FIELD TO MARKET

20 YEARS · 2006–2026

2026 FIELD TO MARKET CROSS-SECTOR DIALOGUE

RISK & RESILIENCE

Summary & Key Findings

June 3, 2026 · Raleigh, North Carolina

Prepared for Field to Market's membership and external stakeholders

REPORT CO-DEVELOPED WITH

SILVER MAPLE STRATEGIES

SECTION 01

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Field to Market's 2026 Cross-Sector Dialogue, held June 3, 2026, at the Sheraton Raleigh Hotel, came at a time when many participants believe the U.S. sustainable row-crop value chain is facing a more complex and interconnected set of risks than in the past. What feels different now is the degree to which multiple pressures are interacting at once, including weather volatility, farm financial stress, land tenure and succession challenges, growing data and reporting demands, infrastructure and market constraints, and evolving expectations around sustainability and resilience.

Experts representing Field to Market's five sectors share their respective group's perspectives on risk and resilience in U.S. sustainable row-crop agriculture on June 3, 2026, during the State of the Sector Forum. The panel took place during Field to Market's annual Cross-Sector Dialogue. *Credit: Kelsey Swango Billings/Field to Market*

Rather than seeking consensus definitions of risk or resilience, the dialogue created space for participants to examine where risk shows up across the value chain, what resilience requires in practice, and where stronger coordination could make a meaningful difference. The discussion surfaced several clear insights:

Economic viability remains more important than ever

The strongest throughline across the dialogue was economics. Participants repeatedly emphasized that resilience efforts are unlikely to scale if growers are expected to carry near-term costs, uncertainty, and operational disruption while value shows up later, elsewhere, or in forms that are difficult for them to benefit from. Growers and rural communities depend on reliable revenue, profitability, and the ability to balance financial risk and reward over long time horizons.

This theme appeared in discussion of scenario planning, ROI modeling, financial tools, and clearer communication of tradeoffs over time. Participants showed strong interest in approaches that could make the business case for sustainable and regenerative practices more visible and decision-useful for growers, landowners, advisers, and downstream actors.

Land tenure and succession planning are key success drivers

Participants also made clear that resilience depends in part on who owns the land, who makes decisions on it, and who benefits from long-term stewardship. Additional focus is needed on rented acres, aging operators, landowner education, succession planning, and conservation-friendly lease design. This broadened the conversation beyond practice adoption alone, highlighting the importance of structural and relationship-driven realities that influence whether longer-term investments in resilient sustainable agriculture are feasible.

Producers must see more tangible value from the data they share

Ag data surfaced repeatedly throughout the dialogue as an essential resource. But participants pointed to a growing mismatch between rising data demands and the practical value returned to the people providing that data. Participants expressed interest in more aligned metrics, clearer expectations, safer approaches to data-sharing, and stronger links between measurement and decision-making. Across sectors, attendees stressed the importance of data systems that can support better decisions, reduce friction, and build trust across the sustainable row-crop value chain.

Relationships and social capital must accompany tech solutions

Another strong theme was the importance of trusted advisers, grower-to-grower networks, ag retailers, co-ops, conservation districts, universities, and extension. Participants repeatedly emphasized that resilience depends on the people and institutions who help translate change into practice, not only on tools and technology. This theme also extended to the human side of resilience. Practical and relationship-based support systems are needed across sustainable row-crop agriculture: in technical assistance, in transition and succession planning support, and for grower mental health and well-being.

Whole-of-value-chain attention can strengthen row-crop systems

Participants also pointed to barriers beyond the farm gate. Supply-chain concentration, limited market outlets for diversified crops, regional infrastructure gaps, and sourcing vulnerabilities all surfaced as constraints on resilience. These issues reinforced a broader point: Resilience isn't just a farm-level challenge. It is a system-wide need shaped by the markets and infrastructure that surround ground-level decisions.

Field to Market could aid resilience through convening, testing

Participants consistently identified several potential roles Field to Market could play in helping members and the broader sustainable row-crop agriculture community cultivate greater resilience while mitigating risks. Among those described in this report:

- **Convening:** bringing together a more representative and decision-relevant set of stakeholders, including more growers, grower-facing organizations, lenders, insurers, regulators, and local delivery partners.
- **Translating:** helping members better understand resilience-related information needs, farm-level realities, and the practical implications of finance, reporting, and program design.

- **Connecting:** linking existing tools, infrastructure, and relationships more directly to practical decision-making, including possible future exploration of economic, social, and scenario-based applications connected to the Fieldprint Platform.
- **Testing:** supporting targeted pilots, working groups, resource scans, and learning efforts designed to answer specific resilience questions for sustainable row-crop agriculture.

The pages that follow provide a deeper look at each of these findings. This report is intended for use by Field to Market's membership and also for external stakeholders including collaborators, prospective members, and funders of sustainable and regenerative row-crop agriculture initiatives. It highlights core themes that emerged from the dialogue and illustrates the kinds of cross-sector opportunity areas that participants identified. These issues might be explored in future dialogues, serve as the basis for future research, or create a foundation for new or expanded Field to Market initiatives.

SECTION 02

ABOUT THE CROSS-SECTOR DIALOGUE PROCESS

For many Field to Market members who participated in the June 3, 2026, Cross-Sector Dialogue at the Sheraton Raleigh Hotel in Raleigh, N.C., the current moment in sustainable and regenerative agriculture feels different. The types of interrelated risks facing U.S. agriculture seem to have grown exponentially, even as practitioners seek to strengthen resilience across the system.

To allow for open and honest discussion of such complex issues, the Chatham House Rule applied. This means attendees could freely share ideas discussed at the meeting without attribution to specific speakers or their respective organizations.

