

Sustainable Agriculture

The three pillars of sustainable agriculture are **profit** over the long term, **stewardship** of our nation's land, air, and water, and **quality of life** for farmers, ranchers, and their communities. Sustainable agriculture aims to meet food and environmental needs of people now, without compromising the ability of people who come after us to meet their own food and environment needs. This poster illustrates some of the ways that's done.

Community Vitality

A robust local economy helps rural and urban communities. When farmers and ranchers sell what they raise locally, it keeps money circulating in the community — and that helps support many businesses and families.

Cover Crops

Growing crops such as rye or clover in a field after the cash crop has been harvested helps control erosion and manage nutrients.

Conservation Tillage

Farmers and ranchers work to prevent wind and water from eroding soil and carrying it away. Soil-conserving methods such as contour tillage and no-till help conserve water, too.

Nutrient Management

Plants need food and nutrients just like people do. Properly managing and applying on-farm nutrient sources such as manure and green manure (from cover crops) can build soil, protect water quality, and reduce fertilizer purchases.

Crop, Livestock, and Landscape Diversity

Growing a variety of crops and livestock can help farmers reduce the risk of pests or diseases, weather extremes, and market conditions. Increasing plant diversity can help conserve soil and water plus provide wildlife habitat.



Sun shines, wind blows, and farmers and ranchers use biofuels, solar power, windmills, and other on-farm energy-saving devices for profitability, efficiency, and a cleaner environment.

On-Farm Energy Conservation and Production

We all need water to drink. That makes conserving and protecting water vital to everyone. Wetlands can filter nutrients and pesticides, plus provide homes for wildlife.

Water and Wetland Management

Ecological Insect and Weed Management
Sometimes it seems pests like to eat crops as much as animals and people do. Using a variety of biological, physical, and chemical tools that work together helps control harmful insects and weeds.



Grazing

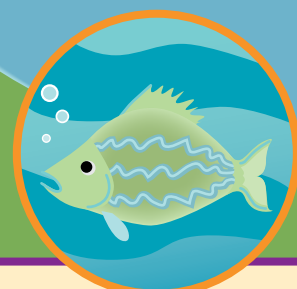
In rotational grazing systems, farmers and ranchers move animals from pasture to pasture at frequent intervals to provide the animals high quality forage. As animals graze they distribute manure, which contains nutrients soil needs to grow healthy plants.

A Whole-Farm Approach

A whole-farm approach is a lot like having a team that wins by working really well together. Using many sustainable agriculture practices creates a strong system that works with nature.

Marketing

Innovative marketing techniques like community supported agriculture (CSA), selling direct to schools, and selling over the Web help farmers and ranchers keep their operations profitable.



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For more information on SARE and sustainable agriculture see: <http://www.sare.org>.