

Biofuels Bonanza? :

Exploring Community Perceptions of the Promises and Perils of Biofuels Production

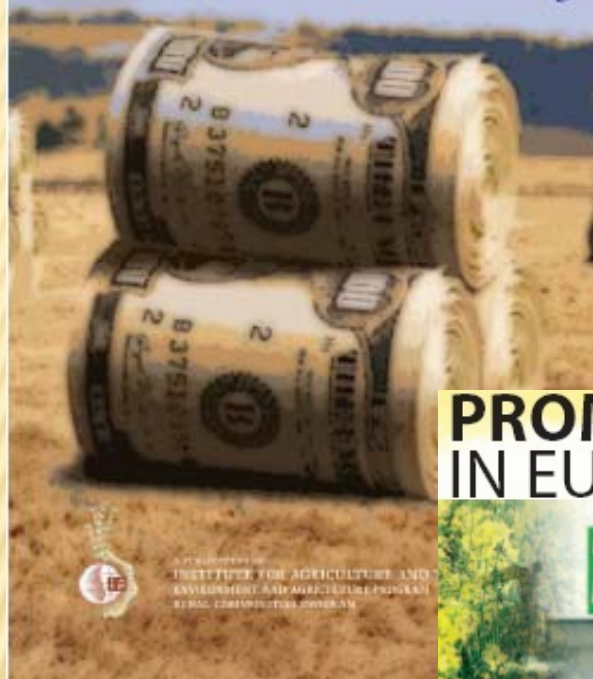


Theresa Selfa, Laszlo Kulcsar, Richard Goe, and Gerad Middendorf,
Kansas State University
Carmen Bain, Iowa State University
National Academy of Sciences Panel
June 23-24, 2009

“Continued expansion of biofuel production will increase global demand for agricultural products and result in the **creation of new jobs** at every stage of the production process, from harvesting, to processing, to distribution. As more countries become producers of biofuels, **their rural economies will likely benefit** as they harness a greater share of their domestic resources. But not everyone will benefit equally”

Cultivating a New Rural Economy

Assessing the Potential of Minnesota's Bioindustrial Sector



Biofuels

towards a greener and secure energy future

Editor P.P. Bhojvaid

PROMOTING BIOFUELS IN EUROPE



THE ETHANOL FACT BOOK

A Compilation of Information About Fuel Ethanol



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CLEAN
FUELS
DEVELOPMENT
COALITION

In cooperation with:



20 years Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy

Where are future markets for Midwestern agriculture?

Right here in the Midwest!

