

Appendix D: Cover letter and follow-up letters for mail survey

[Each letter was mailed on Bemidji State University letterhead.]

LETTER # 1

January 3, 2001

«NAME»

«ADDRESS»

«ADDRESS_2» «ADDRESS_3»

The State of Minnesota is considering a possible program to reward agricultural practices that yield multiple benefits to the environment. In order to develop sound agricultural policy to benefit the environment, research is being conducted about the effects of agricultural practices on Minnesota residents, the state's environment, and its economy. The state must weigh the costs and benefits of increasing conservation practices in agriculture. Bemidji State University is directing the economic analysis of this possible program.

Your household is one of a small number in Minnesota which are being asked to provide information about their views on the proposal. Your name was drawn at random from the entire population of the state. To ensure that the results are representative of Minnesota households, it is essential that each booklet be completed and returned. Any adult (18 years or older) in your household may answer the questions. Doing so will help the State of Minnesota to base its policy on the best information possible.

You are assured complete confidentiality. The identification number on the booklet is for mailing purposes only. This enables us to check your name off the mailing list when your completed booklet is returned. Your name will never be associated with the answers you give.

The results of this research will be used by interested legislators and policymakers in future deliberations on the proposal. The information you provide will have a direct effect on the discussion of the policy. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Patrick G. Welle, Ph.D.
Project Director

LETTER # 2

January 16, 2001

Two weeks ago a booklet was mailed to you seeking your views on a possible program to reward agricultural practices that yield multiple benefits to the environment. The State of Minnesota has commissioned this study so that interested legislators and policymakers can have the best information possible about this type of program.

Your household was drawn in a random sample of the entire state. To ensure that this study represents the views of all Minnesotans, it is important that each household that was selected completes and returns the booklet.

If you have already completed and returned the booklet, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so at your earliest convenience. It is extremely important that your views be included in the study. If by some chance you did not receive the booklet or if it has been misplaced, please call collect at (218) 755-4103 so that we can send you another one. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Patrick G. Welle, Ph.D.
Project Director

LETTER # 3

January 30, 2001

Four weeks ago we sent you a survey seeking your views on a possible program to reward agricultural practices that yield multiple benefits to the environment. As of today we have not yet received your completed booklet.

The State of Minnesota has commissioned this study so that interested legislators and policymakers can have the best information possible about this type of program. The usefulness of our study depends on how accurately we are able to describe what the people of Minnesota want.

Your name was drawn through a scientific sampling process in which every household in Minnesota has an equal chance of being selected. Only about one out of every 3,000 households in Minnesota has been asked to complete this booklet. For the results of this study to truly reflect to views of the citizens of Minnesota, it is essential that each household in the sample return a completed survey.

In case you did not receive the booklet that we mailed to you earlier, or if it has been misplaced, we have enclosed another booklet. Please complete and return the booklet at your earliest convenience. Your contribution to the success of this study will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Patrick G. Welle, Ph.D.
Project Director

LETTER # 4:

February 20, 2001

Last month we sent you a survey seeking your views on a possible program to reward agricultural practices that yield multiple benefits to the environment. As of today we have not yet received your completed booklet.

The State of Minnesota has commissioned this study so that interested legislators and policymakers can have the best information possible about this type of program. The usefulness of our study depends on how accurately we are able to describe what the people of Minnesota want.

Your name was drawn through a scientific sampling process in which every household in Minnesota has an equal chance of being selected. Only about one out of every 3,000 households in Minnesota has been asked to complete this booklet. For the results of this study to truly reflect to views of the citizens of Minnesota, it is essential that each household in the sample return a completed survey.

In case you did not receive the booklets that we sent to you previously, we have enclosed another booklet. Please complete and return the booklet at your earliest convenience. For your views to be included in this important study, your completed booklet must be received no later than March 5th. Your contribution to the success of this study will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Patrick G. Welle, Ph.D.
Project Director