

Incentivizing Farmers to Manage Land for a Climate Resilient Midwest

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December 2 2022, 12 - 1pm CT

537 Heller Hall (ICGC)

Live Stream Available @www.icgc.umn.edu

To understand what is happening on the prairies of the Midwest, you need to understand crop insurance. In fact, to understand why farmers do practically anything today, you need to understand crop insurance. Yield focused incentives push farmers to make land management decisions antithetical to pollinator conservation, soil health, climate mitigation, and even, at times, successful crop production. One popular type of insurance payment, “prevented plantings”, was originally intended to compensate farmers when extreme weather prevented them from getting their crops into the ground. However, it created a perverse incentive in the Prairie Pothole Region to plant the region’s seasonal wetlands. This trend is accelerating today as the “prevented plantings” payouts continue to incentivize planting row crops in critical grassland soil across a record 20 million acres in 2019, double the number of claims from 2011. My current work will use the Hawthorne-Landsdorf integrated incentive evaluation model to visualize how to crop insurance policy changes will affect individual farmer management choices and translate into biophysical outcomes on the landscape.

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