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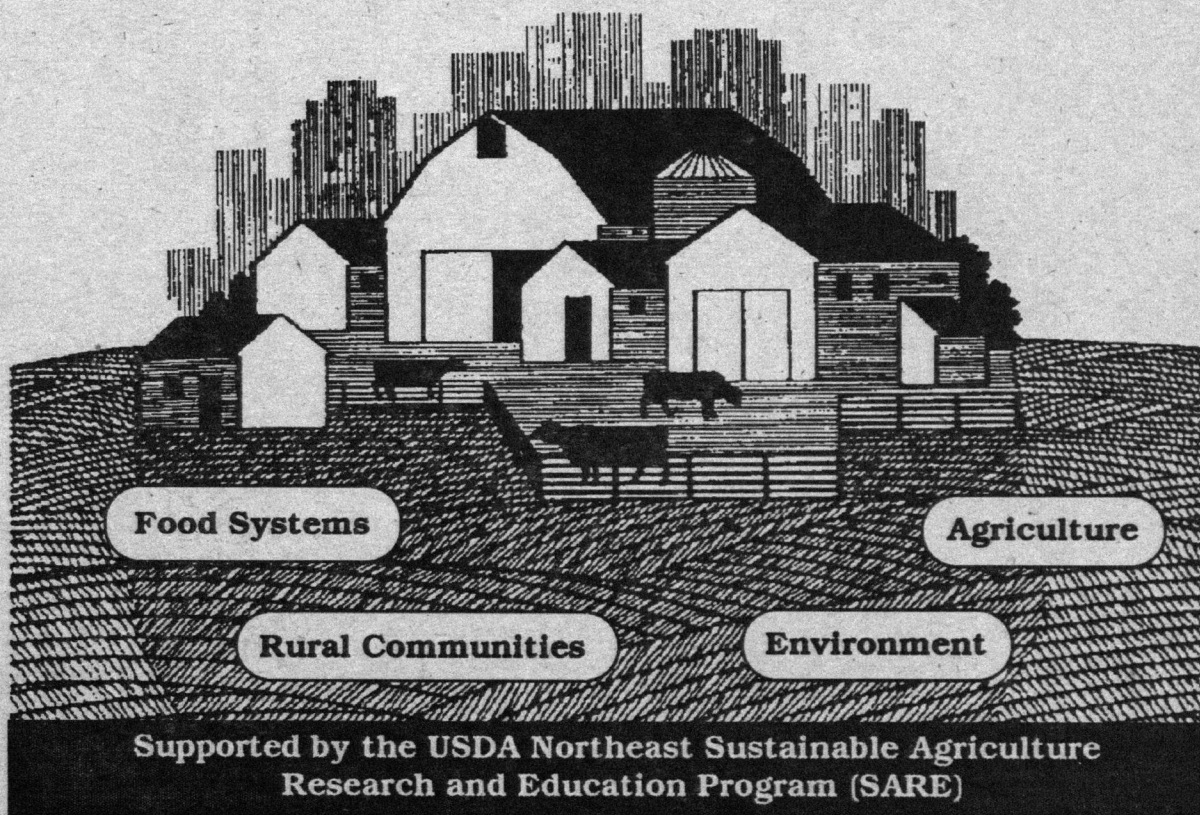
ENE 94-003

# Farming for the Future: Partners in Stewardship

February 22-23, 1995

Sheraton University Inn and Conference Center  
Syracuse, New York

A conference to discuss concerns and create options  
for sustaining agriculture in our communities







# **Farming for the Future: Partners in Stewardship**

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Syracuse, New York

## **Conference Sponsors**

**Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Cornell Farming Alternatives Program  
Agway**

**American Agriculturalist**

**Central New York Crop Management Association**

**College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University**

**Finger Lakes Organic Growers Cooperative**

**Natural Resources Conservation Service**

**New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group**

**Northeast Organic Farming Association - New York Chapter**

**Pro-Dairy Program at Cornell University**

**Funding provided by the Sustainable Agriculture Research  
and Education (SARE) Program - Northeast Region.**

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# Conference Goals

A broad group of people are actively involved in shaping the future of farming in our communities. There is a need for productive dialogue among the various groups of people concerned with the sustainability of agriculture in the Northeast.

Building on the successful series of "Transitions" conferences sponsored by the Farming Alternatives Program, this conference will incorporate farmers, community leaders, government agency staff, consumers, and environmentalists, as well as Extension field staff and faculty as panelists, facilitators, and participants.