Potential for Biofuels for Transport in Developing Countries

October 2005

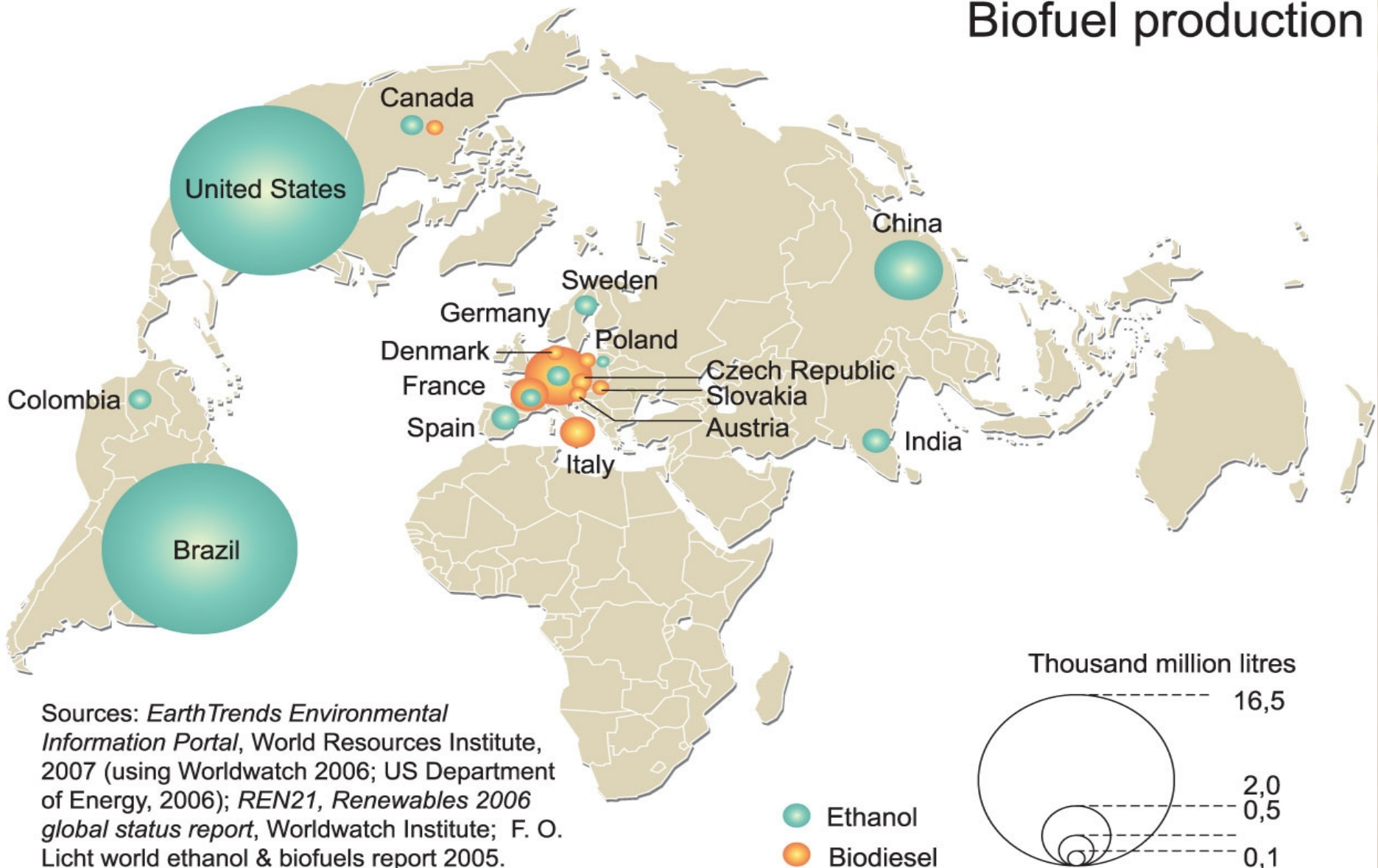


Biofuels: A Win-Win Approach That Can Serve the Poor

Peter Hazell and Joachim von Braun



Biofuel production



Food vs. Fuels

114 Oxfam Briefing Paper

EMBARGOED UNTIL 6am, Wednesday 25 June 2008

Another Inconvenient Truth

How biofuel policies are deepening poverty and accelerating climate change


THE WORLD BANK world development report 2008



AGRICULTURE FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY BRIEF

Biofuels: The Promise and the Risks

Fuelling exclusion? The biofuels boom and poor people's access to land



Lorenzo Cotula, Nat Dyer & Sonja Vermeulen

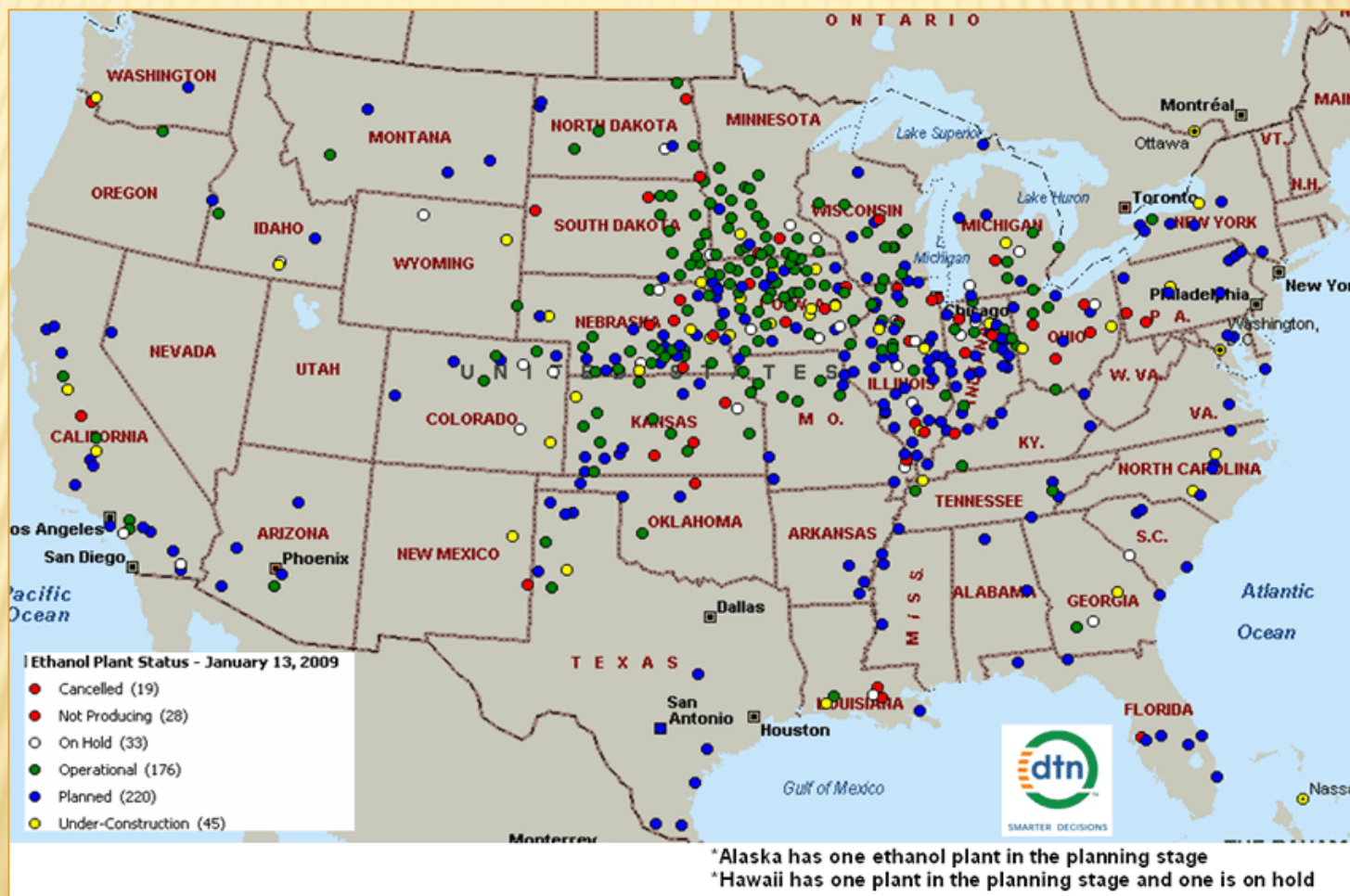
iiED FAO

Attention to:
Food insecurity of the poor
Environmental externalities

Lack of Attention to:
What are the social vulnerabilities of communities
hosting biofuels plants in national biofuels regions?



National Biofuels Regions



