

Sustainable Agriculture

Sustainable Agriculture is farming and ranching in ways that promote the health and wellbeing of people and the planet now and in the future. That means using practices that are: (1) Ecologically sound, (2) Economically viable, and (3) Socially responsible. This poster illustrates some of the ways that's done.



A Whole Farm Approach

Using many sustainable agriculture practices creates a healthy farming system that works with nature. Producers choose practices that work best for their farm or ranch.

Economic Viability

Building a strong local economy supports people and businesses in rural and urban areas. When farmers and ranchers sell, barter, or share what they raise locally, it keeps money and resources in the community.

Community Vitality

Agriculture is a rewarding way of life that involves risks and hard work. Farmers, farm families, farm workers, and communities thrive when people respect each other and help each other grow.

Soil Health

Covering bare soil with cover crops, adding compost, and reducing or eliminating tillage are just a few ways of increasing soil health, controlling wind and water erosion and keeping nutrients out of water and in the soil where plants can use them.

Nutrient Management

Properly managing and applying on-farm nutrient sources such as manure and green manure (from cover crops) can build soil, keep water cleaner, and reduce the need for fertilizer and other off-farm purchases.

Crop, Livestock, and Landscape Diversity

Growing a variety of crops and livestock helps reduce the risk of pests or diseases, weather extremes, and market ups and downs. Practices like agroforestry and conservation buffers help conserve soil and water plus provide wildlife and pollinator habitat.

Ecological Pest Management

Farmers strengthen natural systems with preventive practices like crop rotation to limit disease, pest, and weed issues before they become a problem.

Managed Grazing

In managed grazing systems, farmers and ranchers divide pastures into smaller paddocks and move animals frequently. This provides animals with high quality forage, and as they graze, they distribute manure, which contains nutrients soil needs to grow healthy plants.

Water and Wetland Management

Conserving and protecting water is vital to everyone. Wetlands can filter nutrients and pesticides, plus provide homes for wildlife.

On-Farm Energy Conservation and Production

Farmers and ranchers use biofuels solar power, wind power, and on-farm energy-saving devices to save money and create a cleaner environment.