

**Progressive Farmer**

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## I. Methodology and Sample Characteristics

### Methodology

Zogby International was commissioned by Progressive Farmer to conduct an online survey of 2,963 rural adults: 2765 from Zogby Interactive Online Panel and 198 from Progressive Farmer's subscription list, from 5/23/08 to 5/27/08

A sampling of Zogby International's online panel, which is representative of the adult population of the US with internet access, was invited to participate. Additionally, Progressive Farmer provided a list of subscribers that were also invited to participate. The counties allowed to participate were determined by both the document "List of Rural Counties And Designated Eligible Census Tracts in Metropolitan Counties" and a self identified portion of participants who responded that they live in the "country." Slight weights were added region, party, age, race, religion, gender to more accurately reflect the rural population. The margin of error is +/- 1.8 percentage points. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups.

### Sample Characteristics (continued)

Sample Characteristics	Frequency	Valid Percent*
Sample size	2963	100
East	681	23
South	622	21
Central/Great Lakes	859	29
West	800	27
Democrat	936	32
Republican	1258	43
Independent/Minor party	731	25
18-29	412	14
30-49	1147	39
50-64	823	28
65+	559	19
18-24	159	5
25-34	385	13
35-54	1285	44
55-69	835	28
70+	277	9
Did not answer age	22	--
White	2317	81
Hispanic	286	10
African American	143	5

Asian/Pacific	57	2
Other/mixed	57	2
Did not answer race	103	--
Live in large city	196	7
Live in small city	465	16
Live in suburbs	320	11
Live in rural area	1948	67
Progressive/very liberal	272	10
Liberal	354	12
Moderate	754	27
Conservative	872	31
Very conservative	435	15
Libertarian	160	6
Did not answer ideology	115	--
Roman Catholic	663	23
Protestant	1643	57
Jewish	58	2
Other/none	519	18
Did not answer religion	80	--
Born-again	824	51
Not born-again	803	49
Member of union	630	21
Not member of union	2311	79
Parent of child under 17	866	29
Not parent of child under 17	2080	71
Married	1855	63
Single, never married	545	19
Divorced/widowed/separated	413	14
Civil union/domestic partnership	131	5
Less than \$25,000	317	12
\$25,000-\$35,000	266	10
\$35,000-\$50,000	415	16
\$50,000-\$75,000	574	22
\$75,000-\$100,000	438	17
\$100,000 or more	559	22
Did not answer income	394	--
Male	1442	49
Female	1489	51

\* Numbers have been rounded to the nearest percent and might not total 100.

## II. Executive Summary

In general, people living in rural counties say they decided to live in the country to have a good place to raise their children and for the peace and quiet it provides, but for farmers, the ever-rising costs of fuel, fertilizers and taxes are threatening their business.

Increasing governmental regulation is decreasing the rights of property owners, according to respondents, and the burden of high taxes is not being repaid in services provided by the government. Respondents are also in agreement that infrastructure in their area is not repaired in a timely manner, and that drugs, such as meth, are a major problem.

Majorities also agree that there needs to be increased access to health care in rural areas, and the quality of rural education needs to be improved. Most also agree that it is difficult for small local governments to pay for necessities, and that the church is playing less of a role in daily life than past year.

About half of the farmers polled say they raise livestock, and very few (9%) say their farm is certified organic. Overall, respondents are split about the production of corn-based ethanol, and whether or not land prices today are prohibitive to making a good farming profit.

People living in the rural counties polled tend to lean Republican and are mostly planning to support John McCain in the upcoming presidential election, but one in nine (11%) say they will not vote for McCain or Obama when the time comes.

When it comes to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, residents of rural counties say they are affected just as much as other areas, but most (84%) are in agreement that the war in Afghanistan was to confront terrorism and to catch Osama Bin Laden (81%). Majorities also say they agree that the war in Iraq was to protect oil supplies (66%), and to confront terrorism (63%).

### III. Narrative Analysis

1. *If the election for president was held today, and your choices were John McCain or Hillary Clinton, for whom would you vote? (Note: Questions asked prior to Sen. Hillary Clinton ended her presidential campaign)*

John McCain	48%
Hillary Clinton	33
None of the above	16
Not sure	4

If the election for president was held today, and the choices were John McCain or Hillary Clinton, almost half of all respondents (48%) say they would vote for McCain, while a third (33%) say they would vote for Clinton. Sixteen percent say they would not vote for McCain or Clinton if the election was held today.

