

Sustainable agriculture and the social sciences: Getting beyond best management practices and into food systems

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Sustainable Agriculture and the Social Sciences: Getting Beyond Best Management Practices and into Food Systems

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Abstract

This paper introduces the special issue of Southern Rural Sociology and lays the groundwork for the rest of the papers. The genesis of this special issue flows from the efforts of the Southern Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (S-SARE) program to bring more social science research into its portfolio of projects. Our concern is that by providing best management practices (Band-Aids) to a fundamentally unsustainable agricultural system, the sustainable agriculture movement (and SARE's granting program) favors the environmental component at the expense of economic and social "legs" of the sustainable stool. While focusing on the history and work of the SARE program, we provided a social science perspective on sustainable agriculture.

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sustainable food is food that gets cultivated, distributed and consumed in a way that does not have any long-term degrading impact on the system that sustains this process. This leads us to some ideas for sustainable agriculture, agriculture that can fulfill the needs of today without compromising with the needs of the future. Consuming sustainable foods will lead to sustainable agricultural practices that will have an impact on not just environmental protection but the society and economy as well. Advertisement. Follow Us on. Sustainable agriculture is farming in sustainable ways, which means meeting society's present food and textile needs, without compromising the ability for current or future generations to meet their needs. It can be based on an understanding of ecosystem services. There are many methods to increase the sustainability of agriculture. When developing agriculture within sustainable food systems, it is important to develop flexible business process and farming practices.