

Asking the Right Demographic Questions

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CenUSA's Extension and Outreach (Objective 9) serves as the project's link to the larger community of agricultural and horticultural producers, industry leaders, and the general public. We also have a responsibility to those educators who are charged with acquainting these audiences with issues surrounding the production of biomass for biofuel purposes. Multiple activities and events are planned to demonstrate various biomass production and processing concepts, concerns and benefits. To see how successful the project's outreach efforts are, we will survey these audiences to measure their increased awareness or knowledge regarding the:

- Production, harvest, storage, and transportation of perennial grasses suited for biofuel
- Social, environmental and community implications
- Benefits of biochar as a soil amendment

Because the project's outreach evaluations are focused on improving our educational efforts and assessing the educational objectives, it is not necessary to gather much personal data from audiences. Only general information pertinent to their occupations (producer/educator/industry),

Please select your age range.

- 18-29 years old
- 30-49 years old
- 50-64 years old
- 65 years and over

Please estimate the number of people you will reach with this information.

- 0
- 1 to 10
- 11 to 50
- 51 to 100
- 101 to 500
- more than 500

sphere of influence (multiplier effect), scope of production (acreage), and range of age have value for reporting findings. In this way, summaries can be made describing the type of person interested in biofuels as a potential energy source.

Being consistent in the way we ask demographic questions should allow us to aggregate this kind of data across numerous outreach events, which will enrich project summaries.

Putting questions related to what was learned at the start of a survey ensures respondents will be fresh when answering those important issues, thereby avoiding survey fatigue. Whenever possible, demographic questions should be placed near the end of surveys as they may be considered tedious or intrusive. Providing a range of values to select from instead of asking for a precise value (ex: number of acres in your operation) will also ensure that participants provide data.

Below are examples of general demographic questions put in a way that should not discourage participants from responding. Responses will provide the kind of data useful in describing audiences in project reporting.

Please select your primary occupation.

- Crop farmer
- Horticulture producer
- Industry representative
- State or federal agency

Please select the range of acres you influence.

- 0 acres
- 1 to 50 acres
- 51 to 500 acres
- 501 to 1,000 acres
- more than 1,000 acres

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