

13th Annual Farmer Cooperatives Conference

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AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION®

What are you trying to sustain?

- People?
- The environment?
- Both?

There are two sides to the sustainability debate.

- Environmental
- Efficient



Farm Bureau Policy

- We support scientific research and education that encourages all participants in the agricultural industry to produce, process and distribute safe food, feed, fiber and fuel in a manner that is economically viable and enhances the quality of life for present and future generations.
- We support methods of farming that result in:
 - A profit for the farm operator;
 - A clean environment; and
 - An adequate supply of high quality safe food, feed, fiber and fuel.
- We oppose:
 - Any attempt to mandate low input methods of farming; and
 - Requiring low input methods as a condition of participation in government farm programs.



What Sustainability Is Not

- Sustainability is not business as usual.
- Sustainability is not determined by the size of an operation.
- Sustainability is not a one-size-fits-all system.
- Sustainability is not synonymous with organic. But neither is it synonymous with conventional or biotech.



What Sustainability Is

- Sustainability is a process, not an end point.
- Sustainability should be based on incremental and continuous improvement.
- Sustainability should rely on performance to determine the outcomes of new practices.
- Sustainability is a site specific application of certain practices that grants farmers the flexibility they need in order to adapt to a change in their environment.



AFBF Involvement in Sustainability

Involved in:

- Keystone
- American National Standards Institute (ANSI)

Monitoring

- National Initiative for Sustainable Agriculture (NISA)*
- Specialty Crops Index
- Sustainability Consortium
- Retailer Initiatives



Keystone

- Involved since 2007
- Row Crop Snap-shot
 - Where we are and where we have been.
 - Where are we going and how do we get there?
- Keystone delivers a strong message.
 - Today is not the worst day ever.
 - Great gains have been made.



Involved since 2007

- Leonardo Academy
- SCS 001 Draft Standard for Trial Use
 - Organic only
 - Anti-technology
 - Prescriptive
 - Practice, not outcomes based.

Sustainable Agriculture Standards Task Force Standards Committee

- Representation
 - 25% for farmers
- Balance



What is Driving Sustainability?

Retailers

- Public Opinion
- Consumer Demand

Consumers

- Personal Desire
- Willing to pay a premium?

Farmers

- Cut Costs
- Government Regulations



Standards

- Third Party Certification
- Self Certification

Sustainability Initiatives/Programs

- Participation-based
 - Focus on Research, Education and Data Collection
 - Measurement over time



Third-Party Certified Standards

Pro's

- Credibility
- Uniformity
- Reach

Con's

- Costly
- Prescriptive
- Inflexible



Alternatives to Third-Party Standards

- Sustainability Initiatives
 - Farmers showing a commitment to sustainability.
 - Work cooperatively to address local and regional sustainability challenges.
- Self Certification
 - Affidavits
 - Spot Checks



Necessary Components

- Grower Driven
 - Research Institutions
 - Commodity Groups
 - Government
- Technology Neutral
 - Biotech or Organic
- System Independent
 - Modern Agriculture and Organic



Necessary Components

- Science Based
 - Objective
 - Avoid the pitfalls of precaution.
- Site Specific
 - Farm Variability
 - Measure against yourself



Necessary Components

- **Adaptable**
 - Avoid prescriptive action.
- **Reportable**
 - Confidential
- **Verifiable**
 - Avoid greenwashing.



Questions?

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