2. *If the election for president was held today, and your choices were John McCain or Barack Obama, for whom would you vote?*

John McCain	50%
Barak Obama	34
None of the above	11
Not sure	5

If the election for president was held today and the choices were John McCain or Barack Obama, half of all respondents (50%) say they would chose McCain; while about a third (34%) say they would vote for Obama. One in nine (11%) say they would not vote for either candidate and five percent say they are not sure who they would vote for.

3. *Are you more likely to support Democrats or Republicans in your U.S. House and Senate elections this year?*

Republicans	47%
Democrats	40
Other	4
Not sure	10

Forty-seven percent of respondents say they are more likely to support Republicans in their U.S. House and Senate elections this year, compared to 40% who say they are more likely to support Democrats. One in ten (10%) say they are not sure who they will support this year.

Republicans are favored in all age groups with the exception of those ages 18 to 29, whom favor Democrats (48%) to Republicans (40%). Union members (47%) also favor Democrats over Republicans (38%). Those who say they live in the suburbs (50%) and large cities (48%) are more likely to say they will support Democrats over those in small cities (39%), and rural areas (37%).

Men (55%) are more likely than women (39%) to say they will support Republicans. People who identify their residency as America (62%) are more than seven times as likely to vote for Republicans than those who say they are residents of the planet earth (8%).

*4. Is that a change from prior elections?*

Yes	17%
No	80
Not sure	3

A vast majority (80%) say the party they plan to support this election is no different from last year, while one in six (17%) say it is a change from last year. People living in a large city (28%) are more likely than those in rural areas (15%) to say that is a change from prior elections.

**5-13 Please tell us if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements about rural America.**

**Table 1. Rural Issues**

	Agree			Disagree			Not sure
	Strongly	Somewhat	Total	Somewhat	Strongly	Total	
The amount of taxes people pay does not match the services provided by government.	52	29	<b>81</b>	12	4	<b>16</b>	4
Infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, is often ignored or not repaired in a timely fashion.	45	36	<b>81</b>	14	3	<b>17</b>	2
Drug abuse, such as meth, is a major problem.	42	34	<b>76</b>	13	6	<b>19</b>	5
There needs to be increased access to health care.	46	27	<b>73</b>	13	11	<b>24</b>	4
The quality of rural education needs to be improved.	38	34	<b>72</b>	15	8	<b>23</b>	5
It is difficult for small local governments to pay for necessities.	31	36	<b>67</b>	20	8	<b>28</b>	6
The church plays less of a role in daily life than in past years.	28	36	<b>64</b>	18	12	<b>30</b>	7
The rural crime rate is too high.	18	30	<b>48</b>	28	15	<b>43</b>	10
Getting high-speed Internet service is extremely difficult, or impossible.	17	19	<b>36</b>	26	34	<b>60</b>	4

Respondents are most in agreement on the statements about taxes and repair of infrastructure, as 81% say they agree that the amount of taxes people pay does not match the services provided by the government, and that infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, is often ignored or not repaired in a timely fashion. More than half (52%) say they strongly agree that the amount of taxes does not match the level of services, while only 4% say they strongly disagree with the statement.

Three quarters of respondents (76%) say they agree that drug abuse, such as meth, is a major problem, with 42% saying they strongly agree with the statement. Those over 65-years-old (51%) are most likely to strongly agree that drug abuse is a major problem, while those ages 18 to 29 (32%) are the least likely to say the same.

Seventy-three percent of respondents say they agree that there needs to be increased access to health care. Those who never go to church (63%) are far more likely to strongly agree that there needs to be increased access to health care, compared to those who attend church more than once a week (29%) or about once a week (35%). People who are not investors (54%) are more likely than those who do invest (32%) to say they strongly agree that there needs to be increased access, and Democrats (83%) are far more likely than Republicans (18%) to strongly agree.

