

Viewpoint: Regenerative agriculture has become a popular buzzword. Here's what needs to be done for it to become a transformative, sustainable movement

There isn't a standard definition for regenerative agriculture, but it represents a holistic framework to understand and respond to global challenges in food and agricultural production at the production unit (farm) scale. It has been described as "farming and ranching in harmony with nature."^[2]

Regenerative agriculture expands on sustainable agriculture to include outcomes from "Practices that (i) contribute to generating/building soils and soil fertility and health; (ii) increase water percolation, water retention, and clean and safe water runoff; (iii) increase biodiversity and ecosystem health and resilience; and (iv) invert the carbon emissions of our current agriculture to one of remarkably significant carbon sequestration thereby cleansing the atmosphere of legacy levels of CO₂."

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The way forward demands disciplined focus and determined action to achieve the promises of sustainable and regenerative agriculture approaches. The connections between more data, a better understanding of the unique dynamics in each soil production system, and crop production resilience need to be embraced and incentivized. The innovations and integrations necessary to accelerate the soil renaissance will require novel public-private partnerships with strong commitments to public sharing of data and knowledge for the more than 2 million US farmers and 570 million farmers around the world who generate and curate these data.

Improved knowledge and understanding will encourage the replication and scalability of successful practices for sustainable and regenerative agriculture.

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