

Closing the Deal With Rural Landowners

In Class Exercises

Part 1: Rural Landowners and Their Perspective





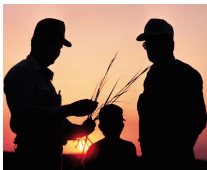
The Three Big Takeaways

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Warm Up Exercise

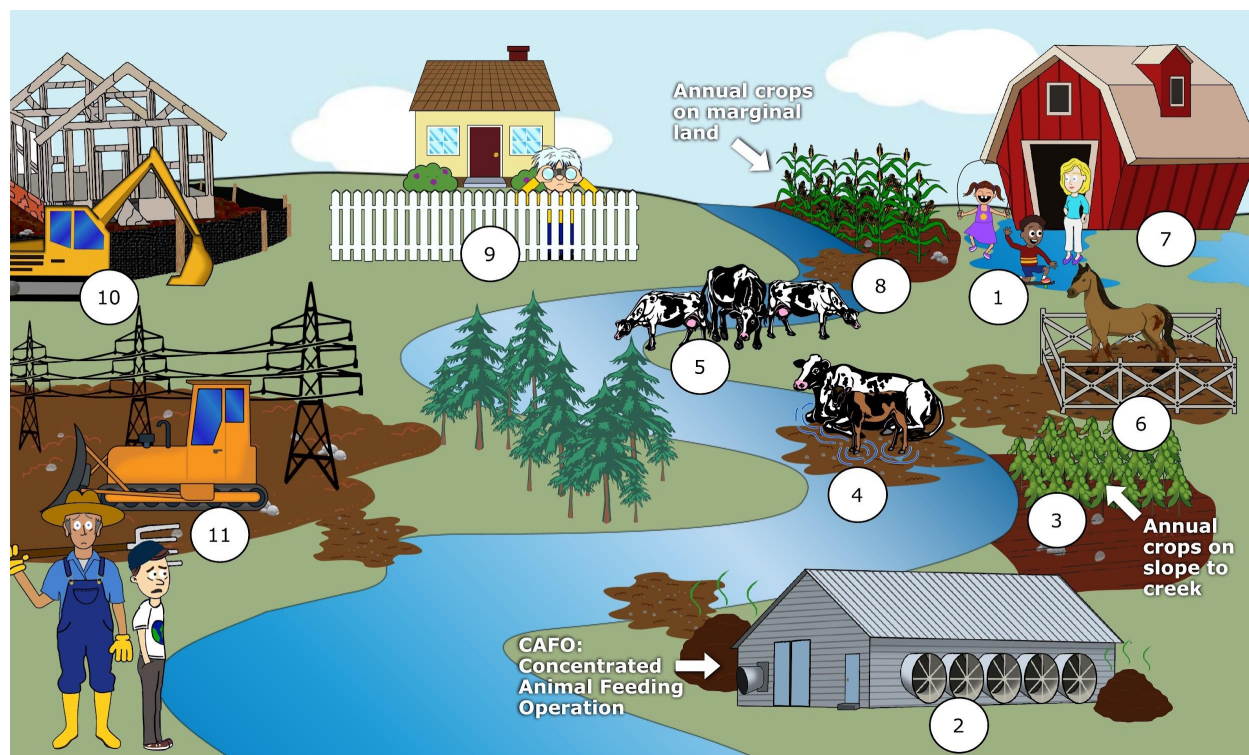
	<p>David Age: 71 Land: Forest Ownership: Primary Annual Sales: N/A</p> <p>David's family owns dozens of parcels around the county. He's watching young relatives migrate to the city, and thinking about the forest where he grew up hunting and fishing. A developer rang him up last week, and he took the call. He'd hate to sell, but some of his family could use help with their college tuition.</p>
	<p>James Age: 33 Land: Forest Ownership: Tertiary Annual Sales: N/A</p> <p>James is the de facto property manager for his parent's country estate, a job he doesn't love. When he inherits the land, he'll sell. Until then, he does his best. He is stumped about how to deal with an insect infestation that is killing more and more trees.</p>
	<p>Joan Age: 60 Land: Farm Ownership: Secondary Annual Sales: <\$10,000</p> <p>Joan and her husband both have day jobs, and farm on the side. Joan tends some cows, and her husband putters on the tractor. They don't read farm journals, and don't mind that they are losing money on their hobby. They think of themselves as good stewards, but the land and equipment are falling into disrepair.</p>
	<p>Jorge Age: 58 Land: Farm Ownership: Primary Annual Sales: \$50,000 to \$99,999</p> <p>Jorge's family has raised cattle in this valley since the land was part of Mexico. He's proud that the operation is going strong on his watch. It takes a lot of land to support a few cows around here, so the fences are a constant chore. The streams are dry most of the year, so he doesn't give them much thought.</p>
	<p>Joseph Age: 61 Land: Farm Ownership: Primary Annual Sales: \$100,000+</p> <p>With more than a thousand acres in corn and soybeans, Joseph can comfortably send his son to school at the state land grant university. So he's puzzled that Junior comes home talking about organic this and free range that. Joseph wants his son to feel a sense of ownership and is ready to let him experiment with a few acres.</p>



