

Williamson Act & Rangeland Production



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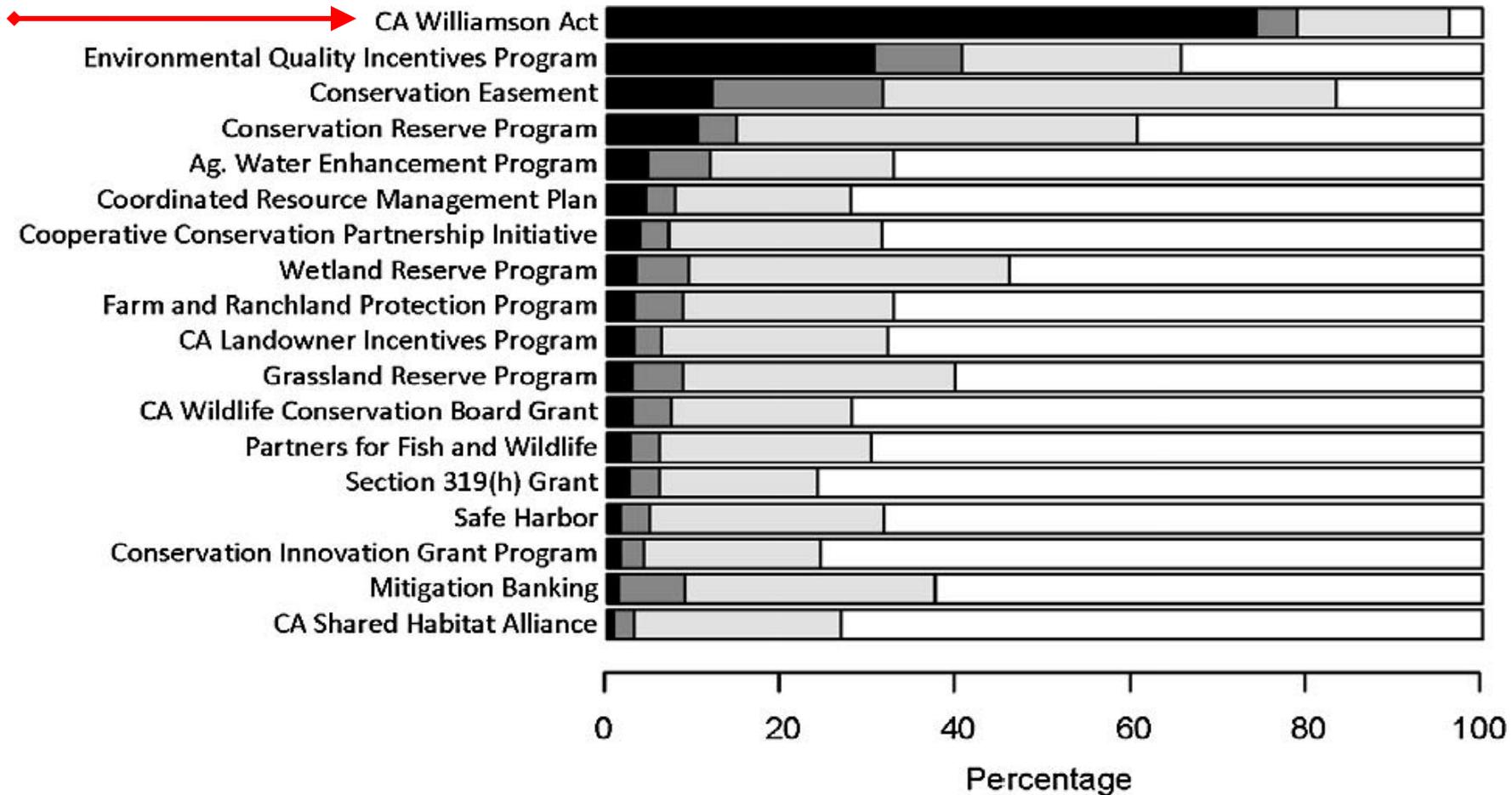


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Williamson Act

- **California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act).**
- **One of the nation's oldest agricultural conservation incentive programs.**
- **To preserve agricultural and open space lands by encouraging landowners to stay in agricultural production through reduced property tax rates.**
- **Landowners voluntarily commit to maintaining their land in agricultural production under a local county contract for a minimum of 10 years.**
- **The economic success of agriculture in California is intertwined with the Williamson Act.**