Insights in this report came from many of the roughly 110 Cross-Sector Dialogue attendees spanning Field to Market's five sectors—Grower Organizations, Agribusinesses, Brands & Retailers, Civil Society, and Affiliates.

Comments and notes were compiled by human reporters during the event and via Mentimeter polling. Additional analysis and synthesis was performed post-dialogue using ChatGPT, then vetted and edited by human reviewers, to more fully connect dots and draw out patterns of interest for possible future Field to Market initiatives at the intersection of risk and resilience.

SECTION 03

EXPERT INSIGHTS: STATE OF THE SECTOR FORUM & PERSPECTIVE BURSTS

The 2026 Cross-Sector Dialogue began with two panels of experts that provided Field to Market members with diverse and nuanced viewpoints on what risk and resilience in sustainable row-crop agriculture means across the U.S. value chain. The conversations were facilitated by Nate Birt of Silver Maple Strategies, which also co-developed this report with Field to Market.

State of the Sector Forum

The forum featured five Field to Market Board members representing each of the organization's five sectors. Each speaker shared perspectives they'd heard from other members of their respective sectors in meetings held before the panel.

Civil Society sector representative Ryan Heiniger of Conservation Technology Information Center (center left) addresses a question during the State of the Sector Forum on June 3, 2026. From left are facilitator Nate Birt, Silver Maple Strategies; Brandon Hunnicutt, Nebraska farmer, the Grower Organizations representative; Alan Martinez, Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability, the Affiliate Sector representative; Sally Flis, Nutrien Ag Solutions, the Agribusiness Sector representative; and Jack Scott, Nestlé Purina, the Brands and Retailers representative. *Credit: Kelsey Swango Billings/Field to Market*

Brandon Hunnicutt — Grower Organizations (Hunnicutt Farms, Neb.): Underscored the pressure created when farmers are asked to manage change while market power and incentives sit elsewhere in the value chain. He encouraged more collaboration and communication, plus flexibility in grower-facing programs. Programs should recognize the unique needs of individual farms and the diverse commodities they grow — for example, conservation needs and program eligibility differ depending on whether a farmer grows corn for feed or for seed.

Sally Flis — Agribusiness (Nutrien Ag Solutions): Emphasized several areas of risk, including changing weather patterns. Such flux can make it hard for companies to decide which genetics to bring to market, compounding already-lengthy time horizons and regulatory review processes for reaching growers with new innovations. Agribusinesses also must evaluate new sustainability programs carefully before recommending them, as a bad experience can shatter years of trust.

Alan Martinez — Affiliate (Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability): Observed that sustainable agriculture remains in an early stage of development, where ambition often exceeds the systems, partnerships, and financial tools needed to support its scale. Drawing on a common risk-management framework, he noted organizations typically respond to risk in four ways: avoid it, reduce it, transfer it, or accept it. While growers are often asked to shoulder a disproportionate share of transition risk, all actors face difficult choices about how much uncertainty they will bear. The challenge is not eliminating risk, but designing partnerships and incentives that distribute it more effectively and fairly.

Ryan Heiniger — Civil Society (Conservation Technology Information Center): Stated that unseen risks often represent the biggest challenges for nonprofits in his sector. He reinforced that federal government support has been a major part of NGO technical-assistance delivery, and stressed the importance of nonprofits advancing regenerative agriculture diversifying their funding streams beyond heavy reliance on the federal government — to put more boots on the ground reaching farmers and assisting them with program sign-ups and the transition to regenerative practices.

Jack Scott — Brands & Retailers (Nestlé Purina): Noted that social indicators of grower and rural-community well-being are often forgotten, representing a key risk. Investment in further due diligence by brands and retailers could open doors for an expanded financial toolbox, such as longer-term contracts with the growers who supply them.

North Carolina diversified farmer Stuart Beam (center) answers a question during the Expert Perspective Bursts panel held June 3, 2026, in Raleigh, N.C. He spoke about the importance of prioritizing farmers' mental health and well-being. At right is Craig Ficenec of Sand County Foundation, who emphasized the need to invest in people who can support producers building resilience with technical assistance. *Credit: Kelsey Swango Billings/Field to Market*

Expert Perspective Bursts

The Expert Perspective Bursts panel widened the lens even further with insights on key issues underpinning risk and resilience:

Succession Planning — Shay Foulk, AgView Solutions: Joining via video, charted the massive transition of farmland from one generation to the next anticipated over the coming decades. He noted the importance of helping farmers navigate often-complex family dynamics so they can develop a clear succession plan with support from qualified technical-assistance providers.

Farmer Resilience — Stuart Beam, Beam Farms (N.C.): Acknowledged the difficult operating environment producers face and encouraged attendees — farmers in particular — to prioritize brain health and look out for their neighbors. He recommended resources such as the Farm State of Mind Alliance, led by the American Farm Bureau Federation.

Technical Assistance & Adviser Education — Craig Ficenec, Sand County Foundation: Observed that sustainable-ag efforts too often overlook that change takes time and that repeated personal connections build trust. A key risk is underinvesting in the people doing the work of technical assistance. He encouraged attendees to also view farmers themselves as trusted advisers in conservation-ag implementation.

Data, Technology & Agricultural Analytics — Daniela Jones, North Carolina State University: Addressed the common misconception that more data lead to better decisions. Researchers and tech providers should coordinate and engage the stakeholders who will use their dashboards to ensure they are actually useful on working farms. She encouraged sharing ideas broadly across the value chain, moving beyond optimization in isolation.

