



The Role of Agriculture as a Smart Growth Solution with 2008 Farm Bill Highlights



Don Stuart

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American Farmland Trust



Traditional smart growth approach



- ❑ Focused on urban success
 - Livability
 - Economic success
 - Efficiencies
 - Infrastructure needs
 - Etc.
- ❑ Geographic expansion seen as appropriate when and where it supports/addresses the needs of urban community – “Smart Growth”
- ❑ Not always consistent with keeping rural communities rural – “outside-in” approach



How can agriculture contribute to urban success?



Stable and committed ag land helps control sprawl

- Rural economic health & independence
- Renewable energy
- Local farms for local food
- Protecting environmental quality
- Low cost, effective environmental offsets
and mitigation for growth



Rural economic health



- ❑ Strong rural economies diminish rural disenchantment with growth management
- ❑ Ag is the traditional economic mainstay for rural economies – an industry that keeps rural lands rural
- ❑ Ag can use urban support for rural economic development efforts and plans
- ❑ Farm Bill – Title VI - economic development
 - Rural electrification & broadband access
 - Water and waste disposal for rural communities
 - Value-added grants to ag producers
 - Small business assistance



Renewable energy

- ❑ Conservation & on-farm production
- ❑ Marketed production
 - Ethanol
 - ❑ Energy independence
 - ❑ Renewable
 - ❑ Competition for oil (esp. in transportation fuels)
 - ❑ Transition fuel
 - Bio-diesel
 - Anaerobic digesters
- ❑ Farm Bill Programs
 - Funding for rural energy
 - Biomass research
 - Bio-refinery loans
 - Tax credits for renewable energy



Local farms for local food



- ❑ Increased in interest in fresh local food
- ❑ Local food requires local farms
- ❑ PDR and TDR as tools for protecting local farms (Farm Bill funding for FRPP increased)
- ❑ Farm Bill programs
 - Help for farmers markets
 - Community food projects
 - Fresh food snacks
 - Nutrition
 - Local food economic development, financing, etc.



Environmental quality



- ❑ Well-managed, undeveloped ag lands:
 - Filter surface water
 - Slow and diminish flooding
 - Recharge aquifers
 - Provide wildlife habitat and migration corridors
 - Sequester carbon
- ❑ Farm Bill conservation tools
 - FRPP, CSP, EQIP, & Technical assistance programs
 - Conservation loans,
 - Cooperative conservation,
 - Wetlands & grasslands reserve,
 - Tax deduction for donated easements)



Environmental mitigation and offsets



- ❑ Growth has impacts on environment
- ❑ Opportunities to mitigate are limited (and weakness in current mitigation system)
- ❑ Increasing cost of environmental compliance
- ❑ Counter-productive impact of regulation
- ❑ Need for cost-efficient mitigation/offsets
- ❑ Ag capacity to supply (carbon markets, water quality trading, wetland and wildlife habitat mitigation, flood mitigation, etc.)
- ❑ Farm Bill
 - New Office of Ecosystem Services and Markets



Why ecosystem markets are good for agriculture



- ❑ Increase profitability & help keep farmland in agriculture
- ❑ Fund voluntary conservation on private natural resource lands (without relying on public funding)
- ❑ Institutionalize incentives vs. regulations (make it harder to ignore the social and market value of private conservation)
- ❑ Transform public attitudes toward ag industry and its critical value in protecting the environment



Why ecosystem markets are good for the rest of us



- ❑ Improved performance of mitigation system
- ❑ Conservative transaction ratios
- ❑ Co-benefits
- ❑ Establishing a \$ value for services (and prevent their externalization from markets)
- ❑ Facilitate efficient concentrations of growth
- ❑ Increased political viability of environmental solutions (e.g. Kyoto Accord & Cap Bill)
- ❑ Lowest cost for environmental gain
(least expensive solution)
- ❑ Most markets are local



An example – Qualco Energy



- ❑ Cooperative project between Farmers & Tribe
- ❑ Environmental benefits
 - Water Quality in basin
 - Carbon sequestration
 - Renewable energy
- ❑ How it works
- ❑ Products
 - Renewable electric energy for PS Energy
 - Waste disposal (tipping fees)
 - Compost
 - Bedding
 - Returns water for irrigation and fertile fields



Instead of this


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We retain some of this


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A window of opportunity



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www.farmland.org

Don Stuart, Northwest Regional Director
3211 Beacon Ave. N., #26
Seattle, WA 98144
dstuart@farmland.org