Farming for the Future: Partners in Stewardship will present the varied perspectives that shape discussions on sustainable agriculture in the Northeast. Methods will be offered for integrating complex information and competing values in extension and public education programs on sustainable agriculture. Additionally, conference participants will learn techniques for implementing sustainable agriculture including soil and crop management practices, software programs, marketing options, and government programs and policies.

The format of the conference itself will serve as a model for innovative programming in sustainable agriculture among diverse interest groups. Participation in discussions of case studies will use interdisciplinary resources and integrate diverse perspectives to examine specific challenges to sustainable agriculture. Participants will be encouraged to engage in productive dialogue and learn skills for building partnerships among various constituents.

*We hope  
that you will join  
the lively discussions  
and enjoy the conference!*  
*Suzanne Cady*  
*Lane Mt. Pleasant*  
*Judy Green*





# Program Schedule

Wednesday	Thursday
<p><b>9:00 Registration</b> LOBBY</p> <p><b>9:45 Welcome Address</b> REGENCY <i>Jane Mt. Pleasant, Cornell</i></p> <p><b>10:00 Opening Panel Discussion</b> "Understanding Diverse Perspectives" Production Agriculture: <i>Keith Eckel</i> Food Systems: <i>Jennifer Wilkins</i> Environment: <i>Greg Watson</i> Rural Communities: <i>Jim Barney</i> Moderator: <i>Gerald White</i></p> <p><b>12:00 Buffet Luncheon</b> PAVILION</p> <p><b>1:30 Concurrent Workshops</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can dairy farms coexist with clean water? COMSTOCK B</li> <li>• Holistic Resource Management: a useful tool for land use planning? COMSTOCK A</li> <li>• Are fruits and vegetables safe to eat? ROOM 202</li> <li>• Can landscape plants be produced and managed sustainably? ROOM 203</li> </ul> <p><b>3:00-3:30 Refreshment Break</b> LOBBY</p> <p><b>5:00 Resource Fair</b> ROOMS 204 &amp; 205 Exhibitors Available</p> <p><b>6:30 Keynote Address</b> REGENCY &amp; Banquet</p> <p>"Building the Bridge: Agriculture and the Environment" <i>Greg Watson,</i> The Nature Conservancy</p>	<p><b>7:30 Continental Breakfast</b> LOBBY</p> <p><b>8:30-12:00 Concurrent Workshops</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovative management and marketing options for cash grain production ROOM 203</li> <li>• What are the economic and environmental impacts of intensive rotational grazing? COMSTOCK A</li> <li>• How does sustainable agriculture affect farm labor? ROOM 202</li> <li>• Does nutrient management of fruit &amp; vegetable production affect the environment? COMSTOCK B</li> <li>• Do new developments in federal, state and local agriculture policies promote sustainable agriculture? AMPHITHEATER</li> </ul> <p><b>10:00-10:30 Refreshment Break</b> LOBBY</p> <p><b>12:00 Buffet Luncheon</b> PAVILION</p> <p><b>1:30 Summary Session:</b> REGENCY "Building Local Partnerships" <i>David Deshler, Cornell</i> <i>Merrill Ewert, Cornell</i></p> <p><b>3:30 Adjourn</b></p>

**Visit the Resource Fair anytime  
between Wednesday noon and  
Thursday at 1:30!**

# Understanding Diverse Perspectives

## Opening Panel Discussion

Moderator: Gerald White, Agricultural Economist, Cornell

**Production Agriculture:** Keith Eckel, President, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau

Managing change is the key to the future. Production agriculture has changed in direct proportion to the availability of information. Agriculture will continue to change, but that change will accelerate to breathtaking speeds. The farmer who is best prepared to handle the forces of change will be the most successful. That farmer who is willing to embrace these changes, but more importantly shape these changes, will have immense opportunities. We must remain competitive to continue success as a farmer. That will be more difficult because we are competing on a global basis. There are political forces that could have negative impact on food production. The future of production agriculture hinges on three major considerations: (1) how we deal with changes in technology; (2) how we manage and use new knowledge, and (3) how we control our business environment, both politically and economically.

