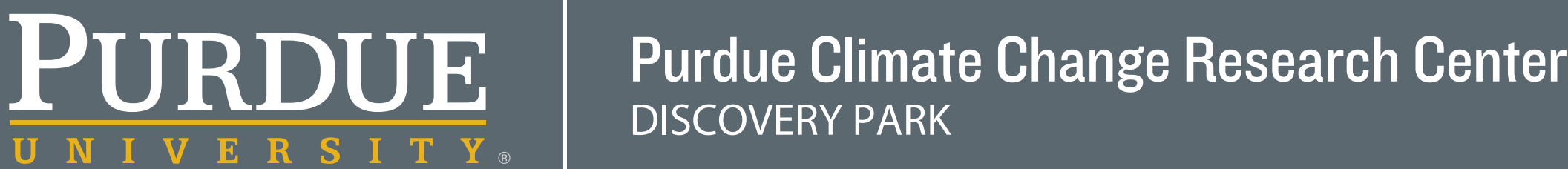


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Evaluating Decision Tools, Outreach, and Outcomes for the U2U Project

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THE PROJECT



AgClimate4U.org

U2U incorporates climate data into useful tools to help farmers and advisors make informed decisions



GOAL:
Improve the resilience and profitability of farms amid a changing climate

DETAILS:

- 6-year, \$5 million U.S. Department of Agriculture grant
- 12-state, interdisciplinary team
- More than 50 team members from 9 universities, two Regional Climate Centers and the National Drought Mitigation Center
- Creating, promoting & evaluating online decision support tools for farmers and farm advisors

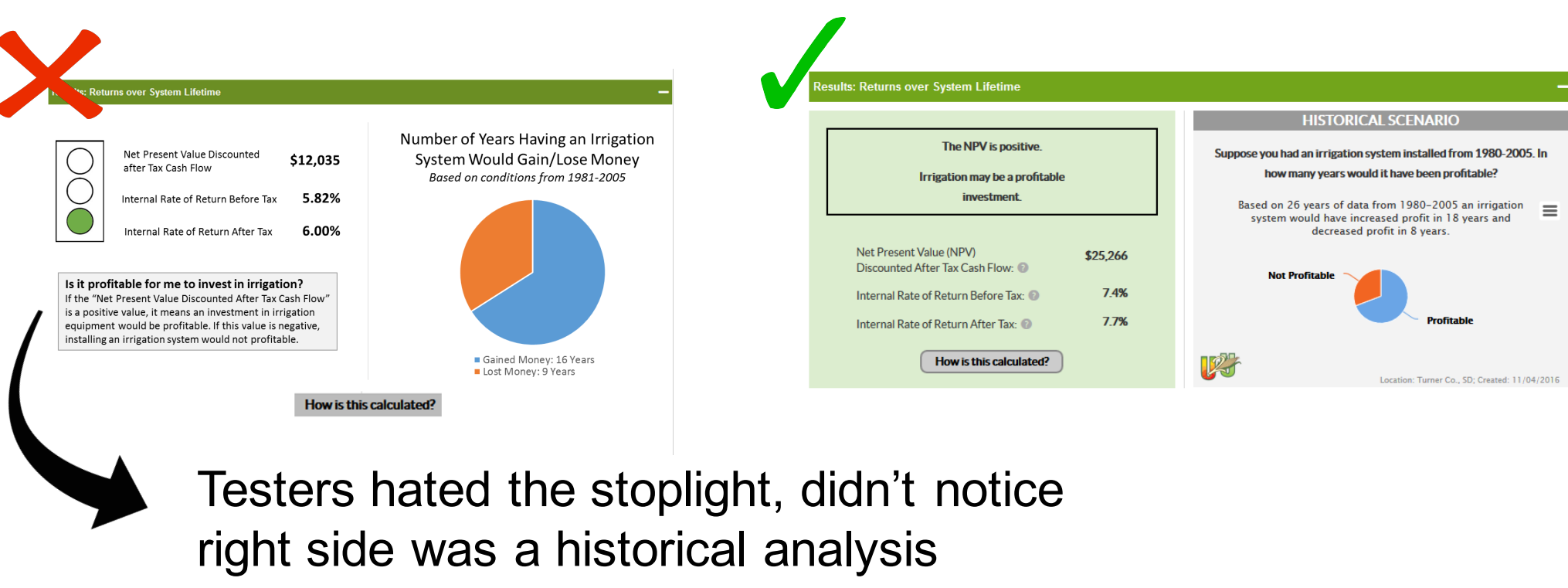
TOOL DEVELOPMENT

EVALUATION QUESTION:
How might the tool need to be updated to ensure usability?

