

Valuing Sustainable Practices

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Introduction

You want to be a good steward of your land, and you want the people who come after you – family members or not – to practice good stewardship, too. What will it take to really make that kind of legacy happen? The following sections detail 10 common sustainable agriculture and conservation practices. We discuss some scientific background and reasons for the practices, estimated costs and benefits of each one, some of the barriers that new farmers may face in implementing them, and suggestions for rent, lease, or sale terms that can facilitate these practices. Each section includes a worksheet that allows you, a decision-maker for a piece of agricultural property, to calculate expected costs and benefits of the practice. This analysis will help you decide whether to take steps in your farm transition plan to ensure that the practice will happen on your land in the future.

It is important to recognize that the numbers presented in this publication are broad estimates that are calculated from national or regional averages over many farms. The numbers shown in the worksheets in each section are a starting point to illustrate possibilities, but they will not apply to every farm. You should collect as much information as you can about your own land and adjust the numbers to reflect your particular situation.

Contents

- Crop Rotation
- Soil Fertility Management (Manure as Fertilizer)
- Cover Crops
- Agroforestry
- Water Quality Management (Wetland Restoration)
- Alternative crops
- Perennial Forages & Grazing
- Pollinator/Beneficial Insect habitat
- Wildlife Habitat
- Organic Certification