**Food Systems:** Jennifer Wilkins, Nutrition Educator, Cornell Cooperative Extension

Consumers have the potential to shape the future of farming through their ever changing, often fickle preferences. Nutrition, food safety and quality, and price will likely continue to be important factors in consumer food decision-making. Environmental issues are increasingly important to consumers. Is the food supply offering choices that, when made, encourage a sustainable food and agriculture system? What are the barriers to consumer participation in developing such a system? What are the opportunities? Increasing awareness of the environmental consequences of food choices will likely improve consumers' ability to participate in shaping a sustainable food and agriculture system.



## **Understanding Diverse Perspectives**

Opening Panel Discussion  
(cont.)

**Environment:** Greg Watson, Eastern Regional Director, The Nature Conservancy

Congress is considering drastically reducing government's role in protecting the environment via regulations. It is imperative that the sustainable agriculture community seize this opportunity to make concrete proposals as to how federal agriculture policy can be redesigned so as to benefit farmers, consumers, rural economies and the environment. We should talk about what it will take to transform current price support programs into a "Green Support Program" to provide farm income support in exchange for environmental improvements. Emphasis will shift away from paying farmers for growing program commodity crops (corn, soybeans, wheat, etc.) and towards encouraging environmentally-sound farm practices (IPM, crop rotations, manure management, etc.). The sustainable agriculture movement has got to demonstrate now more than ever, that building strong networks that include environmentalists, farmers and consumers is the best way to meet the new challenges.

**Rural Communities:** Jim Barney, New York Dairy Farmer

In the past, rural communities were often sustained by a dominant agricultural sector. This is no longer the case. Today, non-agricultural sectors dominate rural economies. Agriculture's sustainability is enhanced in economically healthy communities that actively support local agriculture's needs. In order to compete in the global economy, both the community and its agriculture must understand their common strategic positions. Links between the global and local economic environments will be presented. A quality systems approach borrowed from industrial management principles could apply directly to the issue of sustainable rural communities. Practical examples of how rural communities can enhance their competitiveness by strengthening local institutions will be discussed.

## **Can dairy farms coexist with clean water?**

Dairy farms in New York State are challenged with protecting water quality while still meeting the goals of the dairy farmer. Protection of drinking water through the prevention of non-point source pollution has been identified by the regulatory agencies as the highest priority. Legislation for a voluntary plan for environmental planning to reduce non-point sources of pollutants in ground water from farms is in draft stage. This proposed plan will be outlined, followed by breakout sessions for group discussion on identifying barriers to getting 75% participation by the year 2000, and ideas for overcoming these barriers.

---

### **Workshop Panelists**

Rich Lewis, New York Soil & Water Conservation Commission

John Wildeman, Soil & Water Conservation District, Bath, NY

David Dodge, New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets

Dan Fox\*, Animal Science, Cornell

Merrill Ewert\*, Agriculture Extension & Adult Education, Cornell

**\*Workshop Organizers**



**Holistic Resource Management:  
a useful tool for land use planning?**

Gain a strong sense of the unique characteristics of the Holistic Resource Management (HRM) thought-model through a mock Planning Commission meeting. Learn why and how HRM inspires and enables true resolution, sustainable community development, regeneration of our natural resource base and a greater hope for the future. Practical applications of HRM will be demonstrated. HRM can be used to help any decision-making process—as a way to organize, plan, think, manage and monitor anything.

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**Workshop Panelists**

Willie Gibson\*, University of Vermont Cooperative Extension

Judy Green\*, Farming Alternatives Program, Cornell

David Allee, Local Government Program, Cornell

Karl North, Rural Enterprise Alliance Project, Marathon, New York

**\*Workshop Organizers**

## **Are fruits and vegetables safe to eat?**

Consumer concerns for food safety have implications for agricultural production. Survey results of consumer attitudes about the safety of their foods will open this session. People at different places in the food system, such as farmers, produce retailers, and consumers, view food safety issues in different ways. Consumer and producer views of the safety of pesticide chemical use in agriculture and of alternatives to agricultural chemical use in food production will be presented. Then all participants will be invited to discuss informally their thoughts about these and related issues. The implications of food safety concerns for agricultural production, particularly for pest control, will be addressed. Techniques for Integrated Pest Management (IPM), and other non-chemical pest control methods for fruit and vegetable production will be presented. IPM practices will emphasize new cultivation equipment for weed control and field applications of biological control of insect pests. Costs associated with various IPM programs in orchard management will be compared. The goal of the workshop is for everyone's opinions to be heard and for people to come away with increased understanding of the diverse issues that affect perceptions of agricultural production and food safety issues.

