

Viewpoint: Investing in regenerative agriculture is the latest self-congratulatory easy-fix trend in fashion. Here's why it can't solve all our problems

Investing in regenerative agriculture is the latest trend in fashion. This year, the Kering Luxury Group — home to brands such as Gucci, Bottega Veneta, Balenciaga and Alexander McQueen — has co-founded a [regenerative agriculture fund](#). It aims to transform 247 million acres of land into sustainable fields that produce wool, leather, cotton and cashmere by 2025.

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I'd like to view this as an exciting opportunity for agriculture. In the U.S. alone, the average consumer buys [68 garments per year](#), five times more than in 1980. Sourcing the raw materials for this ever-growing industry from regenerative farms would encompass a large-scale transformation. But just because a shirt is made from regeneratively grown cotton doesn't make it a sustainable product.

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Conserving land is better than farming it regeneratively. Long-standing research into the question of land-sparing versus land-sharing concludes that [land-sparing produces superior outcomes](#) for wild species. We should use as little land as possible for agriculture, dedicating "spared" areas completely to biodiversity rather than incorporating conservation practices into agriculture if they demand larger growing areas.

The more we consume, and the more land we use, the harder it will be to regenerate natural systems rich in biodiversity and sequestered carbon.

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