Majorities also agree that the quality of rural education needs to be improved (72%), it is difficult for small local governments to pay for necessities (67%), and that the church plays less of a role in daily life than in past years (64%). People making less than \$25,000 (52%) are far more likely to strongly agree that the quality of rural education needs to be improved than those making \$75,000 to \$100,000 (35%), or those making more than \$100,000 (30%)

Overall, respondents are split about whether or not rural crime rates are too high, as 48% say they agree and 43% say they disagree. Those making less than \$25,000 (29%), are more than twice as likely as those making more than \$75,000 (12%), to strongly agree that the rural crime rate is too high. Most (60%) overall, say they disagree that getting high-speed internet is extremely difficult, or impossible.

#### 14. Do you have home access to the Internet?

**Table 2. Internet Access**

	%
Cable	38
DSL	42
Satellite	7
Dial up	12
No	1
Not sure	1

Keeping in mind the poll was conducted online, a vast majority of respondents report having home internet access, and 42% say they use DSL. About a third (38%) say they have Internet service through cable broadband, and 12% say they use dialup. Seven percent say they have satellite Internet service.

(15-17) Please tell us if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following reasons why the U.S. went to war in Iraq.

**Table 3. Iraq War**

	Agree			Disagree			Not sure
	Strongly	Somewhat	Total	Somewhat	Strongly	Total	
Protect oil supplies	39	27	<b>66</b>	14	17	<b>33</b>	4
Confront terrorism	44	19	<b>63</b>	8	27	<b>35</b>	2
Bring Democracy to the Middle East	18	31	<b>49</b>	16	31	<b>47</b>	4

Two-thirds (66%) say they agree that the U.S. went to war in Iraq was to protect oil supplies, with 39% saying they strongly agree with that statement. One third (33%) say they disagree that the U.S. went to war in Iraq to protect oil supplies. Sixty-three percent say they think the U.S. went to war in Iraq to confront terrorism, while fewer (49%) say they agree that the war was to bring Democracy to the Middle East.

Those who attend church more than once a week (69%), and born again Christians (62%) are far more likely to strongly agree that the U.S. went to war to confront terrorism than those who say they never go to church (21%), or those who are not born again (40%). Men (48%) are more likely than women (40%) to strongly agree that we went to war in Iraq to confront terrorism.

Liberals (66%), women (43%) and people who never shop at Wal-Mart (57%) are far more likely than conservatives (22%), men (35%) and weekly Wal-Mart shoppers (37%) to strongly agree that we went to war in Iraq to protect oil supplies.

Born-Again Christians (25%) are more likely to strongly agree that the U.S. went to war in Iraq to bring Democracy to the Middle East than those who are not born again (14%)

(18-20) Please tell us if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following reasons why the U.S. went to war in Afghanistan.

**Table 4. War in Afghanistan**

	Agree			Disagree			Not sure
	Strongly	Somewhat	Total	Strongly	Somewhat	Total	
Confront terrorism	59	25	<b>84</b>	6	9	<b>15</b>	2
Catch Osama Bin Laden	47	34	<b>81</b>	8	9	<b>17</b>	2
Bring Democracy to Afghanistan	17	31	<b>48</b>	23	25	<b>48</b>	5

A strong majority (84%) say they agree that the U.S. went to war in Afghanistan to confront terrorism, with 59% saying they strongly agree with the statement. Another strong majority (81%) agrees that the U.S. went to war in Afghanistan to catch Osama Bin Laden, while

slightly less than half (48%) agrees that the U.S. went to Afghanistan to bring Democracy to that country.

Those ages 18 to 29 (56) are more likely than those older than 65 (40%) to say they strongly agree that the U.S. went to war in Afghanistan to catch Osama Bin Laden, while those over 65 (63%) are most likely to say they strongly agree it was to confront terrorism, compared to 54% of respondents 18 to 29 who say the same. Republicans (78%) are much more likely than Democrats (37%) to strongly agree that the U.S. went to war in Afghanistan to confront terrorism.

21. *Do you think rural areas are affected more, less or just as much by casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan compared to the rest of the United States?*

Just as much	57%
More	30
Less	4
Not sure	10

Most (57%) say rural areas are affected just as much by casualties in Iraq and Afghanistan compared to the rest of the country, while three in 10 (30%), say rural areas are hit harder than the rest of the country. There are no significant differences between demographic groups.

