Agroforestry:
What is USDA Doing?
Taking it to the “next level”
(The View from Washington DC)

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Today’s Topics

• Is agroforestry important at the U.S. Department of Agriculture?

• USDA Agroforestry Strategic Framework, FY 2011-2016

• Agroforestry: USDA Reports to America, Fiscal Year 2011-2012 (in press)

• Taking agroforestry to the “next level”…what’s it gonna take?
Is agroforestry important at USDA?

“I came to the USDA with this perspective that we have under-thought and under-utilized agroforestry as a strategy for diversification for our farmers, but now”, she added, “The timing is right.”

Kathleen Merrigan, USDA Deputy Secretary
May 2010, Agroforestry Roundtable Workshop
Is agroforestry important at USDA?

“...at USDA we ought to be looking at ways in which we can reduce manmade barriers to multi-cropping...another strategy for managing risk...whether its double-cropping or cover crops or an integrated crop-livestock arrangement or even agroforestry”

Tom Vilsack, USDA Secretary
February 2013, USDA Ag Outlook Conference
“Managing Risk in the 21st Century”
USDA Agroforestry Strategic Framework, 2011-2016

- **Released June 2011** by USDA Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan, NAAC, Athens, GA
- **Developed by interagency team** (five USDA agencies, Natl. Associations of State Foresters & Cons. Districts)
- **Input from 90+ stakeholders** (Agroforestry Roundtable Workshop, May 25-26, 2010)
**USDA Strategic Framework for Agroforestry, 2011-2016**

**Purpose:**
- Increase awareness & support for agroforestry
- Identify future USDA emphasis areas for agroforestry R&D and technology transfer

**Three Goals:**
- **ADOPTION** – Increase use of agroforestry by landowners and communities
- **SCIENCE** – Advance the understanding and tools
- **INTEGRATION** – Incorporate into an all-lands approach to conservation and economic development
Nine Objectives, including:

**Educate Professionals** (Obj. 1.2)
- Enable natural resource professionals to provide technical, educational, financial, and marketing assistance

**Institutionalize** (Obj. 3.1)
- Incorporate agroforestry into USDA policies, programs, and activities

**Communicate Results** (Obj. 3.3)
- Promote awareness and appreciation for agroforestry
Key accomplishments:

• USDA Agroforestry Executive Steering Committee (guides Strategic Framework implementation)

• USDA Departmental Regulation on agroforestry
  (http://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/Agroforestry_DR_2013.pdf)

• Completed USDA Agroforestry Communication Plan
  Coming soon: enhanced USDA agroforestry web pages and “This is Agroforestry” posters

• First-ever USDA report on agroforestry (in press)
  FY 2011-12 financial commitments, accomplishments, case studies, next steps
USDA Agroforestry Executive Steering Committee established in November 2011:

- Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)
- Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
- Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- Forest Service (FS)
- National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)
- National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Rural Development (RD)

Current Chair: Wayne Honeycutt, NRCS Deputy Chief
Agroforestry: USDA Reports to America, Fiscal Year 2011-2012 [in press]

Overview

• Comprehensive (~180 p.) & in brief (~30 p.) versions
• Federal Fiscal Years 2011-2012
• $333 million invested by USDA (FY 2011-12)
• Maps (e.g., agroforestry practices applied by state)
• 15 case studies – feature producers, scientists, partnerships, others
• Organized around Strategic Framework goals – Adoption, Science, Integration
• 15 “Next Steps” planned by USDA
$333 million invested in agroforestry (FY 2011-12)

• < 1 percent of USDA’s total obligations
• 95% ($328 million) supported technical and financial assistance to help landowners apply practices
  ✓ 99% to riparian buffers and windbreaks
  ✓ 1% to alley cropping, multi-story cropping/forest farming, and silvopasture
• Primary programs (USDA agencies):
  ✓ Conservation Reserve (FSA)
  ✓ Environmental Quality Incentives (NRCS)
Inside the other 5 percent (~$15 million)

- Agroforestry Research, Education, Extension:
  - $4 million - ARS (7 labs)
  - $2.8 million - FS (7 labs, Natl. Agroforestry Center)
  - $3.9 million – NIFA (41 land-grant univ., 6 others).
    (ARS & FS also supported extramural research)

- Technology Transfer, Training/Workshops, Outreach
  - $3.9 - FS (all states except AK, AZ, OR, NM, WA)

