

financially are not having the expected impact because they are difficult follow; as he explained, *"the programs today are not easy to fallow and farmers find it not worth it. So therefore the will leave what money they could have got on the table and the government will say the must not need a program or the income."*

Agents think that the **support from USDA** is necessary in order to spread the adoption of sustainable practices. One said, *"There must be TOTAL buy in by ALL the line extension agents and USDA personal. One-on-one extension only works if there is TOTAL buy in from extension agents and USDA personnel. It is very costly and time consuming."* *"When we can get USDA to support active agriculture as much as they have encouraged the abandonment of agriculture we may be able to make progress. At least in this area, they have "solved" the problem by taking farmers out rather than helping them [to] improve."*

One change agent referred to farmer **resistance to change** and suggested that change in farmers' attitudes and farming styles are needed but are unlikely to occur in a voluntary way. He explained, *"In most cases, it will not happen with the current set of producers. A 'That's how we have always done it and it has fed us' attitude is so ingrained, it will take a changing of the guard to correct the situation."*

#### Financial Help for Sustainable Agriculture

Change agents were asked: What kind of cost share and other forms of financial assistance would be most effective for advancing the adoption of sustainable agriculture practices? Their responses to this question are summarized in the following table, classified in eight categories of issues that change agents considered as cost share needs, other types of financial help recommended, and other comments that change agents made regarding financial help programs currently offered or if they support or not the use of cost share.

From the total surveys received only 56 percent of respondents answered this question. In the following table, categories of responses are expressed in percent of the responses to this question.

**Table 14. Main categories of types of cost share and other forms of financial assistance perceived as helpful for the adoption of sustainable agriculture practices, regional change agents, 2004.**

Category	Number	Percent of responses to question (N=151)
<b>Cost Share</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>52</b>
Cost-share of initial costs (implementation and transition cost)	24	16
Cost-share of Inputs and Supplies	14	9
Education Efforts	14	9
Research Efforts	8	5
Cost-share of Environmental Practices	8	5
Cost-share of Specific Sustainable Practices	7	5

Cost Share of Market and Infrastructure	7	5
<b>Incentive payments, Subsidies, Loans, and Tax credits</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>
Perspectives on the administration of current and prospective programs	59	39
Other comments		
Cost-share is not very effective	11	7
Cost-share can help	9	6

From those who answer this question 52 percent referred to issues in sustainable agriculture that they consider need financial help through cost share; 20 percent referred to other types of financial help (Incentive payments, Subsidies, Loans, and Tax credits); 39 percent made comments about current programs, their administrations and management and suggested adaptations of these programs to sustainable practices; 7 percent do not think that cost share is very effective and 6 percent mentioned that cost share can help (See Appendix C9).

### ***Cost-Sharing Practices and Facilities***

Change agents suggestions about the type of elements that cost share or other should be covering in order to help farmer to adopt sustainable agricultural practices can be classified in eight different categories of elements. In descending order, the categories are cost share of initial costs, inputs and supplies, education, some practices, environmental issues, research, infrastructure and services for sustainable farmers.

Cost share of initial costs and risks was the most frequently mentioned from the elements that change agents mentioned to need cost share assistance. Regarding the cost share of initial costs and risks, change agents differentiated between the **implementation costs** and the **transition risks** that farmers need to overcome in order to initiate with the use of sustainable practices.

Some of the respondents mentioned that cost share of initial costs of implantation will be helpful; they stated about financial help needs, *"Federal programs to help overcome initial investments costs," "Those that bear at least half the cost of implementation."* *"Enough cost share for a producer to derive enough income so that it would entice the producer to change to these methods. Sometimes the cost of equipment is very high to change to these methods."* *"Cost sharing of initial startup of sustainable practices (such as cost-sharing a no-till drill), permanent practices that promote sustainability are very effective."* Other respondents mentioned the financial would be helpful if could cover the initial costs or even get a profit *"a program with progressive adoption of sustainable practices that will allow the producer to at least breakeven and preferably increase their net income, somewhat similar to EQIP."*

One change agent shared his experience overseas about adoption of technologies in France. He explained, *"I visited France a couple years ago with a group of cheese makers, where we visited a dozen or so small dairy farms or cheese operations, and attended two*