

NE Regional Symposium: Ecosystem Agriculture & Ecosystem Services

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Questions:

1. *Is this a meeting you would attend?*
 2. *Do you see value in the way it is framed? If so, where is the most value? If not, how should it change?*
 3. *Who would you want to see at this meeting? Who would you need with you?*
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Meeting summary

The primary goal of the regional symposium is to pull together diverse stakeholders from across the region who have a scientific, thought leadership, or industry roles and interests in

1. furthering the ability of the region's agricultural enterprises to establish, utilize, scale, and derive benefit from ecosystem agriculture practices;
2. finding ways to communicate, market, and establish economic structures so that those practices and the resulting ecosystem services are treated as a value-added product of their agricultural enterprises; and,
3. participating in a forum to promote collaboration across organizations to ensure agricultural sustainability in the NE.

Attendees will be asked to collaborate to develop strategies to scale practices and market agricultural ecosystem services. This includes identifying the important economic drivers and challenging traditional activities and consider new ways forward.

We aim to do this by providing a space and structure for stakeholders to meet, share their challenges/successes, engage in discussions, make connections, learn with each other, and create at least one product of mutual interest (e.g., guidelines, whitepaper, best practices, grant proposal, etc.).

Why this meeting?

- The meeting will
 - o acknowledge that Universities are not the only holders/creators of important knowledge, ideas, and solutions;
 - o embrace the diversity of stakeholder groups;
 - o focus on understanding challenges, identifying opportunities, creating relationships, and establishing pathways to solutions and continued work.
- The meeting will not be
 - o academics coming up with prescriptions,
 - o policymakers making policy in the absence of good science, nor
 - o producers simply airing frustrations in the face of roadblocks.

Driving Questions for On-Site Sessions

1. The need for integrating ecosystem services into economics and management practices has been around since at least the early 2000s. Why has the uptake of the principles been generally slow? Who are the early- vs late-adopters and why? Is it policy? Is it practice? Is it market structure limitations? Is it something else?

2. What is an ideal future for ecosystem agriculture and the valuation of ecosystem services in the NE region?
3. How are you currently working toward that future?
 - a. What is working?
 - b. What did you try that did not work?
4. What structures, policies, or programs are necessary to make that future happen that do not yet exist?
 - a. What are you missing?
 - b. Are you getting supported?
5. What practices (on the farm and in the market) are viable on different scales? What current successes can be translated cross scale or intra-scale? What is needed as different scales and how can the LGUs/regulatory agencies be sensitive or helpful?
6. How can the LGUs in the northeast region best change the culture of the agro-environmental economic system towards valuing the ecosystem services provided by sustainably managed agricultural spaces?