507 CA Ranchers Conservation Program Participation



- I am aware of this initiative and currently participate in it
- I am aware of this initiative and have plans to participate in it in the future
- I am aware of this initiative and have no plans to participate in it
- I am not aware of this initiative and have not used it

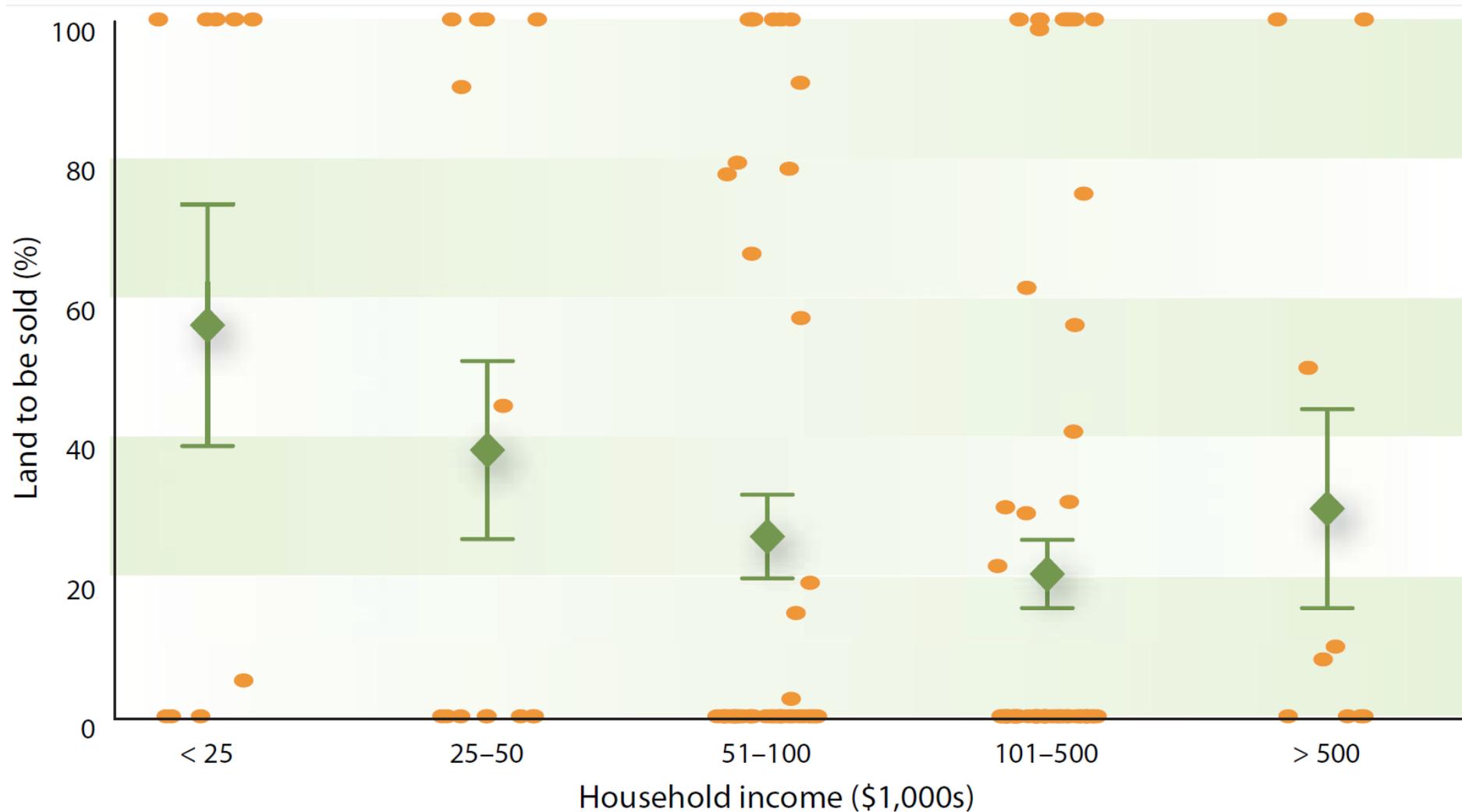
Williamson Act

- **Via the Open Space Subvention Act of 1971, the State of California provided local governments with annual subvention funds to cover forgone property tax revenues.**
- **Contract-holding counties received annual subvention payments from the state in proportion to their enrollment and to the productivity of the enrolled lands.**
- **These payments have been suspended in recent years due to revenue shortfalls.**
- **Contract-holding counties are wrestling with if and how to continue these contracts.**