Insurance, Reinsurance & Risk Capital — LaRon Beemer, Aon: Explained that insurance (or other forms of risk transfer) is often required to scale financial investment. He envisioned a future in which higher-quality agricultural data could support new forms of underwriting, risk sharing, and investment — giving reinsurers and other stakeholders confidence that sustainable ag is a good investment.

Bridging Finance, Supply Chain Risk & Resilience — Erin Killeen, The Sustainability Consortium: Pointed out that sustainability risks increasingly are becoming business risks. She noted a persistent translation gap among sustainability, finance, and legal teams and called for a common language that can bridge misunderstandings and lead to more practical, less complex systems to advance sustainable row-crop agriculture.

SECTION 04

CROSS-SECTOR INSIGHTS: SMALL-GROUP TABLE DISCUSSIONS

After the opening panel discussions, attendees further workshopped sustainable row-crop agriculture risks and resilience opportunities during a structured three-part exercise. The dialogue began at a table labeled with each participant's respective sector name (e.g., Affiliate, Agribusiness). Each table hosted approximately eight to 10 participants, including a Table Captain, a Reporter, other Field to Market members, and expert guests.

Cross-Sector Dialogue attendees discuss solutions for mitigating risk and strengthening resilience in U.S. sustainable row-crop agriculture on June 3, 2026, in Raleigh, N.C. *Credit: Kelsey Swango Billings/Field to Market*

The Table Captain facilitated introductions and guided the conversation, while the Reporter listened to participants' ideas and documented them on a worksheet. Those worksheets served as the foundation for this report and captured these themes:

- a brainstorm of big ideas for mitigating risk and strengthening resilience;
- top barriers to those ideas becoming a reality;
- potential implementation partners who might carry those ideas forward;
- a refined set of solutions from among the initial big ideas;
- a short list of final ideas that Field to Market specifically might lead or support.

During **Round 1**, tables identified the most underestimated or complicated risks and barriers to broader sustainable-agriculture adoption, and named bold, practical moves that might reduce risk while strengthening resilience — writing down up to three actionable ideas, including who might lead or help implement them. In **Round 2**, participants moved to a different table labeled with a sector outside their own, cross-pollinating their ideas with others' to challenge, refine, and expand initial thinking. During **Round 3**, attendees remained seated and converged on a single idea Field to Market could realistically lead or support — listing needed partners, the most realistic first step, and the biggest benefit the idea could deliver.

Round 1 Findings: What Participants Surfaced First

Discussions held during Round 1 produced a wide range of ideas, but several insights emerged repeatedly across the 13 worksheets collected from the small-group discussions.

Insight #1: Economic viability remains a gating issue

> **THE TAKEAWAY**
> Resilience efforts are unlikely to scale while farmers carry the near-term cost and uncertainty and the value shows up later, elsewhere, or in forms that are hard to capture.

Across sectors, participants tied scaling directly to economics. Several tables called for scenario planning, multi-year financial analysis, and clearer links between resilience outcomes and return on investment.

What participants proposed:

- **Financial analysis in the Fieldprint Platform.** Agribusiness participants suggested building financial and scenario capabilities into the Platform so growers can weigh the economics of a decision rather than adopting practices on faith.
- **Economic-scenario tools.** Models that show how different practices play out financially over time.
- **Financial levers tied to outcomes.** Risk-reduction funds, outcome-linked rebates, and low-interest financing.
- **Visible value for ecosystem services.** A grower-facing table emphasized monetizing ecosystem services and making that value legible to buyers and policymakers, not only to farmers.
- **A connected approach to risk.** One Civil Society table called for risk awareness, risk reduction, and risk transfer to be linked rather than treated separately.

Insight #2: Land tenure, succession, and ownership are central — not side issues

> **THE TAKEAWAY**
> Resilience depends on who owns the land, who makes the decisions, and who captures the value of long-term stewardship — so rented acres, aging operators, and the lag between investment and payoff have to be part of the conversation.

Participants repeatedly tied resilience to land tenure and ownership. These are practical constraints on whether farmers can justify or sustain longer-horizon investments in conservation, soil health, and diversified systems — not peripheral concerns.

What participants proposed:

- **Modernized lease agreements.** Grower tables raised the challenge of leased ground and called for updated lease structures and conservation-friendly lease templates.
- **Landowner education.** Helping non-operating landowners understand and support stewardship practices on their ground.
- **Right-of-first-refusal concepts.** Tools that give operators more security and continuity on the land they work.
- **Succession-linked financial planning.** Ideas to tie tax treatment and financial planning more directly to succession readiness.
- **Entry through trusted channels.** Given the sensitivity of family dynamics and landlord-tenant relationships, several tables implied outside actors can only help if they come in through relationships growers already trust.

Insight #3: Data demands are growing faster than people's ability to use them

> **THE TAKEAWAY**
> The next phase of resilience work may depend less on collecting more data than on defining which data are useful for decisions, who benefits, and what counts as "good enough" confidence for a given situation.

Participants were not anti-data — many ideas depended on better data. But the recurring concern was that current systems too often extract information without returning enough practical value to the growers generating it. Data showed up in three forms across the worksheets:

- as a need for more credible and harmonized metrics;
- as a source of burden and misalignment; and
- as a potential foundation for better finance, risk-sharing, and analytics.

What participants proposed:

- **Accessible modeling and streamlined metrics.** Usable modeling, fewer and better-aligned indicators, and integration of economic, social, and operational dimensions rather than narrow technical reporting alone.
- **Safe-harbor data collection.** Approaches that let growers share information without exposing themselves to unintended risk.
- **Neutral data-sharing infrastructure.** Trusted, neutral infrastructure rather than data flowing one direction to whoever collects it.
- **Dynamic risk indicators linked to finance.** Stronger connections between farm-level data and underwriting or other financial tools.
- **Plain-English use cases.** ROI modeling, scenario analysis, and clear translation of what data downstream systems are actually looking for.

