

## Main points of Sandy Ludeman's Presentation 9/24/2010

Sustainability should aim toward these goals:

1. Environmental health and stewardship
2. Economic profitability and efficiency
3. Social equity

Adaptation of machines in the Industrial age reduced labor needs for farming and education and better paying jobs caused exodus from the farm.

My definition of sustainability: "Managing resources efficiently and economically while protecting and enhancing the environment to sustain a quality lifestyle for farmers and society."

I believe that it was ingenuity, self-reliance, and perseverance of the American farmer that built this "near" miracle of modern ag production....not perfect, not the best, not equitable but productivity gains met America's needs and a portion of the worlds needs.

Sustainable Ag is not a specific set of practices to follow step by step; it is a mental shift, a paradigm change that encourages farmers to seek their own path towards a more environmentally friendly approach.

It is not a target, it is a process! Ag Systems are so diverse that farmers must choose those that help him (them) meet the challenges of food security, food safety, nutrition, health, bioenergy, or even climate change on a micro or macro basis.

Sanmarbo Farms abandoned the plow over thirty years ago for a mulch tillage system to improve water infiltration, protect against erosion over winter, to improve soil stability and tilth, and to encourage microbial activity.

We also utilize grass waterways, contour strips, field windbreaks, living snow fences, wildlife habitat plantings, native prairie protection, and wildlife food plots.

We rotate crops to suppress weeds, pathogens and insects and utilize biotech crops as it reduces amount of chemicals we apply.

Sanmarbo Farms also "does" a closed loop system with its 15,000 hog finishing operation, using about 1.5 million gallons of natural fertilizer applied at 3,000 gallons to 4,000 gallons (based on soil tests and nutrient test of manure)per acre which produces a corn crop which is fed to hogs and cycle repeats.

Sustainability of agriculture is not solely the management decisions that the farmer makes. It is also driven by the economic/social decisions that the consumer makes, influencing the food system from the grocery store back to the processor, back to the farmer who must then decide to adapt, challenge, or flee!

National farm and food policy at times distorts the goals of sustainability by the support of monoculture systems that create a heavier use of fertilizer and irrigation than what might be sustainable...payments are dependent on yields. Tide is slowly turning on this point with the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and the now nearly 25 year old CRP (Conservation Reserve Program) which pays the farmer to adopt good conservation practices.

Our society (U.S.) has failed in some respects to protect valuable farmlands from urban encroachment and other challenges through poor zoning and land use laws.

Farmers are entitled to a quality of life comparable to others in society and I believe that by adopting a sustainable mindset, they can be profitable (a must for long-term sustainability) and that we can meet the needs of the present without compromising future generations.