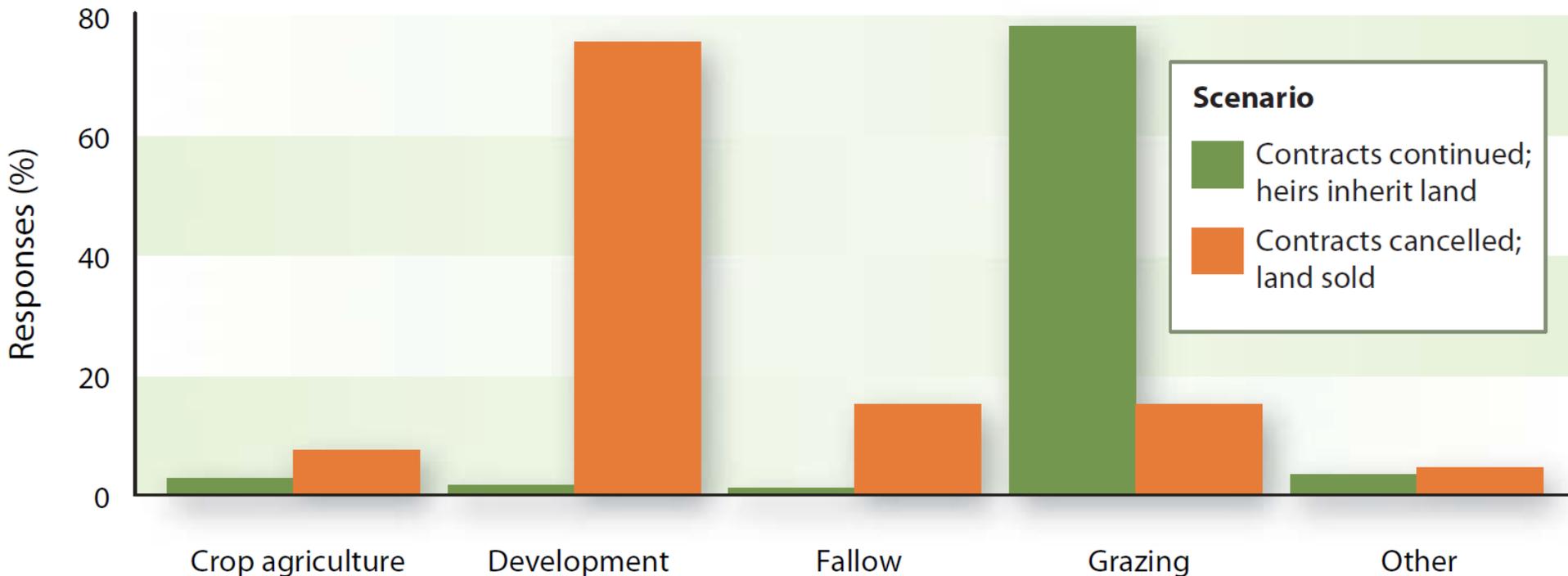
Analysis reveals potential rangeland impacts if Williamson Act eliminated

- **Wetzel et al. explored the economic and ecological impacts if counties eliminate Williamson Act contracts.**
 - **With CA Cattlemen's Association sent a mail survey to 702 CCA members in 33 counties.**
 - **52% Response rate.**
 - **67% of respondents held rangeland contracts in Williamson Act.**
- 91% reported Williamson Act was “very” to “extremely” important for the long-term viability of their ranching operation.**

Rancher estimates of percentage of rangeland they would sell grouped by household income.



Rancher predictions for future use of land by heirs if 1) Williamson Act contracts continued, or 2) if eliminated and land was sold.



Summary

- Williamson Act funding is the most widely used conservation incentive program by CA ranchers – there is not a close second.
- Williamson Act savings may make a critical difference in turning a profit versus taking a loss for the majority of California ranchers.
- Profitability is required for rangeland production and conservation win-wins to occur.
- Funding Williamson Act is a difficult issue, but its conservation value on rangelands is real.