METHODS

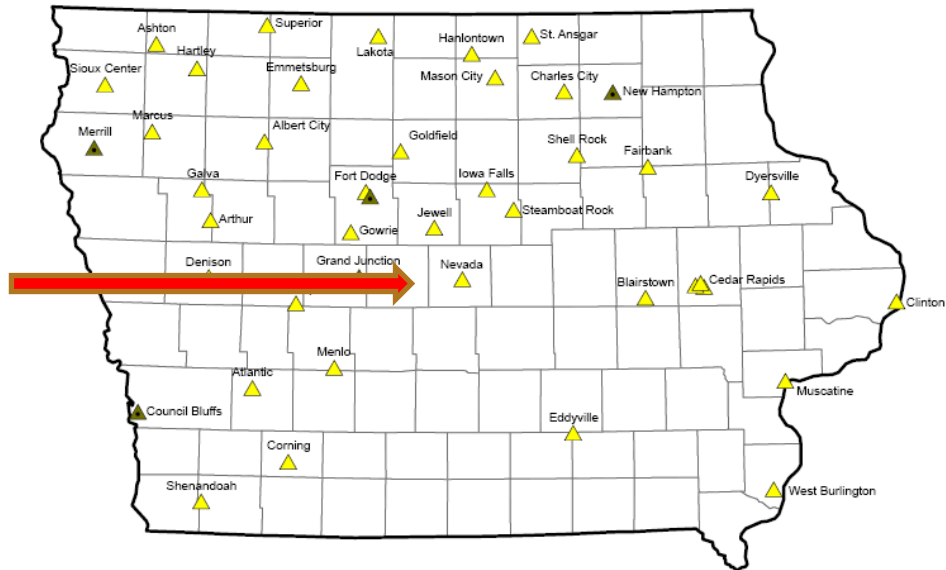
- ✘ Select Six Community Cases (4 in KS, 2 IA): variation in plant establishment date, plant size, ownership structure, community opposition/support, water availability/scarcity
- ✘ Comparative Community Case Study Methods
 - + Track discourse around plant in local media (before/after)
 - + Develop profiles of demographic change, 1980-2007
 - + Community surveys of perceived benefits and costs of ethanol, residents' environmental attitudes
 - + Focus groups and in-depth interviews with farmers, plant workers, local government officials, and business owners in each community

Biofuels Case Study Communities

Community	Population 2007	Plant Start Date	Plant Capacity	Feedstock	Ownership Structure	Community Support/ Opposition	Water Constraints
Russell, KS	4,281	2001	50 MG	Milo/wheat starch	Non-local	Support	Yes
Phillipsburg, KS	2,372	2006	40 MG	Milo/corn	Local	Support	Yes
Nevada, IA	6,644	2006	50 MG	Corn	Local	Support	No