22. *Are you, or any of your immediate family members, farmers?*

Yes	19%
No	81
Not sure	1

Nineteen-percent of respondents say they or someone in their immediate family farms, while the majority (81%) says they are not farmers.

23. *Why do you live in the country? (Choose all that apply)*

**Table 5. Why the Country?**

	%
Peace and quiet	77
Close to nature	58
Great place to raise kids	53
Low crime rates	49
Room for animals	41
Instills values of hard work	34
My family farms	9
Other	24
Not sure	4

Peace and quiet is the number one cited reason for living in the country (77%), followed by those who say being close to nature (58%) and that it is a great place to raise kids (53%). About half (49%) say they choose to live in the country because of low crime rates, and 41% say

they like the room for their animals. A third (34%) say they choose to live in the country because it installs values of hard work, while a quarter (24%) say they have other reasons for living in the country.

Respondents ages 30 to 49 (61%) are most likely to say they live in the country because it is a great place to raise kids, while those who are 50 to 64 are most likely to say they live in the country for peace and quiet (82%), followed by those 65 and older (79%).

24. *What cost, if any, is putting the most strain on your farming business?(choose all that apply... asked only of farmers)*

**Table 6. Farming Costs**

	<b>%</b>
Fuel	84
Taxes	52
Fertilizer	46
Feed	43
Equipment	39
Seed	32
Regulatory	26
Technology	7
Land rent	6
Other *	11
Not sure	5

**(Numbers in parentheses denote similar responses)**

**\*Other:** Retired, n/a, don't farm (9); Water scarcity/cost (7); Market prices low/fluctuating (5); Labor skills/costs (5); Politics, politicians (4)

**Three each:** NAIS ramifications; Environmentalists

**Two each:** GMO contamination/proliferation; Land purchase prices; Inflation escalation; Land development

**One each:** Commodity imports; Illegal immigration; Dollar devaluation; Health insurance; Timber demand; National debt; Not specific; Greenhouse; Mortgage; Coyotes

The costs of fuel, taxes and fertilizer are the top three things putting the most strain on the farming business for those who say they have a farm. A strong majority (84%) say fuel is the number one cost putting the most strain on their farm ing business, followed by half (52%) who say taxes are the most strain. Republicans (90%) are more likely than independents (79%) and Democrats (78%) to say fuel is putting the most strain on their farming business.

25. Do you think the production of corn-based ethanol is good, bad or makes no difference for farming? (Asked only of farmers)

Bad for farming	40%
Good for farming	37
No difference	14
Not sure	10

The production of corn-based ethanol is considered bad for farming by a plurality of respondents (40%), while a similar number (37%) say they think the corn-based fuel is good for farming. One in seven (14%) say they think corn-based ethanol production makes no difference to farming, and one in ten (10%) say they are not sure. Men (43%) are more likely than women (31%) to say corn-based ethanol is good for farming.

26. Can you make a very good, somewhat good, somewhat bad or very bad profit on land at current prices? (Asked only of farmers)

Very good profit	7	<b>Good profit</b>	<b>45%</b>
Somewhat good profit	38		
Somewhat bad profit	27	<b>Bad profit</b>	<b>42</b>
Very bad profit	15		
Not sure.	9		

Respondents are split about profiting on land at current prices, as 45% say they think they can make a good profit on land at the current prices, while 42% say they would make a bad profit. Nine percent say they are not sure about the profit potential of land at current prices.

27. What, if anything, is deteriorating landowner rights? (Choose all that apply)

**Table 7. Land Rights**

	<b>%</b>
Increased government regulations	61
Land use restrictions	51
Environmental restrictions	50
I do not think landowner rights are deteriorating	17
Other*	11
None of the above	2
Not sure	9

**(Numbers in parentheses denote similar responses)**

\***Other:** Eminent domain laws (101); Taxes (91); Development, developers greed (29) Politics, politicians (21); Court rulings, activist judges (20); Big government interference, abuse of power (16); Urban sprawl, city people moving to rural areas (13) Big business takeover (11); Economy, economic issues, land prices (9); Mineral, oil, gas, water rights (9); NAIS (8); Loss of freedom, civil rights infringement (7); Population growth (6); Neighbor imposition (5)

