It Takes a Village: Community Supported, Farm-scale Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Planning

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CAMF
CLIMATE ADAPTATION & MITIGATION FELLOWSHIP

ACES
A Community on Ecosystem Services

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Background

Climate change adaptation is increasingly needed on U.S. farms. The Climate Adaptation and Mitigation Fellowship (CAMF) is an innovative program designed by farmers, agricultural advisors, and researchers to:

(a) assist farmers to create a farm-specific climate adaptation and/or mitigation plan, and

(b) assist agricultural advisors to support farmers in aligned efforts.

Developing understanding through evaluation

Through our in-depth evaluation research of a pilot and ongoing CAMF programs, we seek to shed light on whether learning and planning in a community-supported fashion leads to implementation of climate adaptive/ mitigative practices, and by extension provision of ecosystem services.

Multiple forms of community support

- **Fellows** are enrolled in the program as pairs. They can be either farmers or agricultural advisors.
- **Educators** are agricultural advisors with experience in climate change adaptation and/or mitigation. Each educator supports 2-3 pairs of Fellows.
- **Program coordinators** ensure program milestones are met, design and facilitate educational offerings, give feedback on adaptation and mitigation plans, and ensure evaluation activities are completed.
- The **project manager** supports program coordinators, ensures good communication, manages a regular newsletter, coordinates a monthly email update to all current Fellows.

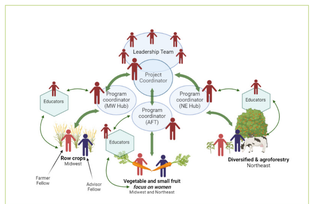


Figure 1: Three CAMF programs are currently running across the Midwest and Northeast regions of the United States.

- The **leadership team** provides guidance on program structure and facilitation, and presents at workshops.

Did the CAMF pilot improve participants' climate knowledge and adaptation confidence? YES, in 5-categories of knowledge.

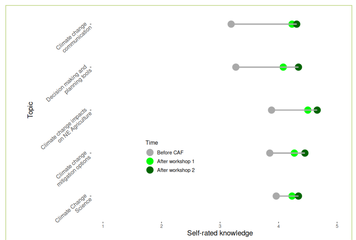


Figure 2: Participants in the CAMF pilot program (2021-2022) assessed their own knowledge of five topics before the program, after the first workshop (held at the beginning of the program) and at the end of the second workshop (held at the end of the program). Knowledge ratings were 1 (not knowledgable) to 5 (very knowledgable). The figure reports average scores reported by the entire cohort, including farmers and agricultural advisors.

What adaptation and mitigation practices did Fellows try out due to the pilot program? Many different practices.

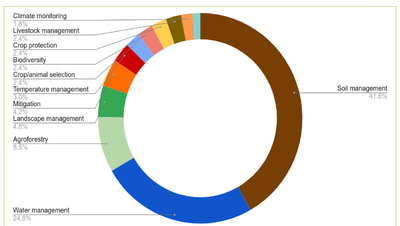
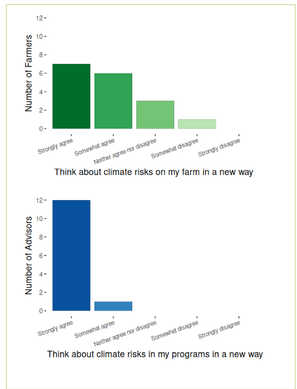


Figure 3: Farmer participants in the CAMF pilot were surveyed directly after the program concluded, and one- and two-years following the completion of the program. They were asked about what climate adaptation and mitigation practices they had tried on their farms since completion of the program. Practices were then grouped into categories by our team. Soil management strategies were the most frequently utilized practices by program alumni.



Did the CAMF pilot influence how farmers and advisors think about climate risk in a new way? YES, but more so for advisors. Many external factors affect farmers' risk exposure.

Figure 4: Farmer and advisor participants in the CAMF pilot were asked whether participating in the program changed how they think about the risks on their farm in a new way, or helped them think about their outreach programs in a new way.

Current programs

Diversified agriculture and agroforestry in the Northeast and Midwest

36 Fellows from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Vermont

Row crops in the Midwest

16 Fellows from Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin

Figure 2: Current CAMF Fellows live and work in green-highlighted states.

Women and non-binary vegetable farmers and advisors in the Northeast and Midwest

32 Fellows from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, New York, Vermont, Iowa, Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin

Ryan Fitzbeauchamp of Evening Song Farm in Shrewsbury, Vermont. His CAMF project and subsequent work has focused on exploring no-till and cover cropping as tools for improving soil health. Here, he takes soil samples in his fall brassicas with the help of two assistants. Photo credit: Rebecca Maden, University of Vermont Extension.

Learn more

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NORTHEAST SARE Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education

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Partners

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Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners
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