Nationally-Oriented Biofuels Regions

IOWA ETHANOL PLANTS



Legend

- ▲ Ethanol Facility in Operation
- ▲ Ethanol Facility Under Construction

Source: Iowa Renewable Fuels Association, January 12, 2009

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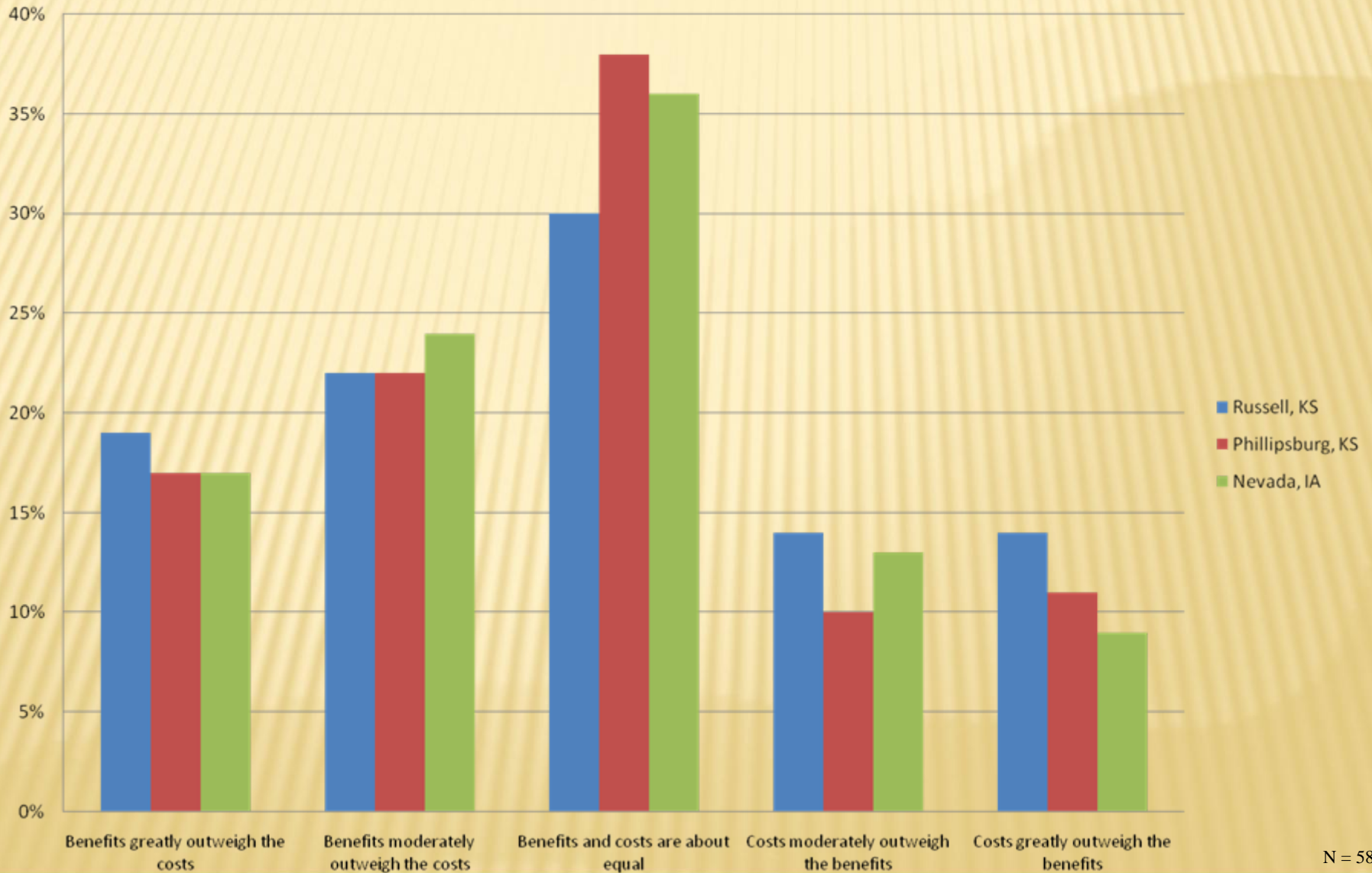


- ★ Existing: 2 plants, 6.2 MGY
- ★ Under Construction: 1 plant, 72 MGY
- ★ Permitted*: 2 plants, 56 MGY
- ★ Permit Pending*: 0 plants, 0 MGY
- ★ Idle: 2 plants, 6.8 MGY



