

Public strongly supports programs helping farmers adapt to climate change

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A survey conducted by Michigan State University reveals strong public support for government programs to assist farmers to adapt to climate change.

According to NASA research, [global temperatures](#) have been rising for decades, and it's affecting all aspects of agriculture. Regardless of what those surveyed believe causes climate change, more than 65 percent of them support government assistance for farmers, said Scott Loveridge, MSU professor of agricultural, food and resource economics.

This year has been a particularly harsh example. This summer's drought is [wreaking havoc](#) on much of the nation's [row crops](#), and close to one-third of states' counties have been declared natural [disaster areas](#) and are seeking federal aid. In Michigan, record-setting temperatures in March prompted fruit trees to blossom. Freezing weather in April wiped out nearly all of the state's [fruit crops](#).

Farmers are feeling the impact now, and consumers are already seeing increased food prices, which are projected to get worse. In these tight economic times, empathy doesn't automatically translate to support for financial assistance. So Loveridge was surprised how many people support the notion of financial assistance for farmers.

"I didn't expect the strong level of public support for helping farmers adjust their production techniques to long-term changes in the climate," he said. "The overall support is likely strongly linked to concerns about

recent food price fluctuations, long-term food security or recognition of agriculture's contributions to the economy."

Aid for farmers can come in a number of forms. Some examples include addressing potential threats and opportunities related to climate change, securing more support for science-based crop projections, and finding and testing varieties and techniques that will perform well in the future, Loveridge added.

Provided by Michigan State University

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