

Demonstrating Sustainable Agriculture at Farm-Scale in the Aspen Parkland



Sustainable agriculture practices provide a wide range of benefits for farmers and the agricultural landscape – including improved soil productivity, increased profits, enhancement of local livelihoods, support for biodiversity, and assisting with adaptation to and mitigation of climate change – all which contribute to a strong, resilient, and competitive agricultural sector.

The Aspen Parkland Agricultural Initiative (APAI) aims to ensure that farmers are able to access these benefits by strategically encouraging the adoption of proven sustainable agriculture practices across the Aspen Parkland ecoregion.

What do we mean by a Model Farm?

A Model Farm is a region-specific demonstration of a sustainable agricultural system operating as a business unit on a working farm. The objective of a Model Farm is to provide clear evidence for local farmers that a shift to sustainable practices is economically viable, agronomically feasible, and that desired profitability and environmental outcomes can be achieved.

If you're interested in participating, you won't be in this alone; Nature United and Collective Impact have partnered to provide you with both financial and technical support. You will work with us to co-develop a Sustainability Plan tailored to your unique soil and weather conditions, cropping systems, and available resources of your operation. The plan will detail how sustainable practices such as minimal soil disturbance, crop diversification, and soil health management will be implemented on up to 400 acres of your operation. While you will use your equipment, labour, and resources to implement the plan, Collective Impact will provide you with ongoing technical, administrative and monitoring support to ensure the plan evolves to continually meet your objectives. Nature United will also provide per acre payment to assist with implementation costs.

The outcomes and learnings from the Model Farms will be used to help form local networks for farmers to share experiences and best practices with other Model Farm participants and other interested farmers, forming a network of farmers around sustainable agriculture.

WHY THE ASPEN PARKLAND?

The Aspen Parkland ecoregion is an area of high agricultural productivity spans 17.3M hectares across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta and includes high value crops such as canola, wheat, oats, and pulses. In addition to high productivity, these soils are also able to store vast amounts of carbon with significant implications for climate change mitigation.

We are bringing farmers, industry, governments, and Indigenous representatives across the region together to address the barriers and invest in the conditions needed for successful adoption of sustainable practices. This includes support for farmers – on farms, across supply chains, and within policy – to demonstrate the agronomic and economic viability of sustainable agriculture at farm scale. Model Farms provide a crucial opportunity to accomplish this.





How are Nature United and Collective Impact collaborating?

Nature United and Collective Impact are aligned in a vision for adopting collaborative and innovative approaches to unite producers, industries and government to adopt sustainable agricultural systems that promote healthy and resilient lands, waters, livelihoods and communities now, and in the future.

Nature United builds diverse partnerships to enhance lands and ensure nature is the foundation of healthy communities, economies and future opportunities. In terms of sustainable agriculture, we take a science-based, landscape-scale, approach that creates solutions which balance on-farm productivity, profitability and ecological resilience.

Collective Impact has extensive personal and professional experience navigating, and helping others navigate, sustainable agriculture programs that help farmers meet their needs and goals. Thanks to their relationships in and knowledge of the region, they are well positioned to act as a coordinator across the network of model farms in the region.

Nature United has partnered with Collective Impact to ensure that all Model Farms have consistent, reliable and knowledgeable support in place to achieve our common goals. As the common thread between the Model Farms, Collective Impact will also play a central role in monitoring and evaluating the impact of sustainable practice adoption on individual farms and across the region. This group will continue to grow over time and build a broader base of participants.

Be part of innovative research to demonstrate the viability of sustainable agriculture at farm-scale.

HOW WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM BECOMING A MODEL FARM?

Joining the Model Farm network offers a unique opportunity to contribute to a growing body of evidence of the agronomic and economic feasibility of sustainable agriculture across the Prairies.

As a participating farmer, you can expect:

- A tailored, long-term roadmap for sustainable practice implementation across your operation that reflects your specific goals and interests
- Technical support from specialized agronomists to implement and adjust your plan over time
- Incentive payments to offset some of the risk and cost associated with adopting sustainable practices
- Support with long-term data collection and interpretation to quantify the agronomic and economic feasibility of sustainable practice adoption across your operation
- Connect to a network of other farmers in the region to share successes, learnings, and stories

For more information on participating in the Model Farm Network contact:

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