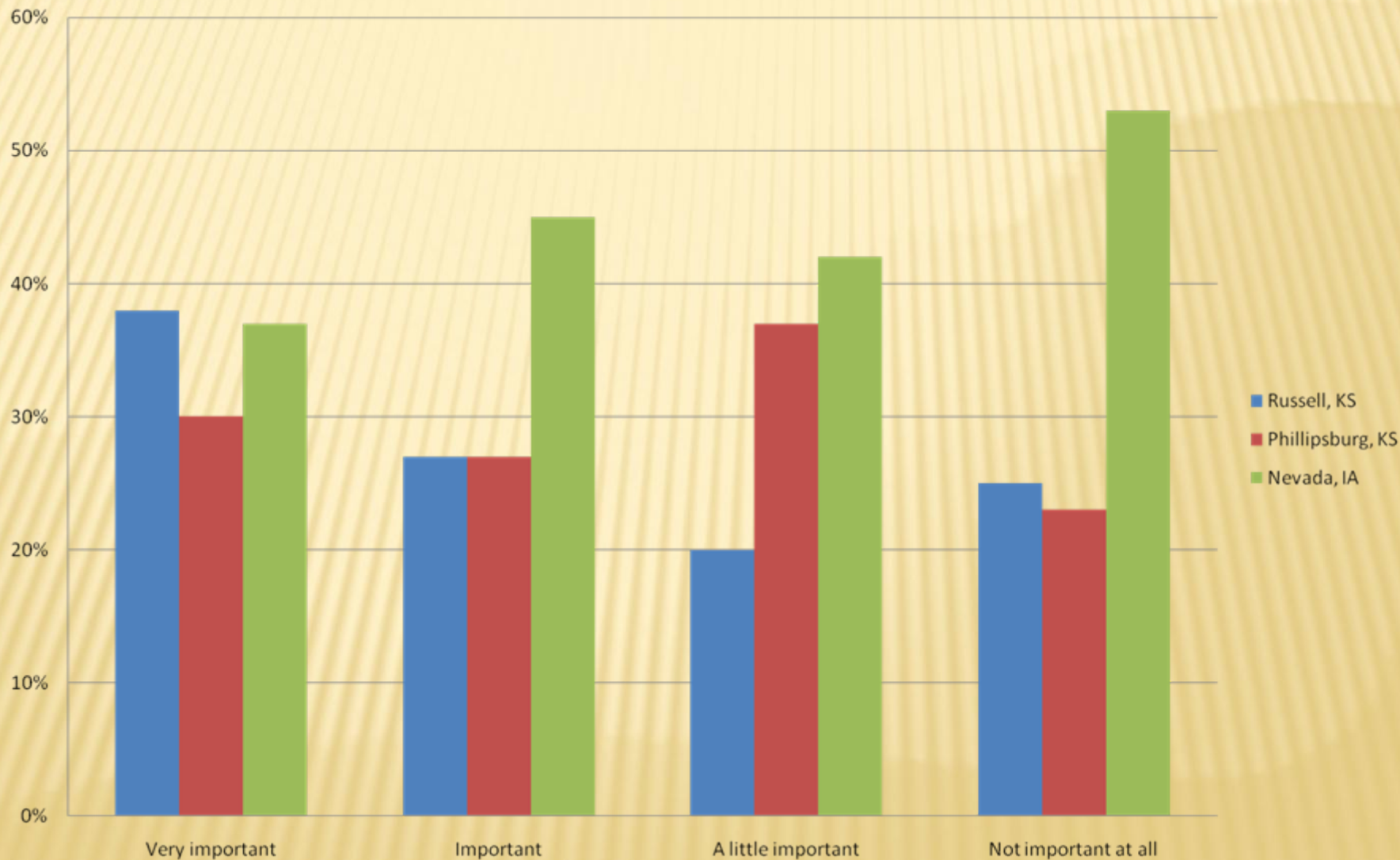
Findings from Community Surveys

How would you rate the impact of the ethanol plant on the local quality of life?



