

Creating Connection Through Culture

All farmers have their own idea of what it means to be a “good farmer,” so how can we tap into a shared farmer identity to encourage conservation practice adoption? One strategy is to connect to the shared culture of the farming community. Using language and imagery that elicit familiar cultural concepts to amplify your conservation message can directly engage local farmers. This helps to build norms around conservation practice usage, which in turn can help to accelerate adoption across the region.

Using culture-based messages works especially well when visible on the landscape through field signs or billboards. The place-based nature of these messages creates an immediate visual association between the message and practice. It also connects to the community beyond those who operate farms and can help to encourage positive associations among non-farmers about their conservation using farmer neighbors.

Shared Language and History



Acadia Soil and Water Conservation District’s cover crop field sign reads, “Beaucoup Benefits! Cover Crops, a Lagniappe for Your Land.” This conservation district is located in the Mississippi River delta region of Louisiana. Using Cajun-French words like Lagniappe (meaning a bonus) help to connect to the culture of the farmers and community members in the area.

Local Pride

The Minnesota Soil Health Coalition taps into the statewide norm of “Minnesota Nice” in their cover crop field sign. Culturally, Minnesota Nice brings about ideas of friendliness, but also about fitting in with the accepted social order.