---

### **Workshop Panelists**

Donna Scott\*, Food Safety Specialist, Food Science, Cornell

Marvin Pritts, Small Fruit Specialist, Fruit and Vegetable Science, Cornell

Wendy Gordon, Mothers & Others for a Livable Planet

Robin Bellinder, Weed Specialist, Fruit and Vegetable Science, Cornell

Mike Hoffman, Biological Pest Control, Entomology, Cornell

Chris Edmonds, Apple Farmer, Alasa Farms

**\*Workshop Organizer**



## **Can landscape plants be produced and managed sustainably?**

What is the public vision of sustainable landscape horticulture? An overview of the current situation will be presented by George Good. Current and future needs from industry and Cornell will be identified in small group discussions. Explore sustainability issues of production of nursery, greenhouse and sod crop production through case studies. Tom Weiler will present Case I: zero runoff options for greenhouses. Scott Clark will introduce Case II: Reducing the solid waste stream. Discussion then focuses on sustainable management practices to optimize design, installation, and maintenance of landscapes. Nina Bassuk will discuss Case III: minimizing inputs for urban street tree management. David Chinery will present Case IV: golf course maintenance with minimal inputs. An open group discussion will focus on future actions.

---

### **Workshop Panelists**

George Good, Dept. of Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture, Cornell

Tom Weiler\*, Dept. of Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture, Cornell

Scott Clark, Nursery Specialist, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Suffolk County

Nina Bassuk\*, Dept. of Floriculture and Ornamental Horticulture, Cornell

David Chinery, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Westchester County

**\* Workshop Organizers**

## **Innovative management & marketing options for cash grain production**

This workshop will focus on sustainable and organic management production practices and marketing techniques for cash grain producers. Bill Cox will outline crop rotation, pest management, and fertilizer practices that will allow cash grain producers in New York to increase corn yields by 10%, while reducing pesticide and fertilizer inputs by 50%. John Myer will then discuss organic management practices that allow him to sell corn, soybeans, wheat, and oats at premium prices. The audience will participate in a lively discussion on the ease of implementation on cash grain farms in New York. Marketing of grain crops will then be discussed by four speakers. Todd Roberts, a large cash grain operator, will describe his marketing strategies to maximize profits for his farm including future contracts, options, spreads, etc. John Myer, an organic farmer, will discuss his marketing strategies and opportunities for organic grains. Richard Corichi, an organic grain buyer from Community Mill & Bean, will discuss organic grain standards, and what he looks for when purchasing. Klaas Martens, a 600-acre cash cropper from Penn Yan will discuss the challenges and opportunities in the transition from mainstream to organic grain production.

---

### **Workshop Panelists**

Bill Cox\*, Soil, Crop, & Atmospheric Sciences, Cornell

John Myer\*, Myer Brothers Farms, Organic grain production

Todd Roberts, Roberts Brothers Farms, Medina NY

Richard Corichi, Community Mill & Bean

Klaas Martens, Cash grain producer, Penn Yan, NY

**\*Workshop Organizers**

### **What are the economic and environmental impacts of intensive rotational grazing?**

An ecological and historical perspective of Intensive Rotational Grazing will provide an overview of this management system. The environmental implications of grazing and the economics of grazing versus non-grazing systems will be presented. Two New York farmers will share their experiences in grazing stocker cattle and dairy cows. Small group discussions will address two questions: (1) What are the barriers to adoption of Management Intensive Grazing? and (2) In what ways do the changes in environmental impact and management encourage or discourage the adoption of grazing? We will learn from the experience and creative problem solving of the group. Participants will be contributing ideas for the promotion of grazing in New York and helping remove barriers, real or perceived, to the adoption of Management Intensive Grazing systems.

