*Buy Fresh Buy Local Nebraska – Sustainable Agriculture Youth Education*

*How can we meet the needs of the present without diminishing opportunities of the future?*

Since World War II, the number of U.S. farms has **declined**, and the average farm size has **increased**. This was possible through the new technologies like mechanization, chemical fertilizers and specialization (only growing one or two crops). This type of farming model is commonly referred to as industrial agriculture. Although industrial agriculture had many positive effects and reduced the risk of farming, there are significant costs…

**Industrial agriculture separates the farm from the ecosystem and has led to:**

* Topsoil depletion (4.6 tons of soil lost per acre per year from water erosion)
* Water contamination from chemical inputs applied to the land (fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides)
* Increased production costs
* Drug Resistant Microbes

***Sustainable Agriculture aims to prevent many of the issues commonly associated with Industrial Agriculture.***

*The 3 E’s of Sustainable Agriculture*

**E**nvironmental Health

**E**conomic Profitability

**E**conomic & Social Equity

*Farm Tours - See Sustainable Farming in Action!*

**Common Good Farm – Raymond, NE:** Common Good Farm is in our 23rd season of growing good food through good farming in Lancaster County, Nebraska! We are a certified organic & certified Biodynamic®/Demeter farm – one of about 120 certified Biodynamic farms in the United States. In some ways, the certifications are just a reflection of our striving to grow the highest quality produce, eggs & meat through soil vitality & regeneration & conscientious farming practices. We use Biodynamic & organic seeds as available, focus on open-pollinated & heirloom varieties & limit our use of hybrids. We’re a mom & pop farm...food is grown from seed to harvest by Evrett Lunquist & Ruth Chantry. Common Good tends to hogs and cows for meat, laying hens for eggs, and an array of vegetables!

**Lakehouse Farm/Prairie Plate Restaurant – Waverly, NE:** Lakehouse Farm is a diversified vegetable farm northwest of Waverly, Nebraska. The farm is certified organic and supplies a majority of the produce used in their on-farm farm-to-table restaurant, Prairie Plate Restaurant. The farm uses sustainable growing practices like cover cropping, drip irrigation, and crop rotation.

Philosophy of Prairie Plate Restaurant: The meats on our menu are pasture-raised and Animal Welfare approved.  Dairy and grain products are sourced locally, many from certified organic operations.  Approximately 85% of the produce on the menu comes from our certified organic farm.   The ingredients that arrive in our kitchen carry a flavor of the land that is unique, delicious and wholesome.  A respect for these ingredients is a central tenet of our philosophy.

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*What sustainable farming practices do each of these farms use?*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Practice** | **Common Good Farm** | **Lakehouse Farm** |
| Cover Crops |  |  |
| Diversity (polycultures) |  |  |
| Integrating Livestock & Crops |  |  |
| Crop Rotation |  |  |
| Minimal Tillage (soil health) |  |  |
| Season Extension |  |  |
| Sales outlet: Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) |  |  |
| Sales Outlet: Farmers’ Market |  |  |
| Other: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (write something in!) |  |  |

*Examples of Sustainable Farming Practices:*

* **Diversity** – farms that grow a variety of plants (polyculture) are usually more economically and ecologically resilient. Farms that only grow one type of plant (like only corn or only cabbage) are referred to as monoculture farming and are more susceptible to pest and weed pressure.
* **Crop Rotation** – don’t grow the same thing in the same location every year!
* **Cover Crops** – plants grown by farmers that is not their main crop (typically not sold). Cover crops increase water infiltration, prevent soil erosion, and break pest cycles.
* **Integrating livestock and crops –** Animals provide many functions to help aid vegetable production, including a source of fertilizer (their manure!) and pest management (chickens eat bugs!).
* **Minimal tillage** – tillage means disturbing the soil to plant crops, typically done with a tractor on farms. Minimal tillage and no-till are common sustainable agricultural practices because minimizing soil disturbance helps keep soil healthy and productive.
* **Season Extension** – practices used to grow crops after the first frost. Examples include greenhouses, hoop houses, low tunnels, etc.