Insight #4: Trusted local support and human capacity remain indispensable

> **THE TAKEAWAY**
> Participants treated trusted-adviser capacity not as secondary to digital innovation but as the mechanism through which innovation, financing, and data systems actually become usable on the ground.

The worksheets repeatedly underscored the need for support that is local, relational, and trusted. This theme cut across ideological and technical lines, and several tables connected these structures not only to agronomic change but also to mental health, succession conversations, and change management. One Agribusiness table described farmer support — including technical assistance, transition support, and mental health — as the No. 1 barrier to strengthening resilience.

Where participants pointed:

- **On-farm and trade channels.** On-farm providers, co-ops, and ag retailers as everyday points of contact.
- **Public and institutional capacity.** Conservation districts, universities, and extension.

- **Peer learning.** Peer networks and farmer-to-farmer learning as a way ideas turn into practice.
- **The human side of change.** Technical assistance, transition support, and mental health treated as connected, not separate, needs.

Insight #5: Infrastructure and market concentration constrain diversification

> THE TAKEAWAY
> Infrastructure and market concentration are underappreciated barriers to diversification. Even when growers are willing to adopt new practices or diversify rotations, broader system constraints can make those choices economically or logistically difficult.

Where participants pointed:

- **Supply-chain concentration.** Concern about dependence on imports, specific geographies, China, or other concentrated sources.
- **Limited market outlets.** Insufficient viable markets for diversified crops, even when producers may be interested in growing them.
- **Processing and aggregation gaps.** Inadequate local or regional infrastructure to process, aggregate, and move diversified crops.
- **Domestic sourcing.** A need to strengthen U.S.-based sourcing as a way to reduce vulnerability.
- **Regional procurement models.** More resilient local and regional buying systems that could support more diverse production systems.
- **Beyond farm-level management.** A broader resilience challenge that cannot be solved only through individual grower decisions.

Insight #6: Collaboration is necessary, but roles and expectations remain blurry

> THE TAKEAWAY
> There is no shortage of interest in collaboration, but the value chain still lacks shared clarity about who should lead and which forms of collaboration are most likely to produce practical progress.

Participants repeatedly called for better collaboration while also revealing how underdeveloped collaborative approaches can be. Many of the same notes that proposed new mechanisms also pointed to uncertainty about who should lead, what Field to Market could realistically own, and where the boundaries lie between convening, education, measurement, and advocacy.

What participants proposed:

- **Grower scholarship funds.** Direct support for farmer participation and farmer-driven ideas.
- **Government-relations alignment.** Coordinating advocacy and policy engagement across actors.
- **Watershed-level collaboration.** Organizing efforts around shared geographies rather than individual operations.

- **Neutral legal frameworks.** Structures that let parties work together without one side carrying undue risk.
- **More representative convenings.** Bringing regulators, growers, and other missing actors into the same room.

Survey Results · Top Risk and Resilience Barriers

At the end of Round 1, reporters polled their tables via Mentimeter: "What is the biggest barrier to mitigating risk and strengthening resilience across the U.S. row-crop value chain?" Responses are listed in no particular order.

1. Ownership and decision-making of farmland
2. Farmer support (technical assistance, mental health, transition plans)
3. Farm security and farm finance
4. Inequitable distribution of funding
5. Supply chain logistics and diversification
6. Misalignment across data, indicators, insurance, advocacy
7. Farm economics are not conducive to change
8. Lack of supply chain representation, specifically widespread grower access
9. Comprehensive, aligned delivery of technical assistance and aligning a market that values regenerative agriculture outcomes
10. Lack of markets and infrastructure to support diversified crop and livestock production systems
11. Lack of trust and transparency of the role of each stakeholder in these partnerships
12. Alignment
13. The last 80 years of federal farm bill that has created the unsustainable farming system we're in now

Round 2 Findings: How Cross-Pollination Changed the Recommendations

Several rounds of discussion with a diverse group of Field to Market members enabled attendees to build on and edit resilience solutions proposed by others. *Credit: Kelsey Swango Billings/Field to Market*

The cross-pollination phase forced participants to move tables — outside of their native sector — and invited them to stress-test nascent ideas beyond a sector-specific framing. Three examples illustrate how attendees improved upon early-stage ideas about mitigating risk and strengthening resilience.

Cross-Pollination Proof Point: Economic Translation

What began in some cases as a general call for better economics became more clearly defined as scenario-planning, ROI modeling, integration of financial data into the Fieldprint

Platform, geographically relevant datasets, and clearer explanation of how practices affect land values, risk, or long-term viability. Cross-sector participants wrestled with which data points, audiences, or tools would be required to make their ideas usable.

Cross-Pollination Proof Point: Support-System Design

Producer-led and peer-to-peer approaches gained traction when participants connected them to more explicit delivery channels such as co-ops, ag retailers, conservation districts, universities, extension, and watershed-level efforts. Cross-pollination tended to push ideas away from generic calls for education and toward concrete questions about who is trusted, who is available to help locally, and how those actors might be supported or linked together.

Cross-Pollination Proof Point: Farmland and Transition Planning

Ideas around lease modernization and succession planning became more actionable when participants envisioned engaging in these activities using resources such as templates, legal resources, and landowner-facing education. They also recognized that stakeholder needs might vary depending on whether land is owned or rented. This moved the conversation toward practical design choices that might enable better decisions even against the backdrop of deeper, unresolved structural issues.