EVALUATION METHOD:




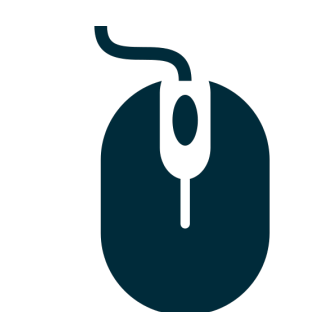
- BENEFITS:**
- Watch 10-15 minute videos of participants using your site. Hear them describe where they get stuck or confused. See what distracts or draws their attention.
 - Testers are paid, screening questions find target audience
 - Tasks are customized, feedback within 1 hour
- TIP:**
- Best suited for page layout, site navigation, locating key content, first impressions of trustworthiness and likability




OUTCOME EVALUATION

EVALUATION QUESTION:
What, if any, difference did our tools make?

EVALUATION METHOD:
End-of-project survey with farmers and agricultural advisors to measure perceptions and attitudes about weather and climate, awareness of U2U project, and use of U2U tools.

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- 1. Paper Survey with Farmers**
- Random sample of landowners across 12-state Midwestern U.S. region, with oversampling in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Nebraska
 - 2,633 responses (2,166 in 4-state area), 39% response rate. 1,536 respondents (1,224 in 4-state area) were farmers
 - Results shown are only for the 4-state area
- 
- 2. Online Survey with Advisors**
- Surveyed nearly all advisors across 12-state region, including Extension staff, Certified Crop Advisors, conservation staff, Technical Service Providers, and others
 - 3,098 responses, 25% response rate. 2,719 respondents advised farmers