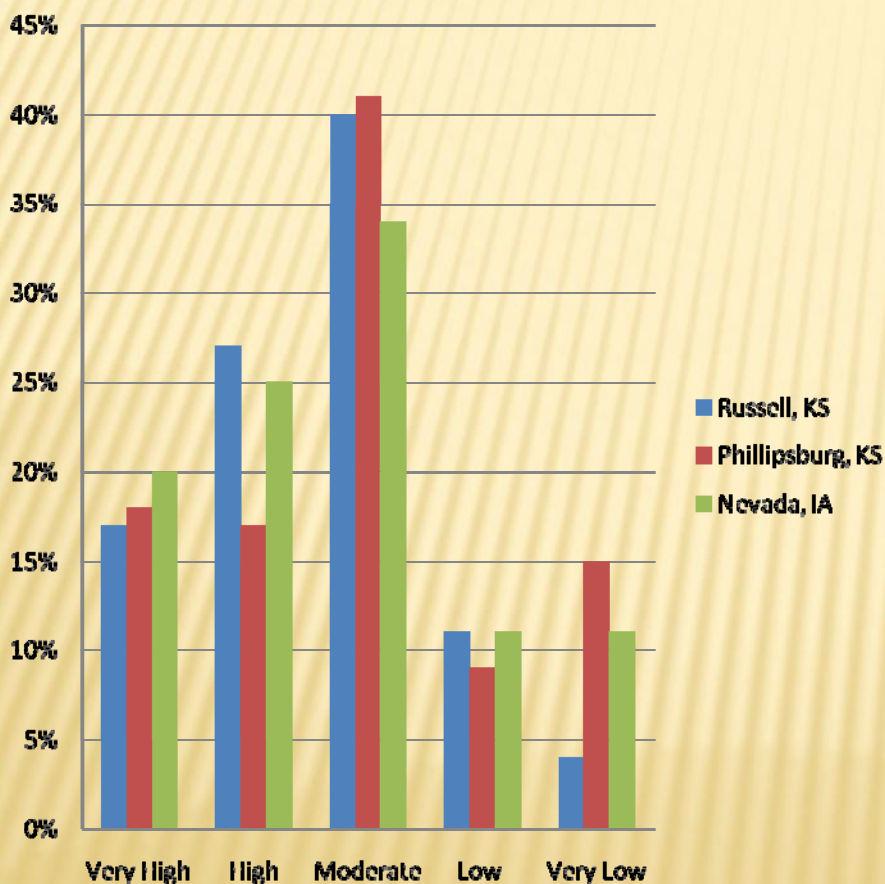
Findings from Community Surveys

How important is the ethanol plant to the economy of the local area?



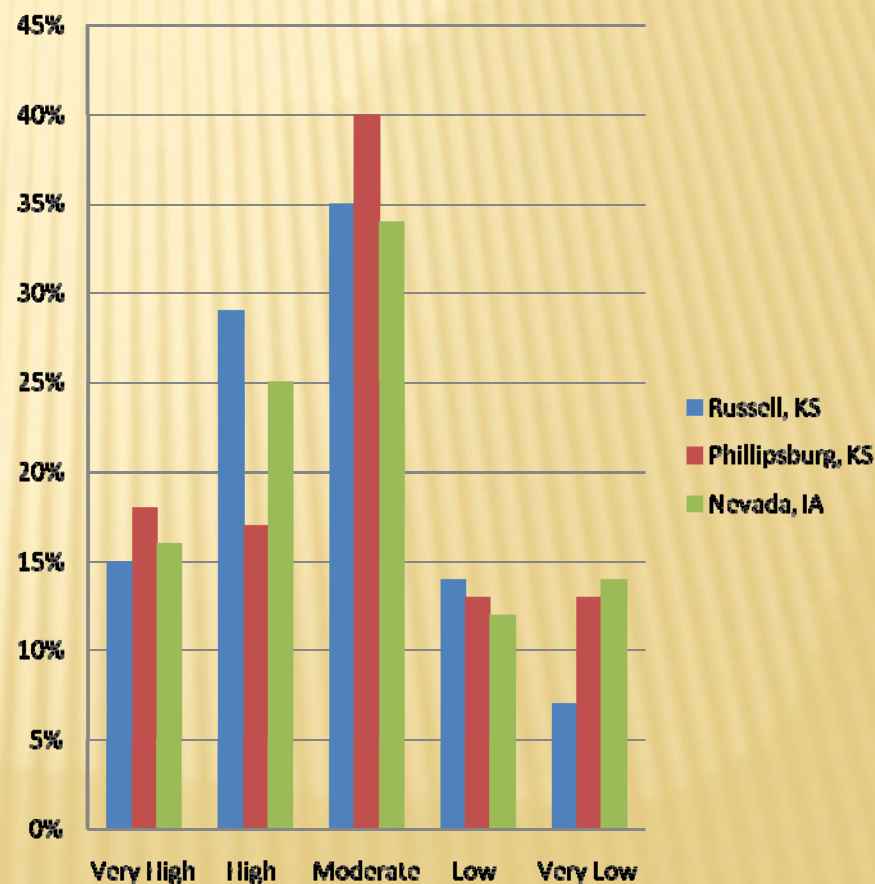
Findings from Community Surveys

What was your level of support for the local ethanol plant at the time it was established?