Cross-pollination also surfaced some cautions. Several notes imply that participants were skeptical of solutions that depend on heavy federal design, one-size-fits-all metrics, or abstract data systems detached from local conditions. Others worried that some concepts could drift into formal advocacy or legal complexity beyond Field to Market's role.

Round 2 Findings: Conditions That Must Be Met to Strengthen Resilience

While fine-tuning ideas for mitigating risk and strengthening resilience, participants also landed on a set of enabling conditions that would make many different solutions more likely to work.

Scaling Condition #1: Clearer definitions and shared signals

Across data, finance, sourcing, and resilience claims, stakeholders continue to ask different questions, use different indicators, or work from different assumptions about what counts as success. Without greater alignment, even well-intentioned efforts create duplication and friction. More shared language is needed to reduce confusion and help actors understand what is being requested and why.

Scaling Condition #2: Economic feasibility and risk-sharing

Resilience efforts stall when costs are concentrated upstream, returns are uncertain or delayed, or incentives do not recognize the realities of rented land, transition periods, or volatile markets. Any scalable approach must explain how downside risk is reduced, how value is created or recognized, and why the proposed action is rational from the grower's point of view.

Scaling Condition #3: Trusted translation capacity

This includes local advisers, peer networks, co-ops, ag retailers, conservation districts, extension, and other organizations that can help bridge the distance between strategy and practice. The people who make up the value chain already know a great deal about what should happen; what remains uneven is the connective tissue that helps the right information reach the right people in the right form at the right time.

Scaling Condition #4: Decision-useful data systems

The value chain wants better measurement along with modeling, analytics, and reporting structures that support action and reward contribution. Systems that only collect data for downstream reporting are likely to face skepticism; systems that help growers, landowners, lenders, advisers, or buyers make better decisions are more likely to build support.

Scaling Condition #5: Honest cross-sector alignment about roles and expectations

Clearer answers are needed to questions such as who is best positioned to convene, who can fund, who can validate, who can pilot, who can advocate, and who can absorb risk. Where those roles remain fuzzy, collaboration rhetoric tends to outpace progress on working farms.

Survey Results · Favorite Overall Ideas

At the end of Round 2, reporters polled their tables via Mentimeter: "In one sentence, describe your table's favorite idea for mitigating risk and strengthening resilience." Responses are listed in no particular order.

1. For supply chain diversification, assess international supply chain risks and barriers within each major input pillar.
2. Replicate the Field to Market model holistically at the watershed level.
3. Modernize lease agreements with conservation planning and right of first refusal.
4. Monetize ecosystem services to build up the science that supports sustainable-agriculture production communication.
5. A foundation to provide funding for local farmer-driven ideas.
6. Unlock financial levers to reward good management — e.g., low-interest loans, insurance rebates — for farmers adopting regen-ag practices.
7. Influence policy by aligning on a message via FTM and engaging members' government-relations teams to collectively deliver that message to D.C.
8. Make economic-scenario analysis for a farmer more transparent across the value chain so everyone understands the risks and rewards.
9. Bring the right people — producers and regulators — to the table.
10. Source domestically, creating a captive market of U.S. farmers; improves livelihoods and addresses an insurance piece as well. FTM could be the middle player that helps.
11. Identify specific, practical tweaks to the federal crop-insurance program that would build a more sustainable safety net to support regen-ag transition.
12. Improve farmer and supply-chain relationships via programs for real risk-sharing that build long-term trust in partnerships.

Round 3 Findings: Roles Field to Market Could Play

During the third and final round, participants explored key roles Field to Market could play in mitigating risk and strengthening resilience — in keeping with its three strategic pillars of multi-stakeholder collaboration, science-based tools and research, and continuous improvement.

Role #1: Convening

Field to Market might explore bringing to the table an even more representative and decision-relevant mix of stakeholders — more growers, grower-facing organizations, regulators or standards-setters where appropriate, lenders, insurers, and local delivery partners who often sit between strategy and implementation. Some tables stated that grower participation should be broadened and financially supported where needed, including through travel scholarships or related mechanisms that make participation more feasible.

Role #2: Translating

This could include helping members clarify what resilience-related information is actually needed, what counts as credible but practical measurement, how to interpret demands coming from finance or reporting contexts, and how farm-level constraints affect the design of programs or partnerships.

Participants in the 2026 Cross-Sector Dialogue listened to fellow industry experts and shared their own views on opportunities to mitigate risk and strengthen resilience. The event happened June 3, 2026, at the Sheraton Raleigh Hotel. *Credit: Kelsey Swango Billings/Field to Market*

Role #3: Connecting

Field to Market could continue to connect existing tools and infrastructure more directly to practical decision-making. The Fieldprint Platform surfaced several times not only as a measurement tool but as a possible home or connector for additional kinds of analysis — particularly around economics, scenario planning, outcomes, and communication of value.

Role #4: Neutral Bridge-Building and Testing

This might involve brokering targeted pilots, surfacing case examples, linking members with external partners, or convening smaller working groups around clearly bounded questions. Field to Market has the ability to bring together actors who might not otherwise collaborate easily, while still remaining grounded in science, pragmatism, and cross-sector trust.

Role #5: Advancing the Core Strategic Pillars

Participants recognized that some of the most difficult resilience issues touch areas such as policy, insurance design, capital formation, or legal coordination that go beyond Field to Market's core roles. The organization should engage those issues carefully through convening, translation, education, and selective partnership rather than by trying to directly own every solution.

Round 3 Findings: Top Refined Ideas Field to Market Could Lead or Facilitate

01 Make economic resilience more visible and decision-useful

Participants see a need for practical tools that help clarify the tradeoffs, returns, and risk over time of sustainable and regenerative practice implementation on row-crop fields.