	<p>Mary Age: 62 Land: Forest Ownership: Secondary Annual Sales: N/A</p> <p>Mary and her husband own the Silver Lake RV park and campground. Mary knows the lake and the surrounding woods are a big draw for her customers, but has no idea how to manage those resources. Mary never knows when a bad season will clobber her cash flow, and she takes a short-term view on spending money.</p>
	<p>Michael Age: 65 Land: Forest Ownership: Primary Annual Sales: N/A</p> <p>Michael's a widower who has been on disability ever since the accident. He just can't get around the property like he used to. Some neighbors are running ATVs through his woods and tearing up the stream bank. Michael doesn't like it, but he's not sure what to do. Michael's son is grown and out on his own, but would help out if asked.</p>
	<p>Patricia Age: 51 Land: Farm Ownership: Primary Annual Sales: \$10,000 to \$49,999</p> <p>Patricia's mission is to provide healthy fresh food to city residents. She has plenty of customers for her Community Supported Agriculture program, but needs grants and donations to keep the doors open. She thinks hard about her customers' diet, and doesn't think much about the rainwater running off her land.</p>
	<p>Richard Age: 45 Land: Farm Ownership: Tertiary Annual Sales: \$100,000+</p> <p>Richard thinks that "green" rhymes with "ka-ching." He makes steady profits selling organic produce to Whole Foods and Trader Joe's. His once-skeptical relatives lease him more acres every year. He's curious about the latest sustainable agriculture techniques, but is frustrated that he can't call the shots on the land that he farms.</p>
	<p>Robert Age: 43 Land: Forest Ownership: Secondary Annual Sales: N/A</p> <p>Robert is an attorney who grew up in the suburbs, but he married into a family with rural land. He enjoys the view of the woods from his home office window. He doesn't realize the forest is a wildfire hazard. He never gives anyone free legal advice. He would be skeptical that free forestry advice would be available or worthwhile.</p>

Which of these landowners most closely resembles the landowners you actually work with?	
What kind of problems could you help that person with?	
What types of "deals" might you be able to close with them?	

Exercise #2: Benefits & Barriers

Problems the Landowner Sees, Problems You See



 Landowner	 Conservation Professional
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. After several generations, the farm might not stay in the family 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The farm might get sold to developers 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11.

Exercise #3: Conservation Practice Benefits & Barriers

Riparian Buffers

Benefits	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eliminates calving risk areas• Improved grazing management and herd movement• Reduces erosion• Less mowing• CREP rental payments• Meet requirements for other cost share items• Healthier herds & lower vet bills• Privacy from neighbors• Attractive (if flowering plants chosen)• Hunting/fishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of land from production• Perceived to be unattractive, poorly groomed• What will the neighbors think?• Some preferred riparian plants are problematic• Invasives• Maintenance of buffer or supporting infrastructure (fences, watering stations)• CREP contract length and provisions

Converting Cropland to Perennial Grassland Shrubs or Trees

Benefits	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stop wasting time/money on unproductive land• Convert poor cropland to good pasture• Eventual timber harvest• CREP payments• Fewer gullies on the land• Wildlife and hunting leases	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of land from production• Pride in owning productive land• What if crop prices go back up?• What will the neighbors think?• Invasives• Hard to reverse the decision once the trees take root• Might shade fields• May attract wildlife that may eat crops• May have to get started in the livestock business

