



Policy

University: Sri Sri University
Country: India
Web Address: www.srisriuniversity.edu.in

POLICY ON SUSTAINABLY FARMED FOOD

Name of Policy	Policy on Sustainably Farmed Food	Department Responsible	Faculty of Agriculture
Department	All	Prepared By	Prof. Kumaraswamy
Effective Date		Verified by	DO
Date of Creation	04-03-2020	Approved by	Executive Registrar
Reviewed on	05-12-2022	Reference No.	SSU/AR/2022/381B
Number of Pages	3		

To achieve food security and meet the demands of the ever-growing human populations, farming systems have assumed unsustainable practices to produce more from a finite land area. This has been cause for concern mainly due to the often-irreversible damage done to the otherwise productive agricultural landscapes. Agro-ecology is proclaimed to be deteriorating due to eroding integrity of connected ecological mosaics and vulnerability to climate change. This has contributed to declining species diversity, loss of buffer vegetation, fragmentation of habitats, and loss of natural pollinators or predators, which eventually leads to decline in ecosystem services with consequent decline in quality of food. Currently, a hierarchy of conservation initiatives is being considered to sustainably restore the ecological integrity of agricultural landscapes. However, the challenge of identifying a suitable conservation strategy is a daunting task in view of socio-ecological factors that may constrain the choice of available strategies. One way to mitigate this situation and integrate biodiversity with agricultural landscapes is to implement offset mechanisms, which

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are compensatory and balancing approaches to restore the ecological health and function of a farm ecosystem. This needs to be tailored to the history of location specific agricultural practices, and the social, ecological and environmental conditions. The offset mechanisms can complement other initiatives through which farm are insured against landscape-level risks such as droughts, fire and floods. For countries in the developing world with significant biodiversity and extensive agriculture, we should promote a comprehensive model of sustainable agricultural landscapes and ecosystem services, replicable at landscape to regional scales. Arguably, the model of sustainably managed farm can be a potential option to produce organic food and raw materials with acceptable quality to insure human health index.

The major challenge in the modern agricultural landscapes is to meet the ever-growing demand for agricultural products while simultaneously sustainably managing the productive soils with no use of chemical inputs (fertilizers and pesticides). Further, economic and physical environments characteristic also define sustainable production of food. The Faculty of Agriculture has made significant efforts to develop 40 acres of land as farms to cultivate various seasonal, annual and perennial crops with no use of chemical inputs in crop management and production. In this direction following policy initiatives have been considered and implemented to ensure sustainably farmed food with desirable quality, which has direct implications to human health index and health of the environment.

Vision and mission/s of Faculty of Agriculture

Vision:

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Develop an institution of excellence to provide education, training/outreach services and to generate skilled manpower to meet the demand of agriculture sector at regional and national level.

Mission:

The Faculty of Agriculture at the university will be built to address problems of agriculture sector with an aim to revitalize the sustainable agriculture practices, promote innovations and popularization of technologies to adopt conservation and precision agriculture. The department has following mission to achieve the objective goals;

1. Build faculty and team of inter-disciplinary expertise to provide quality and comprehensive education in agriculture.
2. Evolve innovation in course curricula and training programs.
3. Design and generate problem solving tools/technologies/innovations relevant to enhance the productivity of agricultural crops and sustenance of ecosystem services.
4. Develop pro-farmer outreach programs– scientist-farmer forums, farmer cooperatives, ICT based user-friendly mobile-based app., forward market linkages and knowledge resource modules, building interactive knowledge base on agricultural practices etc.
5. Build a 'Centre for Conservation Agriculture and Innovations' with inter-disciplinary expertise to promote sustainable agricultural practices and develop technologies to help farmers.
6. Build 'Institute of Agricultural Sciences' as Centre of Excellence.

Policy considerations for sustainably farmed food:

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1. **Sustainably restore the cultivable lateritic land area:** A long-term plan has been initiated on campus to build healthy soils by applying the principles of restoration ecology and natural farming to cultivate seasonal, annual and perennial crops.
2. **No use of agrochemicals-** For crop cultivation management, non-use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides shall be encouraged to prevent any residual toxicity in soil and water. The beneficial flora and faunal communities shall not be disturbed to maintain the mutualistic ecosystem services.
3. ***In-situ* composting methods-** Develop and practice *in-situ* composting mechanisms/methods/protocols to effectively recycle the farm biomass, kitchen waste and leaf litter to produce value added compost with improved nutrients content and composition. The value added compost shall be utilized as a sustainable substitute to chemical fertilizers for nutrient management of crops.
4. **Animal husbandry-** A animal farm has been developed with organic principles to produce nutritionally healthy milk and milk products. The cow milk shall be distributed among the student boarders as a nutrient supplement. In addition, the cow dung and urine shall be utilized to produce formulations with variable nutrient content intended for applying to soil to sustain the productive capacity, crop growth and immunity booster to overcoming yield losses, which support the concept of regenerative agriculture.

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5. **Medicinal garden-** A *in-situ* repository of native medical flora shall be developed and utilized for naturopathic treatments and alternative medicines to provide solutions to present day human health complications. The medical species collection will be shared to promote national repository by ex-situ conservation of different indigenous medicinal and aromatic plants without disturbing the native ecosystem.
6. **Rejuvenation of soil-** Soil health and quality shall be sustainably managed by applying the principles of natural farming applicable to location specific needs, utilization of farm yard manure to supplement nutrients to the crop and maintain the fertility status of the soil in subsequent cropping seasons.
7. **Afforestation-** The land area shall be afforested with indigenous and economic tree species through annual tree plantation initiative as part student's co-curricular activity to inculcate responsible development and protection of the living environment. The degraded land will be planted with suitable perennial tree species producing high biomass, N-fixers, soil builders and also having aesthetic value to restore the ecosystem services and manage them sustainably with economic and ecological benefits to the contiguous ecosystem. The tree plantation with complementarity will also reduce the soil erosion, recharging ground water and add biomass to soil profile.

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8. **Enriching biodiversity-** A comprehensive practical's shall be integrated into the course curriculum to build biodiversity with conservation initiatives. Students shall participate in such initiative through various practical modules of organic crop cultivation, landscaping, apiculture, and floriculture etc. within the campus. It is envisioned to re-introduce both flora (rare and endangered) and faunal (arthropods, beneficial microorganisms, vertebrates, natural predators and birds) species at various trophic levels sustain the ecological equilibrium of the contiguous ecosystems within the campus.
9. **Nutritious food for healthy body and mind-** The rationale of building a farm with natural and organic farming principles has broader goal of achieving self-sufficiency to provide balanced and nutritious food to students and staff. Balanced nutritive food preparations have ingredients sourced from the organic farm. The sustainably farmed food also considers varieties of veggies, millets and fruits to accentuate the importance nutritionally certified vegetarian food, which has minimal environmental footprints.

The policy on sustainably farmed food also considers awareness building amongst the students and community alike living on the campus.


Executive Registrar

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