Possible FTM role: explore whether existing tools, especially the Fieldprint Platform or related resources, could better support scenario analysis, outcome valuation, or clearer communication of the financial implications of practice change.

Realistic first step: a member-informed scoping exercise focused on the specific economic questions growers, landowners, advisers, and downstream actors most need help answering.

Likely partners: ag economists, data providers, grower representatives, and member organizations already working on farm-level financial analysis.

Key barriers: data availability, regional variability, platform scope, and the risk of promising more precision than the underlying datasets can support.

02 Strengthen grower-centered design principles for resilience initiatives

Multiple tables implied that resilience efforts fail when they are built around downstream goals without enough regard for producer feasibility, timing, and risk exposure.

Possible FTM role: develop a grower-informed set of design principles or practical guidelines for member initiatives that aim to advance resilience.

Realistic first step: a grower-informed, targeted working group focused on identifying the most common project-design friction points and the principles that could reduce them.

Likely partners: grower members, affiliates, civil society organizations, and selected brands or agribusiness actors involved in sustainable and regenerative program design.

Key barriers: developing guidance specific enough to be useful without becoming so rigid it loses applicability for diverse geographies and commodities.

03 Elevate land tenure and succession as resilience infrastructure

The volume of notes on lease design, landowner education, succession planning, and transition support suggests a major opportunity to treat these not as peripheral issues but as core determinants of resilience.

Possible FTM role: Field to Market doesn't provide legal or estate-planning services, but it could help convene partners, surface practical resources, and highlight where ownership and transition dynamics affect adoption and long-term stewardship.

Realistic first step: a resource scan or member roundtable focused specifically on rented land, conservation-friendly leasing, and succession-related resilience barriers.

Likely partners: organizations such as American Farmland Trust, Practical Farmers of Iowa, university extension experts, farm-transition specialists, and selected grower-facing legal or advisory groups.

Key barriers: state-specific legal and policy differences, complex family dynamics, and the fact that many transition-planning decisions happen in private rather than in institutional settings.

04 Invest in trusted intermediary capacity and local translation support

Participants repeatedly signaled that greater resilience could be attained through closer partnership with the people and institutions growers already trust.

Possible FTM role: highlight effective intermediary models, convene ag retailers, co-ops, conservation districts, extension, and peer-learning leaders, and explore where members could better support local translation capacity.

Realistic first step: a focused learning session or small design sprint on adviser and intermediary roles in resilience implementation.

Likely partners: extension, conservation organizations, co-ops, ag retail, and mental-health or farm-support organizations where relevant.

Key barriers: a lack of durable funding, coordination, and clarity about who should deliver the technical assistance to growers.

05 Use neutral convening to test pilots around risk-sharing and regional collaboration

Several final-round ideas pointed toward the potential value of watershed-level models, regional pilots, domestic-sourcing collaborations, or more explicit cross-sector risk-sharing conversations.

Possible FTM role: broker one or two carefully bounded pilots or learning cohorts rather than launching a broad risk-sharing program immediately.

Realistic first step: identify where member interest, regional opportunity, and partner readiness overlap enough to justify a pilot with a clear question and clear boundaries.

Likely partners: member companies, growers, regional organizations, watershed partners, lenders, or technical providers depending on the topic.

Key barriers: scope creep, unclear ownership, and the temptation to frame pilots as proof of concept before enough evidence exists.

06 Improve representation and plain-English translation in future convenings

Some tables suggested there is room to improve on risk- and resilience-related communications — encouraging further grower participation, bringing underrepresented actors to the table, and translating complex topics such as greenhouse-gas accounting or reporting expectations into language usable across the value chain.

Possible FTM role: act relatively quickly through targeted invitations, scholarships, and dedicated translation sessions that help members and growers discuss important topics in language easily understood by all parties.

Realistic first step: review Field to Market event attendance patterns, identify gaps, and design a modest support mechanism or content approach before the next major convening.

Likely partners: member sponsors, grower organizations, standards bodies, or subject-matter experts willing to engage in plain-English Q&A sessions or resource development.

Key barriers: the practical work of making participation and translation worth the effort for busy participants.

Survey Results · How Field to Market Could Lead

At the end of Round 3, reporters polled their tables via Mentimeter: "What is the #1 refined and actionable idea Field to Market could realistically lead, and what would be the main benefit?" Responses are listed in no particular order.

1. FTM convenes trade associations and others to spur action on completing assessments, including identifying co-risks and benefits. Benefit: consistent supply and avoided disruption.
2. Define risk and resilience for each node of the supply chain — convene the people and organizations with data we can act on. Builds a more holistic business case for farmers and supply chain.
3. Develop a report showing risk/benefits of practices to educate nonfarm landowners and CPGs and allow farmers to create scenarios.
4. Support members in effectively sharing knowledge on successful risk-sharing in projects with farmers — reducing the risk of starting new projects.
5. Create best practices for rented-land agreements (longer lease, cost-sharing), then ensure FTM members with projects dependent on leased land understand the limitations.
6. Facilitate/create a foundation to provide funding to local farmers; work with commodity groups across regions.
7. Integrate financial data into the Platform to show costs/benefits of practices and outcomes. Creates transparency and digestible ways to measure them.
8. Cross-sector collaboration at the watershed level — benefiting producer livelihoods and generating public benefits (soil health, water conservation).
9. Encourage grower attendance and participation: waive registration fees, build a travel-sponsorship program, promote locally and with grower-facing members.
10. Social indicators. Main benefit: more incentive for farmers to keep growing when their livelihoods are valued and prioritized.
11. Convene a research coalition of crop-insurance experts to learn what has/hasn't worked and what data to bring to make the case for regen-ag policies.
12. Engage stakeholders to begin building data sets to support storytelling of farm production/ecosystem value — supporting generational farm-transition viability.
13. Convene a member group of government-relations reps to align on a message or ask to bring to state or federal government. Accelerates adoption; enables stronger cross-sector work.