Livestock Exclusion/Streambank Fencing

Benefits	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eliminates calving risk areas• Improved grazing management and herd movement• Improved herd health (reducing the “fecal-oral pathway”)• Livestock performs better with abundant clean water (as opposed to dirty river water)• Streambank stabilization — protects fences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Upfront and maintenance cost for fencing and alternative watering systems• Red tape with cost share• Loss of pasture• Loss of stream access• Loss of shade• Aesthetics (weeds/invasives behind the fence)• Trees block view of pasture

No Till/Cover Crops

Benefits	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time/labor/gas savings (plowing, fertilizing, pesticides, etc.)• Get back in the field sooner after rain• Drought resilience, less irrigation• Improve soil health and reduce erosion• Forage crops for livestock• Fewer concerns about rocks in the field• Nitrogen/phosphorus reduction credits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short-term reductions in yield• Upfront investment in equipment• Upfront investment in skill development• Must purchase cover crop seed• Extra cycle of planting and harvesting• Weeds/insects

Nutrient Management

Benefits	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save money on fertilizer • Improved yields • Improved soil • Cost share • May be required to access other cost share/technical assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial costs in equipment and subscriptions • Feeling forced to do it • Old habits are hard to break • Short life of nutrient management plan • Conflicting advice from fertilizer merchants • Red tape on cost share

Easements

Benefits	Barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent, ties heirs' hands • Can resolve family disputes • Peace of mind that the farm will stay a farm; that family heritage/land connection will be maintained • Protects conservation values, rural, historic, other legacies, and sense of place • Short-term tax (income & estate tax) and long-term tax savings (property tax), may not have to fill out land use tax form • Take action to be part of larger community effort (neighbors have easements) • May trigger additional review or scrutiny of eminent domain proposals (power lines, pipelines, roadways) • Ability to "cash in" some of property's value to purchase additional land, invest in equipment, or through retirement tax incentives • Helps beginning farmers farm • Provides grounds to refuse access requests (ATVs, hunting, wood cutting, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent, ties heirs' hands • Can cause family disputes • Requires clear future vision for the property • Complicated (family dynamics, competing values, tax caps, red tape) • Complex team and up-front costs needed: Appraiser, lawyer, easement holder, etc. • Lack of understanding of zoning and real estate law, and how easement fits • Fear that easements open land to the public • Fear of government involvement and/or management oversight • Length of time to apply for some easement programs • Buffer requirements

Exercise #4: Networking in the Community

Networking Opportunity	Do <u>you</u> attend these?	Do you think <u>your landowner</u> attend these?
Environmental Conferences and Workshop Like This One	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
School Events & Games		
Civic Group Meetings (Ruritan, Rotary, etc.)		
Farm Auctions and Trade Shows		
County Fair		
Church Services & Events		
Public Meetings (Not your organization)		
Community Events (Parades, BBQs, Fourth of July, etc.)		
Cultural Events (Concerts, Plays, Gallery Openings, etc)		
Local Sporting Events		
Weddings, Funerals, Baptisms, Bar Mitvahs, etc.		
Charitable & Volunteer Events (Bingo, 5ks, Food Banks, etc.)		
Social Clubs (Board Games, Book Clubs, etc.)		

Where else might you run into your landowner by chance?

Exercise #5: The \$\$ Puzzle

Federal/State Programs	Program(s)	Assistance	Pros & Cons	Already Familiar	Who I should Ask
Local Conservation District	State BMP programs	Cost Share, Technical Assistance, Tax Credits.	Less red tape than the feds. May have \$ when the feds do not. Funding varies year-to-year.		
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service	Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)	Cost Share, Technical Assistance for various BMPs.	May have \$ when the District does not. Funding varies year-to-year. More red tape than the Conservation District		
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service	Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)	Support landowners going above and beyond minimum requirements.	Can help a motivated landowner go beyond the minimum. More red tape than the Conservation District		
USDA Farm Service Agency	Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)	Provides technical and financial assistance to convert poor cropland to conservation use. CREP targets high priority areas designated by the state.	Assistance to get started, annual payment after that. Must take land out of production. Temporary Commitment (10-15 years).		
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Partners for Fish and Wildlife	Assistance and financial assistance to private landowners, usually up to \$25k, 5 to 70% of total cost.	Temporary Commitment (usually 10 years). Must help "federal trust resources" like endangered species or migratory birds.		
State Programs	Trading/ Credits	Some states allow one party to pay another (such as landowners) to reduce pollution on their behalf, usually at a 2:1 ratio.	Emerging source of funding. Programs are in their infancy, and vary from state to state.		