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#### **Workshop Panelists**

Darrell Emmick\*, State Grasslands Specialist, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Rick Swenson, Natural Resource Conservation Service

Stuart Smith, Agriculture, Resource & Managerial Economics, Cornell

Bill Tracy, Manager, Sunrise Farms, Auburn, New York

Chuck Benson, Dairy farmer with 600 cows & heifers, Lansing, New York

Nate Leonard\*, Pro-Dairy Program, Cornell Cooperative Extension

**\*Workshop Organizers**

### **How does sustainable agriculture affect farm labor?**

This workshop will explore ways to develop a sustainable workforce for New York farms. An overview of national and state demographics of farmworkers, emphasizing migrant and seasonal farmworkers, will be presented by Herb Engman. Tom Maloney will discuss how to attract and retain a qualified work force, emphasizing compensation, working conditions and "people skills." Amy Machamer will present the practical challenges of establishing and maintaining a sustainable work force on the farm from the viewpoint of an experienced owner. Aspacio Alcantara will present the viewpoint of the farmworker, describing workers' needs and expectations. The public policy implications of a sustainable agricultural work force will be addressed by Velma Smith and David Fellows. All presentations will be short, leaving ample time for questions, discussion within the group, and debate on the issues.

---

#### **Workshop Panelists**

Tom Maloney\*, Agriculture, Resource, & Managerial Economics, Cornell

Herb Engman\*, Director, Migrant Labor Program, Cornell

Amy Machamer, Owner, Hurd Orchards, Holley, NY

David Fellows, Governmental Relations Dept., New York Farm Bureau

Aspacio Alcantara, Farmworker, La Cooperativa (farmworkers' cooperative)

Velma Smith, Deputy Regional Supervisor, Rural Opportunities Inc.

Carolyn Mao, Translator

**\*Workshop Organizers**



## **Does nutrient management of fruit & vegetable production affect the environment?**

How can crop nutrient needs be safely met without undue economic costs or environmental impact? What are the environmental consequences of excess fertilization? Learn techniques farmers use to determine fruit and vegetable crop fertility needs. Ian Merwin will discuss nutrient retention and loss from the orchard environment, highlighting results from root zone monitoring. Bob Poole will present options for vineyard floor management and nutrition. Methods to determine nutrient status and fertilizer requirements will be described by Warren Stiles. Tissue testing and other ways to maintain recommended fertility levels in vegetable crops will be discussed by Pete Minotti. Jim Barber will explain how vegetable crop nutrition is managed on a mixed vegetable and dairy farm. Dick DeGraff will discuss nutrient management in organic vegetable production. Panel presentations will be followed by general discussions.

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### **Workshop Panelists**

Ian Merwin, Orchard Specialist, Fruit and Vegetable Science, Cornell

Bob Poole, Viticulturist, Geneva Experiment Station, Cornell

Warren Stiles\*, Orchard Nutrition, Fruit and Vegetable Science, Cornell

Pete Minotti, Vegetable Fertility, Fruit and Vegetable Science, Cornell

Jim Barber, Dairy and Vegetable Farmer

Dick DeGraff, Organic Vegetable Farmer, Northeast Organic Farming Assoc.

Brian Caldwell\*, Organic Fruit and Vegetable Farmer

**\*Workshop Organizers**

**Do new developments  
in federal, state and local agriculture policies  
promote sustainable agriculture?**

Are there any programs which will arrest the long term decline of farming in New York State? What existing programs help farmers or communities make changes? How can these programs more effectively strengthen the rural economy? What are the obstacles? What new proposals are on the drawing boards? Nelson Bills will provide a close look at the structure of agriculture in the United States today and highlight major trends for the future. Amy Little, Greg Watson and Rick Zimmerman will present their perspectives on federal activity. Will there be a 1995 Farm Bill? What does the Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture propose? Can budget cuts be advantageous for family farms, rural communities and food security? Senator John R. Kuhl, Dave Dodge, and Rick Zimmerman will share their views of New York State policies. What policies or proposals enhance the economic viability and environmental soundness of farms and strengthen the rural economy? A panel of representatives from the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Boards (AFPB) in Monroe, Wayne and Dutchess Counties will share their ideas about what these boards can do to encourage farming and protect farmland.

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Workshop Panelists

Nelson Bills\*, Agricultural, Resource and Managerial Economics, Cornell

Greg Watson, Eastern Regional Director, The Nature Conservancy

Amy Little, Director, Campaign for Sustainable Agriculture

Rick Zimmerman, New York Farm Bureau

Senator J. Randy Kuhl, State Senate Agriculture Committee

David Dodge, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

Tom Sanford, Advisory Council for Agriculture & Farmland Protection Boards

Rod Stetner, Farmer and Ag. & Farmland Protection Board- Monroe Cty

Elizabeth Henderson\*, Farmer and Ag. & Farmland Protection Board-Wayne Cty

\*Workshop Organizers

# **Building Local Partnerships**

## **Summary Session**

Participants will identify points of difference and opportunities for agreement within sustainable agriculture practice. Posters will summarize major themes, ideas, and technologies discussed in each of the earlier workshops. Learn about a conflict management approach to building consensus among organized groups with divergent interests. Define specific actions designed to promote partnerships between individuals and groups that are concerned with the problems of rural communities, agriculture, the environment, and our food system. Decide what outcomes from the conference are essential to share with constituent groups.