Post-Dialogue Insights: Takeaways from the Expert Panelists

As a wrap-up, experts from the State of the Sector Forum and the Expert Perspective Bursts panel were invited back on stage to share takeaways from the morning's conversations. A few of the ideas they shared, paraphrased from notes:

> **Stuart Beam:** More producer input is needed.

> **Brandon Hunnicutt:** Engage in cross-sector collaboration to figure out what growers actually need, rather than making assumptions and handing out money for things that might not work.

Alan Martinez: We need greater co-creation with producers, where growers are active partners in design, testing, and refinement of sustainable-agriculture programs. He encouraged participants to keep experimenting and learning rather than letting a “this is hard” mindset slow progress.

Sally Flis: Trust remains key. Explore ways to help verify which grower-serving groups are credible to receive funding for implementation.

Erin Killeen: Get growers to the table first. Focus on alignment. Build shared infrastructure and incentives. Emphasize social indicators spanning growers and communities. Reinvest in information sources trusted by growers.

Daniela Jones: Work on better understanding growers’ operational challenges in sustainable and regenerative agriculture. Government policies can also assist in behavior change.

Jack Scott: Value nature as an asset worth protecting. This can help mitigate the risk of farmland being converted to non-ag uses.

LaRon Beemer: Consider ways to mitigate risk and strengthen resilience for human capital — the people at the center of U.S. sustainable row-crop agriculture, including the economic and financial risks they bear.

Craig Ficenec: Explore ways to partner more closely with non-operating landowners.

SECTION 05

POST-DIALOGUE INSIGHTS: UNRESOLVED TENSIONS

Attendees surfaced not only opportunity areas but also unresolved tensions that current and future ag leaders should weigh carefully on the path to mitigating risk and strengthening resilience for U.S. sustainable row-crop agriculture.

01 Determining how much standardization is the right amount

Participants clearly want more alignment in data, indicators, and expectations, yet several also cautioned against one-size-fits-all systems or overbuilt requirements that fail to reflect local realities. The practical question is how to pursue enough alignment to reduce friction without flattening important differences.

02 Murky boundaries among education, convening, and advocacy

Several ideas touched on crop-insurance design, legal coordination, market incentives, domestic sourcing, or government relations. Participants often framed Field to Market’s role carefully, implying that the organization should inform, convene, translate, or support members without becoming a formal advocacy body.

03 Social indicators of farmer / rural well-being and livelihood

Resilience frameworks remain incomplete when they omit profitability, living income, mental health, health-care access, or succession stress, according to some participants. The human realities of agricultural transition must be factored into risk- and resilience-focused efforts.

04 Role of public policy versus private-sector initiative

Some tables leaned toward policy levers, public incentives, or stronger public infrastructure, while others emphasized the limits of federal design and the importance of trusted local or private channels. Participants see resilience as requiring both institutional and market-facing change, even if they differ on where the primary lever sits.

05 Where risk resides and who has leverage to change it

Participants were candid, directly or indirectly, that many sustainability and resilience expectations are still easier to set downstream than to absorb upstream. Until that imbalance is addressed more directly, resilience efforts might continue to generate interest without fully earning growers' trust.

SECTION 06

CONCLUSION

The concept of resilience in U.S. sustainable and regenerative row-crop agriculture, however broad, can be a useful organizing concept because it forces stakeholders to connect real risks and prospective solution sets that are too often addressed separately.

The 2026 Cross-Sector Dialogue did not reduce resilience to a single practice, metric, or technology. Instead, it surfaced a more grounded understanding that resilience depends on whether farmers, advisers, companies, and other actors can navigate disruption, absorb transition, and keep making workable decisions under pressure. At the end of the day, all of these issues fundamentally involve complex human beings in pursuit of enormous change with incomplete information.

> *The time has come to shift from broad recognition that resilience is urgently needed to bold action that creates even greater resilience on working lands — with broad benefits from farm gate to end user.*

Determination, empathy, and creative problem-solving will likely be just as necessary as the capital, labor, and time required to support row-crop growers in their continued adoption of sustainable and regenerative agriculture practices over Field to Market's next 20 years.

Participants consistently pointed toward practical needs such as better economic translation, stronger support systems, more honest treatment of land and succession realities, more decision-useful data, and more explicit cross-sector alignment on roles and expectations. None of those needs are especially flashy, but together they illustrate the underdeveloped yet essential connective tissue required to maintain and expand sustainable row-crop agriculture.

Participants also appeared to see a constructive role for Field to Market in pursuit of greater resilience. They underscored the value of Field to Market as a convener, translator, and bridge-builder that can help members clarify what matters, where collaboration is worthwhile, and what kinds of action are realistic. These roles could be especially valuable at a time when the row-crop value chain is still learning how to manage increasingly interconnected risk.

Field to Market is well-positioned to play a role in strengthening resilience because of its experience and track record of building trust, sharing visibility, enhancing coordination among stakeholders, implementing real-world sustainable-ag projects, and measuring and reporting on continuous improvement over time. In short, attendees encouraged Field to Market and its members to help make the path toward resilience more practical, more coordinated, and more credible.

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APPENDIX A

FULL MENTIMETER QUESTIONS & RESPONSE SUMMARY

The following questions and answers were compiled via the Mentimeter smartphone survey tool during Field to Market's 2026 Cross-Sector Dialogue on risk and resilience.