N = 498

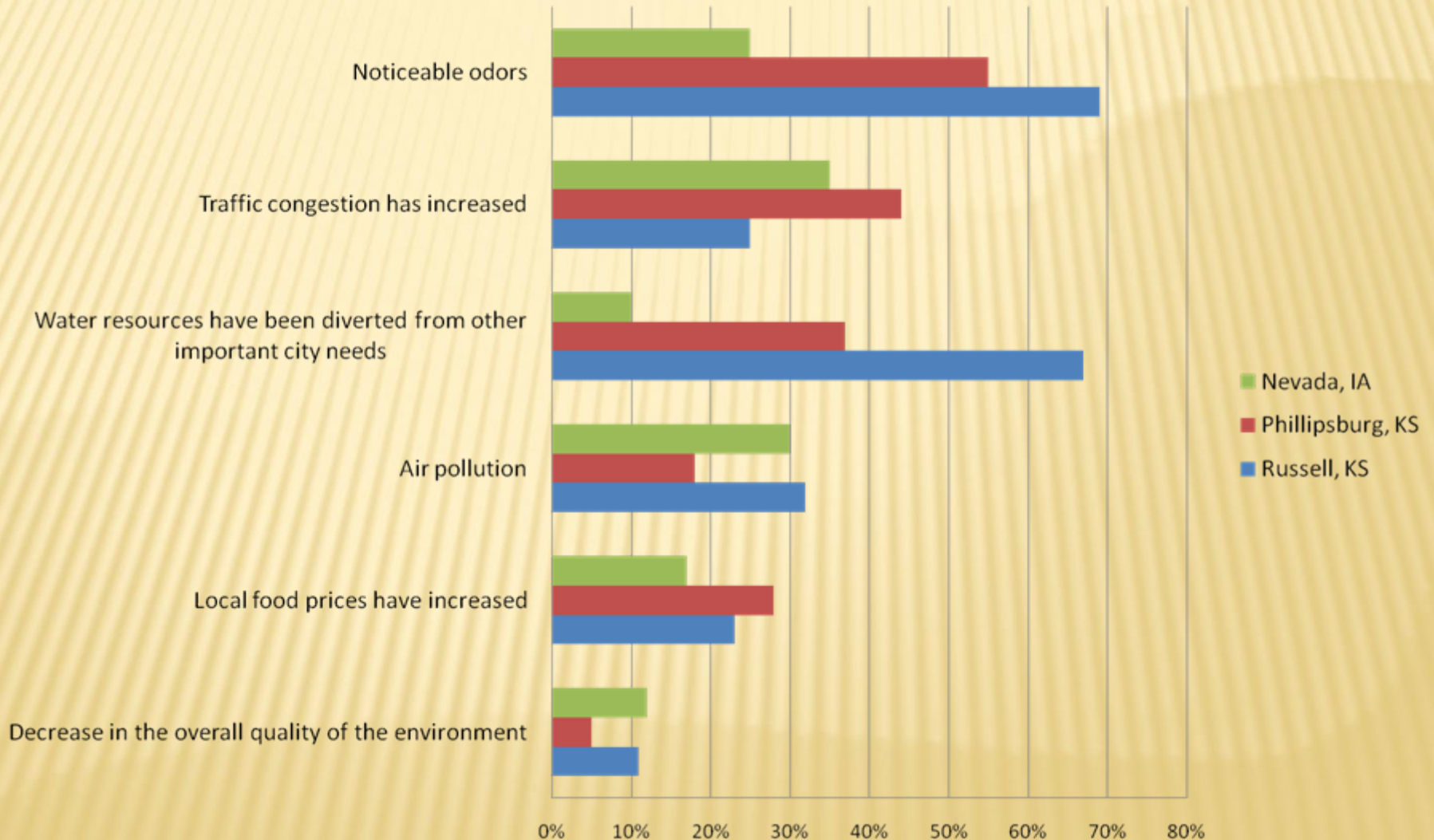
How would you describe your current level of support for the local ethanol plant?