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## **Workshop Organizers**

David Deshler, Agriculture Extension and Adult Education, Cornell

Merrill Ewert, Agriculture Extension and Adult Education, Cornell

# What is Sustainable Agriculture?

"an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will, over the long term:

- \* satisfy human food and fiber needs;
- \* enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends;
- \* make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls;
- \* sustain the economic viability of farm operations;
- \* enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

---The Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (Farm Bill)

"Sustainable agriculture and forestry systems will:

- \* promote good stewardship of the land by utilizing production techniques and land management practices that prevent erosion, improve soil health and minimize water and air pollution;
- \* promote nutrient recycling through profitable use of agricultural by-products and wastes;
- \* rely on--and encourage--greater diversity on farms and between farms, as well as more management-intensive practices that are safe and environmentally sound;
- \* profitably employ more people in agricultural enterprises, both in full- and part-time capacities;
- \* provide a viable family living--economically and socially--from farming; and
- \* contribute to the quality of life in rural communities and for society as a whole."

---Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program, NE Region

"A sustainable agriculture must be ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially responsible....These three dimensions...are inseparable, and thus, are equally critical to long run sustainability....The ultimate consensus that a sustainable agriculture must be socially responsible is still emerging. However, to argue that an economically viable and ecologically sound system of agriculture can be sustained in the absence of social justice, is to ignore the fundamental nature of humans. At their very core, such arguments beg the question of sustainability for whom, or at least for how many?"

---Ikerd, J., Univ. of Missouri, 1995

"Sustainable agriculture is an integrated system of plant and animal production practices that assures ample supplies of food and fiber at a price that reflects the true cost of production including externalities, yet affordable to consumers. It must profitably reward the farmer to ensure the protection and enhancement of natural resources. A sustainable agriculture will make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and will seek ways to integrate natural biological cycles and controls into production practices. It will enhance the quality of life for farmers and society and will contribute to the development of strong, resilient sustainable communities."

---The Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Poteau, Oklahoma

"Most [definitions] agree that sustainable farming systems all share certain attributes. First, they conserve and protect the essential agroecosystem resource bases (e.g., soils, water, genetic diversity). Second, they provide adequate quantity and quality of the food and fiber to meet present and future requirements. Third, they optimize crop output per unit of capital, labor, land, or energy input. Finally, they are profitable enough to provide farmers with adequate living standards and support viable rural communities."

---Merwin, I.A. and M.P. Pritts, *HortTechnology*, 1993

"Sustainable agriculture: an agriculture that can evolve indefinitely toward greater human utility, greater efficiency of resource use, and a balance with the environment that is favorable both to humans and to most other species."

---Harwood, R.A., 1990

"Sustainable agriculture is both a philosophy and a system of farming. It is rooted in a set of values that reflects an awareness of both ecological and social realities and a commitment to respond appropriately to that awareness. It emphasizes design and management procedures that work with natural processes to conserve all resources and minimize waste and environmental damage, while maintaining or improving farm profitability. This is accomplished by taking into account nutrient and water cycles, energy flows, beneficial soil organisms, natural pest controls, and the humane treatment of animals. Such systems also aim to ensure the well-being of rural communities, and to produce food that is nutritious and uncontaminated with products that might harm human and livestock health."

---MacRae, R.J., S.B. Hill, J. Henning and A.J. Bentley,  
*American Journal of Alternative Agriculture*, 1990

MANY FARMING PRACTICES MAY CONTRIBUTE TO A SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE, INCLUDING: site specificity, crop rotations, green manure cover crops, integrated pest management, ridge tillage, organic fertilizers, biological control of insects and diseases, companion planting, intercropping, resistant varieties, biotechnology, reduced synthetic pesticide use, integration of crops and livestock, limited tillage, diversified crop and livestock species, protective soil covers, living mulches, low-density livestock housing, diversity in crops and livestock, composting, on-farm processing, community supported agriculture, draft animals, farmers markets, heirloom varieties, nutrient monitoring, locally based food systems, raised beds, mulches, natural predators, beneficial soil organisms, native plants, site specificity, soil testing...