All attendees were invited to respond to: "What is the single biggest opportunity for agriculture (and Field to Market) over the next 20 years?" The question was both a nod to the organization's 20th anniversary in 2026 and a forecast of big opportunities over the next two decades.
Credit: Field to Market

The full set of responses featured in the word cloud

Agri carbon · Agronomy · AI · Alignment · Alignment to make progress · Alternative finance · Biofuels · Carbon · Carbon sequestration · Chain of custody · Collaboration · Commercialization · Common measurement · Convergence · Diversified finance · Diversify U.S. ag and market · End-to-end connectivity · Farm transition · Farmer profitability · Farmers · Finance · Financial resilience · Focus on sustainability · Fully account impact · Generational wealth · Good news · Impact · Innovation · Markets for new crops · Partnership · Precision conservation · Reduced rates of adoption · Resilience (×4) · Risk evaluation · Scale regen ag practices · Scalability · Shared financing · Stacked incentives · Stewardship · Strong farmer support · Supply chain resilience · Sustainable ag landscapes · Support growers first · Systems change · Tell ag sustainability story · The next generation · Tribes · True market solutions · Trust is huge · Uptake · U.S. fertilizer production · Water (×2) · Young farmers

Three additional questions were posed during the small-group table discussions. Reporters polled their tables to reach consensus, then responded on behalf of their respective table. The full sets of responses to these three questions are presented in context within **Section 04**:

- *"What is the biggest barrier to mitigating risk and strengthening resilience across the U.S. row-crop value chain?"* — see **Round 1 survey results**.
- *"In one sentence, describe your table's favorite idea for mitigating risk and strengthening resilience."* — see **Round 2 survey results**.
- *"What is the #1 refined and actionable idea Field to Market could realistically lead, and what would be the main benefit?"* — see **Round 3 survey results**.

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT IDEA INVENTORY BY TABLE

This appendix inventories top ideas captured by Reporters at the 13 tables that submitted worksheets from Field to Market's 2026 Cross-Sector Dialogue on risk and resilience in U.S. sustainable row-crop agriculture.

At-a-Glance Inventory

#	SECTOR THAT KICKSTARTED CONVERSATION	BIGGEST BARRIER THIS TABLE IDENTIFIED	FAVORITE / FINAL IDEA DEVELOPED	FIELD TO MARKET POTENTIAL ROLE
1	**Agribusiness**	Grower-facing participation is too thin; programs risk being less relevant without stronger grower presence.	Create grower travel scholarships / waived registration; bring the Greenhouse Gas Protocol into the room in plain English.	Recruit, underwrite, and design for stronger grower participation.

#	SECTOR THAT KICKSTARTED CONVERSATION	BIGGEST BARRIER THIS TABLE IDENTIFIED	FAVORITE / FINAL IDEA DEVELOPED	FIELD TO MARKET POTENTIAL ROLE
2	**Civil Society**	Economic risk remains hard to translate into usable scenario planning and succession support.	Add economic / ROI scenario planning and succession-support resources that growers, landowners, and downstream actors can use.	Convene partners and explore a scenario-analysis module or dashboard.
3	**Grower**	Farmland ownership and decision rights limit action, especially on leased acres.	Modernize lease agreements with conservation provisions and right-of-first-refusal concepts.	Convene legal, NGO, and grower partners to develop best-practice lease tools.
4	**Civil Society**	Current crop insurance and safety-net structures do not adequately reward transition risk.	Pursue crop-insurance reform research to better support profitable, compensated regenerative transition.	Convene a research coalition and frame evidence-based options.
5	**Agribusiness**	Trust, proof points, and shared understanding of stakeholder value remain weak.	Convene a cross-sector government-relations / alignment group around a shared message and stronger proof points.	Translate stakeholder roles, evidence needs, and shared messaging.
6	**Grower**	Farm security and farm finance remain major constraints; ecosystem-service value is not monetized well.	Monetize ecosystem services and strengthen the data/science base that can support them.	Help build datasets, communicate value, and connect data to incentives.
7	**Agribusiness**	Supply-chain logistics, sourcing concentration, and lack of diversification create systemic risk.	Assess bottlenecks across major input pillars and identify alternative sourcing / infrastructure options.	Convene trade groups and members to assess co-risks, benefits, and supply options.
8	**Agribusiness**	Farm economics are not conducive to change.	Build economic scenario tools and conservation-practice reports that show risks and rewards across the chain.	Expand Fieldprint or adjacent tools to support scenario analysis and education.
9	**Affiliate**	Alignment and trust are weak; funding for farmer-led local ideas is fragmented.	Create a foundation or pooled mechanism to fund locally driven farmer ideas and networks.	Help validate the concept, find partners, and connect funding sources.
10	**Agribusiness**	Farmer support systems are fragmented; local capability is poorly connected to buyer demand.	Develop co-op / ag-retail bridging programs that connect local capacity with buyer needs.	Blueprint and facilitate regionally grounded partnership models.
11	**Grower**	Funding is inequitably distributed; expectations are often set without farmers at the center.	Replicate the Field to Market model at the watershed level with farmer-first principles.	Use the membership base to pilot regional, cross-sector collaboration models.
12	**Civil Society**	Markets and infrastructure for diversification are insufficient.	Unlock financial levers — loans, insurance, rebates, and outcome-linked value — to reward good management.	Integrate financial data and outcomes into platform logic and partner conversations.
13	**Cross-sector**	Misalignment across data, indicators, insurance, and advocacy.	Advance social indicators, domestic sourcing / regional aggregation, and transparent risk-sharing models.	Surface tensions, add social metrics, and support neutral infrastructure conversations.