N = 562

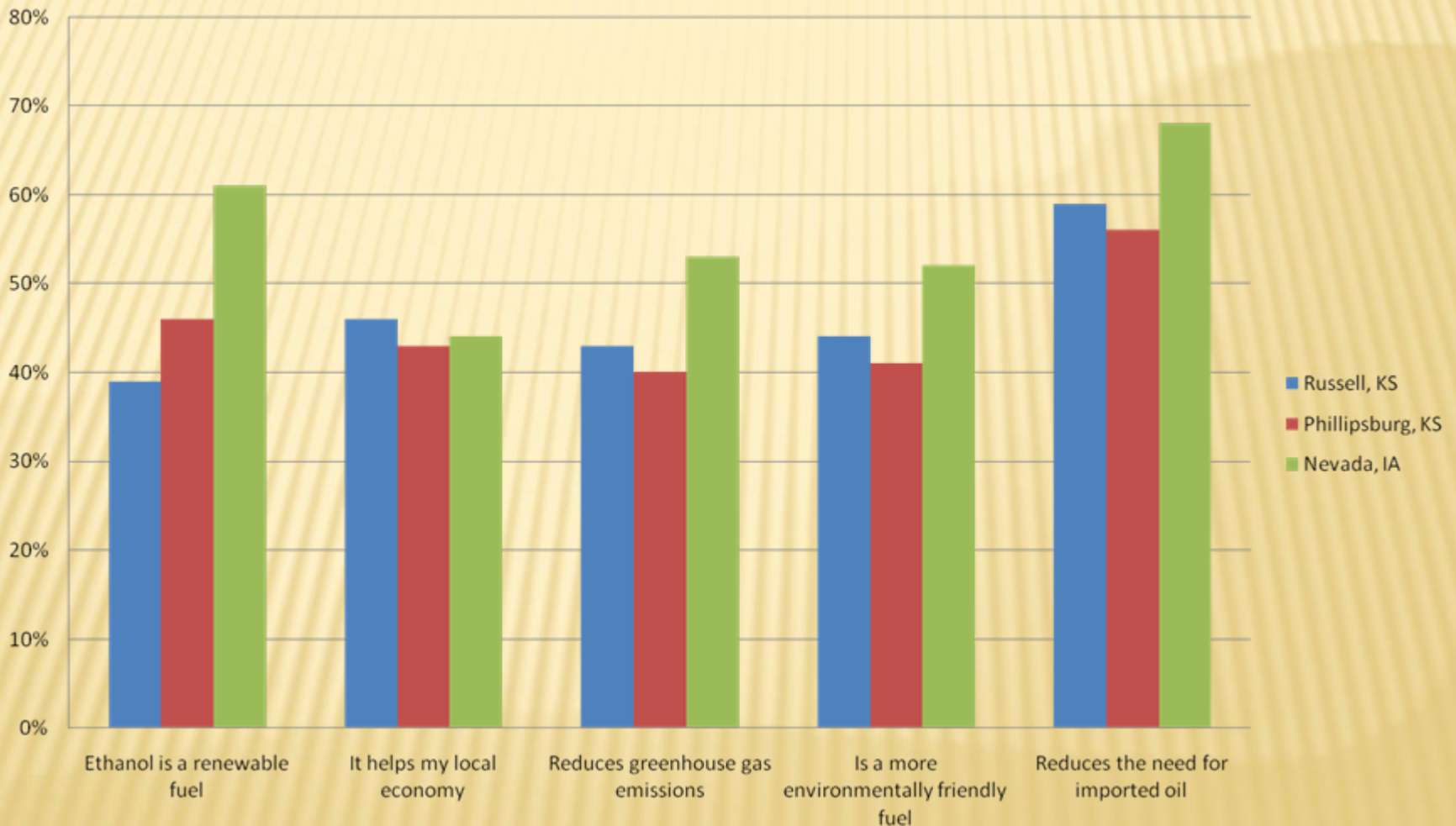
Findings from Community Surveys

Has the ethanol plant had any of the following impacts?



Findings from Community Surveys

Percentage of respondents who indicated that the following reasons for using E-85 are very important



“How would you describe the current public sentiment about the ethanol plant?”

Positive comments :

“It smells and smokes but any job in this town is better than none at all.”

“Glad to have it, especially with several communities losing jobs in western Kansas.”

“We support it, we love it, we want it to stay here! (Have lived here 52 years!).”

“I think most people like having it here. It brings more awareness to the availability of E-85 as an alternative to gasoline.”

Negative comments:

“Very negative. Our water rates have gone up, while we are under severe water restrictions. The ethanol plant gets the water, the citizens get the bill. People in this community can't enjoy their own back yards.”

“It's pretty much a mixed bag. Many didn't really know the amount of water used or that the price of corn would go up.”

“Not good. There is not that much water and in a few years there is the possibility that our water sources will be gone. The people for the ethanol plant will leave with their money and we will be stuck without water.”

Farmers Focus Group: Mixed Sentiments

[It's] kind of a two-edged sword for the livestock industry. .. I love it when I sell grain but when I buy cattle feed, it's killing me."

the promised 'local' benefits from the ethanol plant were not forthcoming.

And they was just going with the big...So they were catering to the feed lots and it was all going hundreds of miles away from here, and then when someone, you know, I live fifteen miles out of town from the plant here. I said, hey I'm just fifteen miles from the plant and I couldn't get any.

Wide ranging concerns about the future viability of the ethanol industry by community members

“It may soon close and we will be burdened with the tax load, as we already are and had no say about it; no election! We done this, now you taxpayers eat it.”

Very frustrated with increase in traffic to/from the plant and a disappointment in the addition of jobs that are not available to the local residents

Most people don't have any idea about who runs the plant and who benefits from it locally.

The only problems I have with the ethanol plant is why should our county go into debt to build a paved road to the plant to make the investors money?

“The downside that scares me to death is, we have built a lot of things around this plant and other towns have built around plants like it and the stroke of the market could shut them all down. The upheaval caused would be tremendous. A lot of money being lost in investment and...”

“[The future] well, we hope it'll be good”

Conclusions:

This research highlights the social vulnerabilities that place-bound communities in national biofuels regions are experiencing.

- Fragile economic state of ethanol industry, plant closures, future viability is in question
- Residents feel buffeted by international and national policy decisions
- Worried about shifting technology that may make their plant outdated

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For ongoing project results, www.ksu.edu/sasw/kpc/biofuels/project_doe.htm

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