TOOL OUTREACH

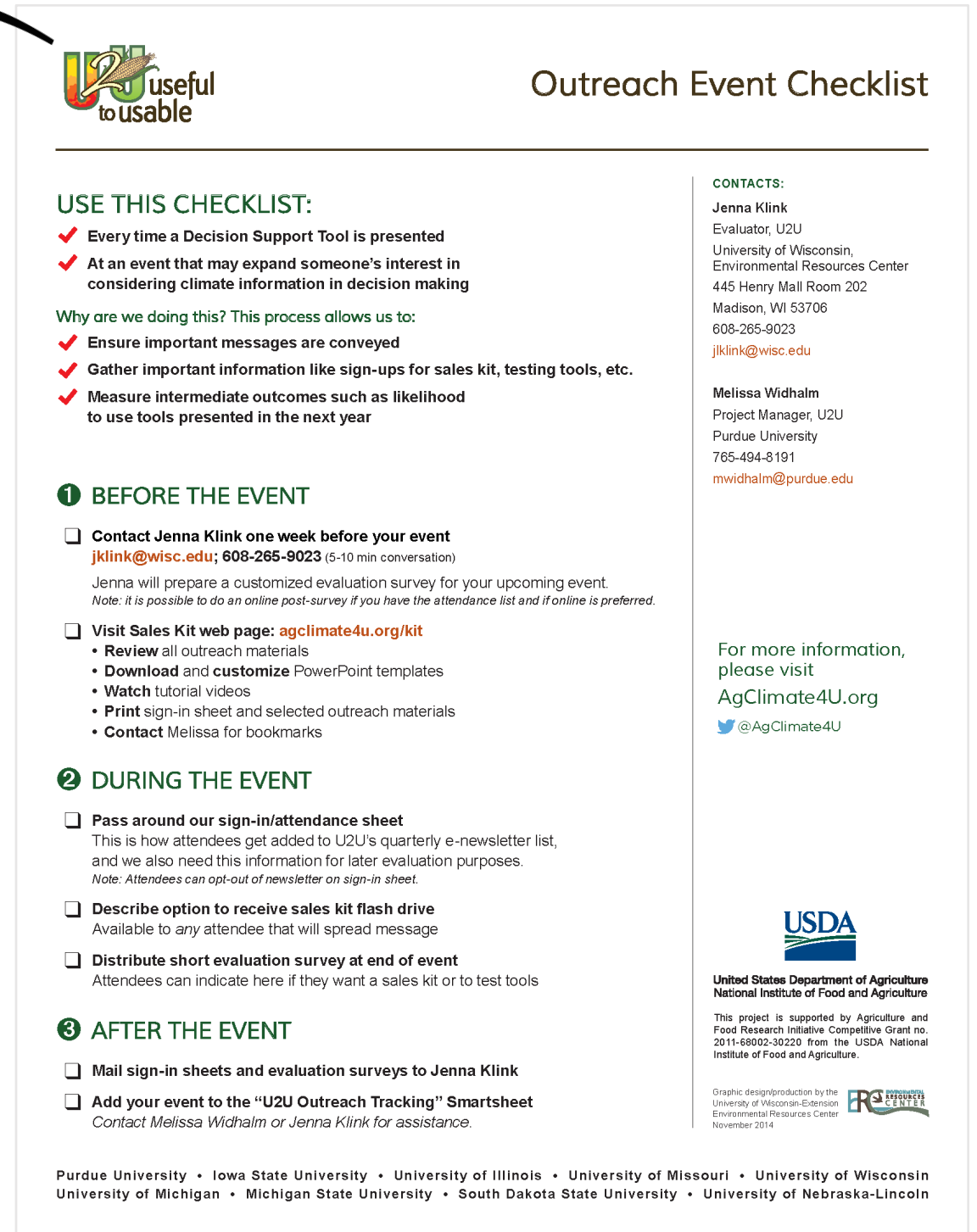


165 in-person outreach events with farmers and advisors from July 2013 to June 2016

EVALUATION QUESTION:
What are immediate intentions of audience?
How can we improve our future outreach?
Who wants more information?

- EVALUATION METHOD:
- Post-event surveys, customized for each event's content and audience, conducted at 32 events (n=882)
 - Monitor Google Analytics

Outreach event check list ensured consistency.



Post-event team debriefings allowed for real-time tool adjustments, development of new outreach materials.


MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Mail and email promotional materials sent to target lists via media buying company, reached 35,560 people




EVALUATION QUESTION:
How effective was our campaign?
Is a multimedia approach worth the money?


- EVALUATION METHOD:
- Monitor Google Analytics after send-outs
 - Email open rates and click rates
 - Include survey with final mailed campaign



48% of those on the campaign email list opened at least one campaign email.



11% clicked on a link to explore project tools.



Generally, web traffic during campaign periods was **2-3 times greater** than non-campaign periods.

Nearly 40% of respondents to the final campaign survey did not continue to explore the website and find other tools when they looked at the advertised tool online, supporting the decision to market each tool individually.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

| GOALS: | VISION |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Farmers improve decision making✓ Purposively use climate information | |
| GOALS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Use U2U tools, apply to decisions✓ Advisors improve decision making | |
| EDUCATIONAL | |
| 75% of advisors and 65% of farmers are moderately to very concerned about weather or climate impacting farm management in their area. | |
| 35% of advisors and 34% of farmers had heard of at least one U2U tool before the survey. | |
| 73% of advisors said the U2U tools are moderately to very usable (of those who used at least one tool). | |
| ACTIONS | |
| 33% of advisors and 34% of farmers who heard about the U2U tools used at least one U2U tool in their advising and/or decision making. | 79% of advisors and 59% of farmers are willing to use decision support tools with weather or climate information to inform their work |
| Advisors mostly used U2U tools for advising about seed purchases, crop choice and fertilizer application timing. | 52% of advisors and 44% of farmers who used U2U tools said their <u>likelihood of using weather or climate information has increased</u> due to the U2U project. |
| Farmers mostly used the U2U tools for decisions around harvesting, planting and irrigation scheduling. | 71% of advisors and 44% of farmers would recommend at least one U2U tool to others . |
| 41% of advisors indicated they have given better quality advice after using U2U tools. | As of late 2016, U2U tools have supported decisions on over 15.5 million acres in the Midwestern U.S. |