of the program forever

6 CONVERSION FUNNEL

Realistic numbers for Iowa

Stage	Count	Conversion
Total farms in Iowa (USDA Census)	~85,000	
Farms in target 10 counties	~25,000	Top corn/soy counties
Received SMS / learned about program	~15,000	60% have mobile on file
Opened the link	~6,700	SMS open rate ~45%
Completed the survey	~2,700	Completion 40% (w/ \$25)
+ elevator events + ambassadors		+800-1,300
TOTAL TARGET	~3,500-4,000	Realistic target

7 READY-TO-USE SCRIPTS

What to write and say

SMS (First Contact)

"Hey [Name], this is [Ambassador] from [County]. Iowa State + Cargill are putting together a crop report for our area. Takes 3 min, you get a free county yield comparison + \$25 Casey's card. No login needed: [link]. 47 folks in [County] already did it."

Elevator Event (In Person)

"Morning! Grab some coffee. Hey, we're doing a quick thing - trying to get a picture of how the season went around here. Just 6 questions on this iPad. Everything's anonymous - no names attached. You get to see how [County] compares to the rest of the state. Want to give it a shot?"

Phone (Follow-up, Ambassador)

"Hey [Name], it's [Bob] - yeah, from down the road. Listen, I did this quick crop survey thing, took me like two minutes. They show you how your county stacks up yield-wise - kinda interesting actually. You got a sec? I can walk you through it right now on your phone. Or I'll just text you the link."

Flyer at Co-op / Elevator

"HOW DOES YOUR FARM STACK UP? Take the 3-min Iowa Crop Survey. Get your FREE County Yield Report + \$25 Casey's Gift Card. Anonymous | No login | Phone-friendly. Scan QR or text FARM to 55555. Powered by Iowa State Extension & Cargill Agricultural Partners."

8 LAUNCH TIMELINE

Period	Phase	Actions	Target
Month 1	Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalize survey form (7 questions max) - Hire 5 ambassadors in key counties - Prepare Casey's gift cards - Get SMS list via Farm Bureau / FSA - Build benchmark report template 	
Month 2-3	Soft Launch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Launch in 3 counties (Polk, Story, Black Hawk) - Coffee events at 2-3 elevators - SMS blast (batch 1: 3,000) - Ambassadors begin peer outreach 	500
Month 4-6	Scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expand to 10 counties - Launch benchmark report (viral loop) - Grain bid alerts service - County leaderboard - Best timing: Jan-March (post-harvest, pre-planting) 	3,500+

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Benchmark Report** — the most powerful technique. Curiosity > Privacy.
2. **Local Ambassadors** — peer-to-peer trust is 5x stronger than any corporate outreach.
3. **+\$0.02/bu premium** — real money, long-term loyalty.
4. **Start with internal data** — 80% of the info already exists at Cargill elevators.
5. **Timing** — launch Jan-March (post-harvest, pre-planting).
6. **SMS-first** — no email, no logins, no long forms.