RELATED TERMS: regenerative agriculture, organic farming, biodynamic farming, agroecology, permaculture, low-input agriculture, reduced-input agriculture, alternative agriculture, eco-agriculture, natural farming, agroforestry...



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# Acknowledgments

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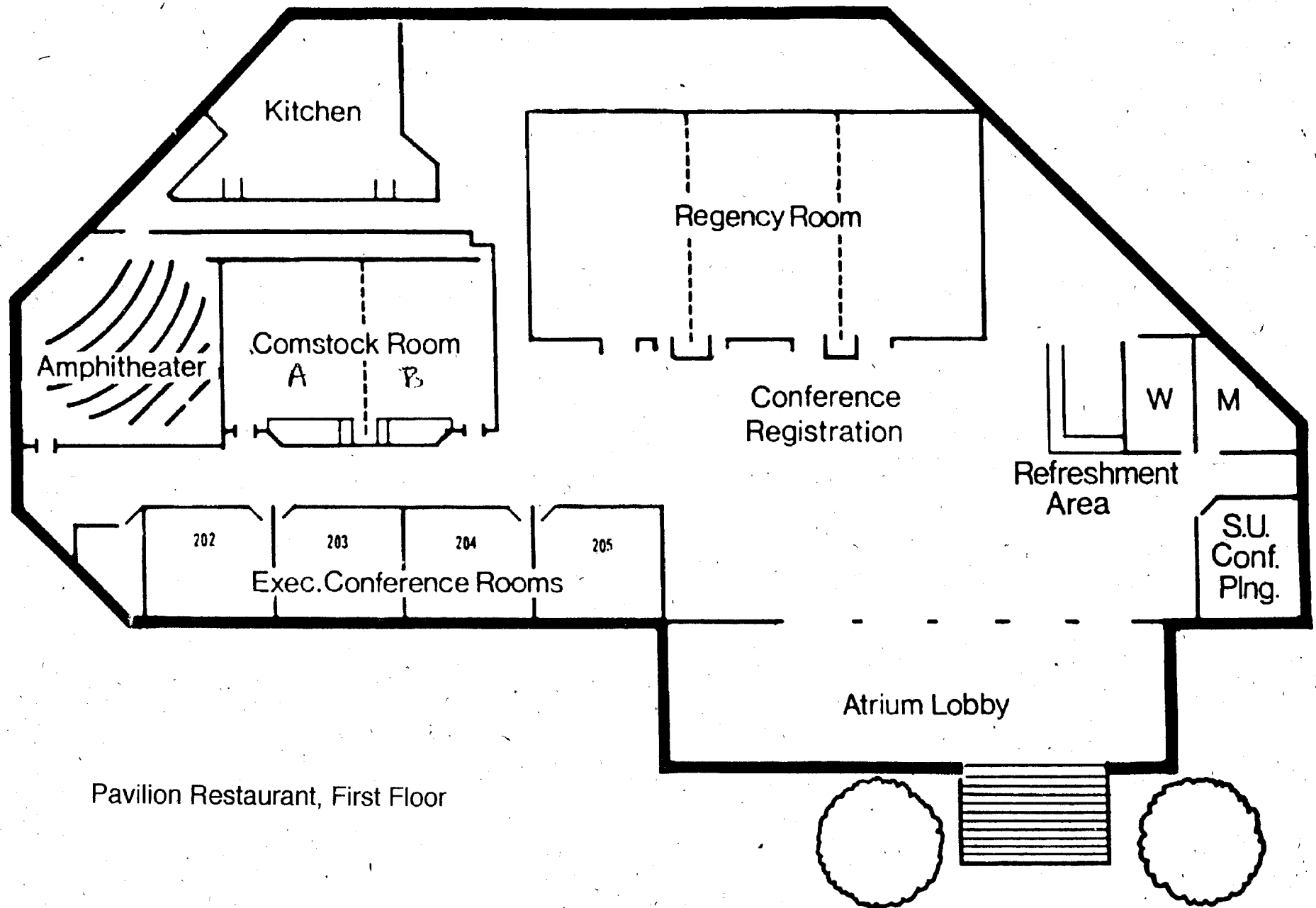
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# Conference Center Map





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