**Four each:** Costs associated with landowner rights; Home owner associations; Infrastructure traffic

**Three each:** Corporate farms, mega farms, CAFOs; Urban blight, homelessness, poverty; Recreational land use; Water scarcity/usage

**Two each:** Lack of public understanding; Corruption, fraud, waste; UN meddling & treaties; Special interest groups; Subsidies, incentives; Animal issues; Less services; Not specific

**One each:** Foreign ownership of US land; Illegal immigration; NAFTA

Increased government regulations is cited as the number one reason for deteriorating landowner rights, according to 61% of respondents, while half say land use restrictions are deteriorating rights (51%), and environmental restrictions (50%). Seventeen percent say they do not think landowner rights are deteriorating, and one in nine (11%) say other things are causing a deterioration.

Men (68%) and Republicans (79%) are more likely than women (54%), independents (63%) and Democrats (36%) to say increased government regulations are deteriorating landowner rights.

28. *How do you diversify your income from farming? (Choose all that apply...Asked only of farmers)*

**Table 8. Diversified Income**

	<b>%</b>
Off farm work	58
I do not diversify my income	24
Vegetable/fruit stands/ farmers markets	17
Lease land for hunting	12
Rent to companies for wind farm, cell towers...	12
Offer tourism opportunities	3
Investments in ethanol or biodiesel plants	2
Bed and breakfast	2
Other*	12

**(Numbers in parentheses denote similar responses)**

**Other:** Retired, n/a, don't farm (13); Entrepreneur, self-employed (12); Social security, pension, retirement income (10); Lease land/mineral rights/storage space (9); Investments provide income (6); Equities, trade stocks/commodities (4); Forestry products (3)

**Two each:** Specialty/heritage/experimental crops; Small family garden; Internet enterprise

**One each:** Crops & cattle; Not specific

More than half of those who farm, say they diversify their income by doing off-farm work (58%), but a quarter (24%) say they do not do anything off the farm to diversify their income. One in six respondents (17%) say they have a vegetable stand or attend farmers' markets, and 12% each say they lease land for hunting, or rent to companies for wind farms or cell towers.

29. How many acres do you farm? (Asked only of farmers)

**Table 9. Farm Size**

Acres	%
1-50	37
51-100	15
101-300	18
301-500	8
501-1,000	5
1,001-2,000	6
2,001-5,000	2
5,001+	2
Not sure	8

A plurality of respondents (37%) says they farm one to 50 acres, while 18% say they work 101 to 300 acres, and 15% say they farm 51 to 100 acres. Fewer respondents say they farm more than 301 acres, with 2% saying they farm more than 5,000 acres of land.

30. What kind of farming do you or your family do? (Choose all that apply... Asked only of farmers)

**Table 10. Farm Types**

	%
Livestock	50
Vegetable	29
Grain	27
Corn	20
Soybeans	17
Fruit	17
Dairy	11
Fiber	6
Nuts	4
Other	19

(Numbers in parentheses denote similar responses)

**Other:** Hay (32); Silva culture, forestry products (22); Poultry, eggs (10); Retired, n/a, don't farm (7); Lease/rent land to others (6); Ornamental plants, nursery stock (5); Tobacco (5); Cotton (5); Horse farm (4)

**Three each:** Seeds, heirloom, hybrids; Sheep, wool; Grass, sod; Coffee

**Two each:** Hobby farm, personal garden; various, not specific; Herbs

**One each:** Beekeeping; Mushrooms; Marijuana; Wildlife; Fish

Half of all farmers polled (50%) say their family raises livestock, while 30% say they have a vegetable farm. Twenty-seven percent of respondents say they harvest grain, and 20% grow corn. Seventeen-percent each say they grow soybeans, or fruit, and one in nine (11%) are dairy farmers. Nineteen percent say they have some other kind of farm.

31. *Do you think global warming has had an impact on your farming business? (Asked only of farmers)*

No	60%
Yes	29
Not sure	12

Most farmers polled (60%) say they do not think global warming has had an impact on their farming business, while nearly three in 10 (29%) say they think it has had an impact. Twelve percent of respondents say they are not sure if global warming has had an impact on their farming business.

32. *Is your farm certified Organic? (Asked only of farmers)*

No	87%
Yes	9
Not sure	3

The vast majority (87%) say their farm is not certified organic, but 9% say their farm is organic.