- Marketing, Rural Development
  - $800,000 – AMS, RD
Adoption (Goal 1)

- Currently no national database of agroforestry plantings or landowners applying the practices
- Application on <1% of potentially suitable land

USDA assistance, 2008-2012:

- 336,000 ac. of buffers, windbreaks, alley cropping
  (372 million ac. of cropland)
- 2,000 ac. of silvopasture
  (179 million ac. of grazed forest land & pasture)
- 500 ac. of forest farming
  (363 million ac. of ungrazed forest land)
Adoption (Goal 1)

2012 Census of Agriculture includes the first-ever agroforestry practice question:

“At any time during 2012, did this operation practice alley cropping or silvopasture as an integrated Agroforestry system?”

- First data expected in February 2014
- Makes possible: follow-on surveys and analysis of producers who responded “yes” or “no”
Agroforestry: USDA Reports to America, Fiscal Year 2011-2012 [in press]

**Adoption** (Goal 1)

**Supporting activities:**

- Forest Farming Community of Practice established
- Multistate agroforestry working groups: Chesapeake Bay, Midwest, Pacific Islands and Pacific Northwest (?)
- USDA supported 40 agroforestry demonstration sites
- US-Canada agroforestry MOU signed (USDA National Agroforestry Center – AAFC Agroforestry Development Centre)
- First agroforestry academy for resource professionals, supported by USDA SARE grant (2013–14)
Science (Goal 2)

Selected accomplishments:

• USDA supported 69 agroforestry research projects
• 200 peer-reviewed agroforestry publications by USDA scientists/partners at 47 institutions (41 land-grant)
• Agroforestry module added to the Forest*A*Syst, a web tool that helps landowners develop a mgmt. plan
• Profitable Farms and Woodlands: A Practical Guide in Agroforestry for Landowners, Farmers, and Ranchers published to help limited resource producers in SE
Taking agroforestry to the “next level”
...what’s it gonna take?

BIG PICTURE
Desired Outcome: Landowners, managers, Tribes, and communities adopt agroforestry practices resulting in improved water, soil, and air quality; sustainable agriculture; product diversity; and rural wealth. (Strategic Framework, Goal 1)

Agroforestry applied = 5% of suitable lands in U.S.
Taking agroforestry to the “next level” ...what’s it gonna take?

FIVE ACTIONS:

1) **Eliminate agroforestry illiteracy**
2) **Significant expansion of agroforestry research, education, extension at universities**
3) **Peer to Peer learning!**
4) **National inventory of agroforestry plantings and producers who are practicing agroforestry**
5) **Agroforestry defined and explicitly authorized in the next Farm Bill**
Taking agroforestry to the “next level”
...what’s it gonna take?

ACTIONS

1) **Eliminate agroforestry illiteracy**
(critical mass of nat. resource professionals!)

- Agroforestry academies expanded to Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, Northeast, Northwest
- National “Certified Agroforester” program
  (*Journal of Forestry* commentary, Dec 2012)
- Agroforestry 101 required for USDA employees
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**ACTIONS**

2) **Significant expansion of agroforestry research, education, extension at universities**

- Agroforestry majors/certificates/area of expertise offered by universities in five major regions (NE, Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, SE, NW)
- Regional agroforestry working groups in same regions, each anchored by a land grant university
- Tribal and Island agroforestry working groups
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ACTIONS

3) **Peer to Peer Learning!**
(landowner to landowner; professional to professional)

- Agroforestry demonstration sites in every state – strategically located, maintained and used!
- *eXtension Communities of Practice* established for all practices (alley cropping, windbreaks, silvopasture, riparian & upland buffers) and Tribal agroforestry, island agroforestry
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ACTIONS

4) **National inventory of agroforestry plantings and producers who practice agroforestry**

- Assess responses to the agroforestry practice question in the 2012 Census of Agriculture
- “Linear forests”, on both agricultural and urban lands, are included in the FIA program.
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**ACTIONS**

5) **Agroforestry defined and explicitly authorized in USDA/Farm Bill programs:**
   - Conservation (e.g., EQIP)
   - Forestry (e.g., Forest Stewardship)
   - Research (e.g., Smith-Lever, McIntire-Stennis)
   - Horticulture and organic agriculture (e.g., Specialty Crop Block Grant)
Questions/Comment?

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