

One respondent cited as example, *“Example--Some fertilizer dealers utilize uncertified soil labs(KINZE)that make recommendations for nutrients which are not needed, and also recommend applications such as lime in calcareous soils where there is no need, and is actually a detriment to nutrient utilization and crop production.”* Other respondent cited a product that is promoted as sustainable but he considers it as unsustainable; *“Round-up ready” encourages chemical dependence in lieu of development of sustainable practices.”*

Respondents consider that these types of information from companies are causing confusion about sustainable practices. They stated, *“Obviously companies such as Monsanto have not been helpful. In fact that kind of company tries to confuse the issue with false claims and attempts to get USDA to change organic and other standards.”* *“Some of the local suppliers wholeheartedly support this concept and others refuse to promote it. When producers talk to each other they get mixed signals thus causing much confusion and less acceptance of the ideas.”*

Respondents blamed these companies of **claiming too many products’ virtues**. They suggested, *“many companies come in making outrageous claims for a product. Sell their snake oil and disappear,”* *“many of these [companies] products are presented as magic potions that will work great under any conditions. Too many claims have been made for some products, not enough data from field research presented.”*

### ***Funding and Incentives***

Funding is other way through which these companies are hindering adoption of sustainable agriculture. Some respondents stated that they hinder through funding of university research and government agencies activities. They stated about how these companies are hindering, *“supporting school and university projects,”* *“They are heavy sponsors of farm meetings held by government agencies, and so are able to control the agenda for mainstream farmers. Many farmers do not know about sustainable ag groups, which do not have the resources for outreach that Extension does. A few commercial firms (fencing specialists, cover crop seed sellers, etc) show up at conferences, but in general they don't have the ability to sponsor lunches and even entire meetings like the big corporate guys.”*

Some of the respondents are neutral toward commercial firms and dealership, they do not think that helped or hindered. They stated about these companies: *Commercial firms and dealerships have not played much of a role in assisting or hindering the acceptance of sustainable practices by local growers,”* *“I don't think that these firms have been a factor either way. The only not helped nor hindered.”*

### **How Nongovernmental Organizations Hinder Sustainable Practices**

Change agents were asked to rate the influence over sustainable agriculture adoption efforts from farmer organizations, conservation organizations and environmental groups in a five category scale. The responses are summarized in the following table.

**Table 11. Perceived influence of nongovernmental organizations on the adoption of sustainable agriculture practices, regional change agents, 2004.**

Organization	Percent (N=205)				
	<i>Help a lot</i>	<i>Help some</i>	<i>Make no difference</i>	<i>Hinder some</i>	<i>Hinder a lot</i>
Farmer organizations	<b>12</b>	<b>52</b>	21	7	2
Conservation organizations	<b>22</b>	<b>54</b>	13	4	1
Environmental groups	4	31	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>

It is clearly observed in the table that the farmers' organizations and conservation organizations show a tendency to help efforts of sustainable practices adoption. While these two types of organizations seem to be helping, environmental groups are mainly not making a difference or even hindering efforts of adoption of sustainable practices.

To understand the real effect and the ways in which these organizations are helping or hindering change agents were asked: In what ways have farmers' organizations, conservation organizations, and environmental groups helped or hindered? Their responses to this question are summarized in the following table, classified four categories that refer to hindrance and three categories that refer to help from these organizations or groups.

From the total responses to the survey, only 46 percent of the participants addressed the question. From those who answer this question 40 percent mentioned issues related to hindrance and 36 percent mentioned issues related to help from these three types of organizations. The following table presents the frequencies for each major category and the percents from answers to this question as well as from the total responses to the survey.