Local/Nonprofit Programs	Program(s)	Assistance	Pros & Cons	Already Familiar	Who I should Ask
Land Trusts	Easements, various other programs	Purchase property, purchase easements outright, or help landowners put easements in place.	The programs are usually permanent. Maybe underfunded, understaffed, and have a backlog.		
Wildlife Orgs: Ducks Unlimited, Trout Unlimited, National Wild Turkey Federation, etc.	Various programs	Technical assistance and cost share for wildlife habitat preservation and restoration.	Varies from location to location. Usually must demonstrate a benefit to a particular species of concern.		
Private Consultants/ CCAs	Technical assistance	Can help landowners write plans and pursue funds.	Treat landowners as clients — proactive and responsive. Government/non profit staff may perceive private consultants as competition.		
Land/Sea Grant Extension	Outreach/ Research	Demonstration projects, scientific studies, educational workshops.	Extension has credibility, but is unlikely to help individual landowners directly.		
Clean Water Nonprofits and Grantmakers	Various programs	Various programs, usually to fill in gaps from federal and state programs	Less red tape than the government. Inconsistent availability.		
County/ Municipal Governments	Various programs	Easement programs, land use tax incentives, stormwater fees and waivers.	Varies from location to location. Inconsistent availability.		

Part 2: Managing the Workload & Staying in Touch

Exercise #6: Managing the Workload

Workload Management Tools in Alphabetical Order	Workload Management Tools in PREFERRED order (best on top, least on bottom)
Automatic task reminders	
Electronic calendar with follow up dates marked	
Electronic task list	
Weekly/monthly team meetings and reports on pending deals up the chain of command	
Paper calendar with follow up dates marked	
Paper task list	
Sales or prospect database, with records of past calls, emails, etc.	
Spreadsheets that track pending deals	
Sticky notes and more sticky notes	
Trying to keep it all in your head	Trying to keep it all in your head

Download the spreadsheet if you want it:

<https://bit.ly/closing-deal-spreadsheet>

Exercise #7: How They Hear About Your Workshop

Imagine you want 20 landowners to attend your workshop. How much promotion would you need to do:

How Approached	Above Average RSVP Rate	# You Need to Reach	Below Average RSVP Rate	# You Need to Reach
Invite them personally over the phone	50%	$20/.5 = 40$	15%	
Send an email using BCC or a email blast program	5%	$20/.05 = 400$	2%	
Send a postcard	2%		.5%	
Article in Weekly Newspaper or Ag Journal	.5%		.025%	
Social media post	.05%		.025%	
Fliers here and there	.025%		.001%	

Exercise #8: Icebreakers

Here are some common topics that you can use to break the ice with a landowner that you are getting to know, and signal to them that you are interested in helping them succeed with *their* goals for *their* land.

Example	Write One for Your Target Landowner
Asking the landowner for advice on something they are doing well ("Your feedlot floor is super clean. I know other farmers are struggling with that. How do you do that?")	
Complimenting some aspect of the operation that seems to be going well ("Those apple trees look really healthy")	
Chit chat about farm equipment ("What do you think of that Kubota tractor? Why did you buy it instead of the John Deere?")	
Following up on an earlier conversation ("Last time I saw you, you were headed out on vacation. Did you have fun?")	

Exercise #8: Write Down a Silly Question That Has Nothing to Do With this Course

(e.g. Have you ever tried to stand on your head?)

Exercise #9: Readability

Please rewrite this passage, aiming for the highest readability score that you can without changing the meaning. You do this in three ways:

- Break long sentences into shorter sentences
- Replace long words with shorter words that have similar meanings
- Rewrite passive voice into active voice

Current Passage	Your Rewrite
<p>USDA's New Farmers website has in-depth information for new farmers and ranchers, including: how to increase access to land and capital; build new market opportunities; participate in conservation opportunities; select and use the right risk management tools; and access USDA education, and technical support programs. These issues have been identified as top priorities by new farmers. The website will also feature instructive case studies about beginning farmers who have successfully utilized USDA resources to start or expand their business operations.</p> <p>Readability Score: 18</p>	