



UNITED TO GROW FAMILY AGRICULTURE



Introduction

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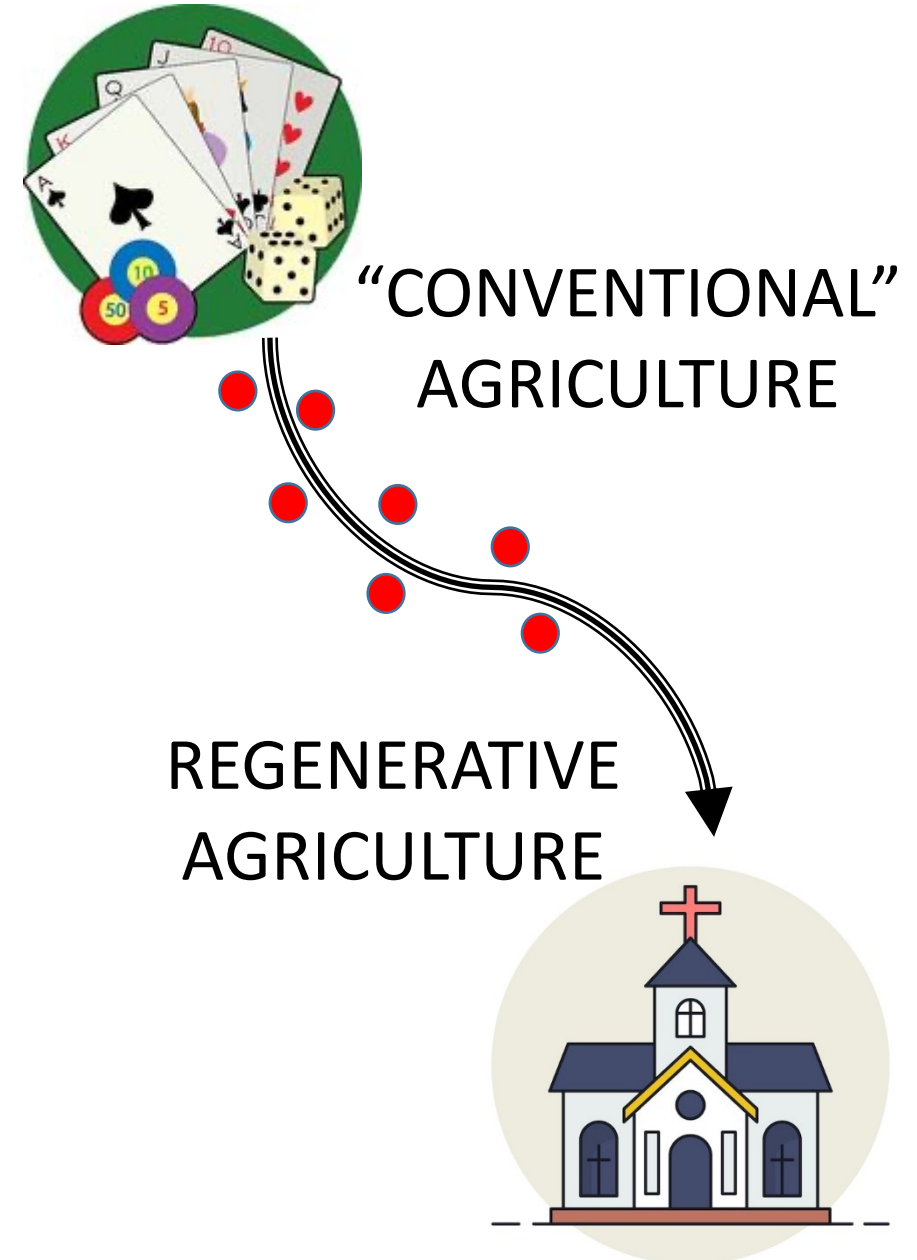
Preaching Beyond the Choir

An Extended Metaphor on Creating Change in a Community

From Casino to Church

- Build a good church
- Understand the people
- Understand the setting
- Create Shared Objectives
- Provide real support
- Tell your story well

**Casinos are not all bad and churches are not good.
We're starting from the assumption that we know what
our vision is.



From Casino to Church

- Build a good church



“CONVENTIONAL”
AGRICULTURE

REGENERATIVE
AGRICULTURE



WAYS TO SEQUESTER CARBON



147 CO₂e

Incorporate alley cropping on 100 acre farm



121 CO₂e

Convert 100 acres of cropland to forage for grazing



66 CO₂e

Convert to no-till on a 100 acre farm



65 CO₂e

Add agroforestry practices by planting 100 trees

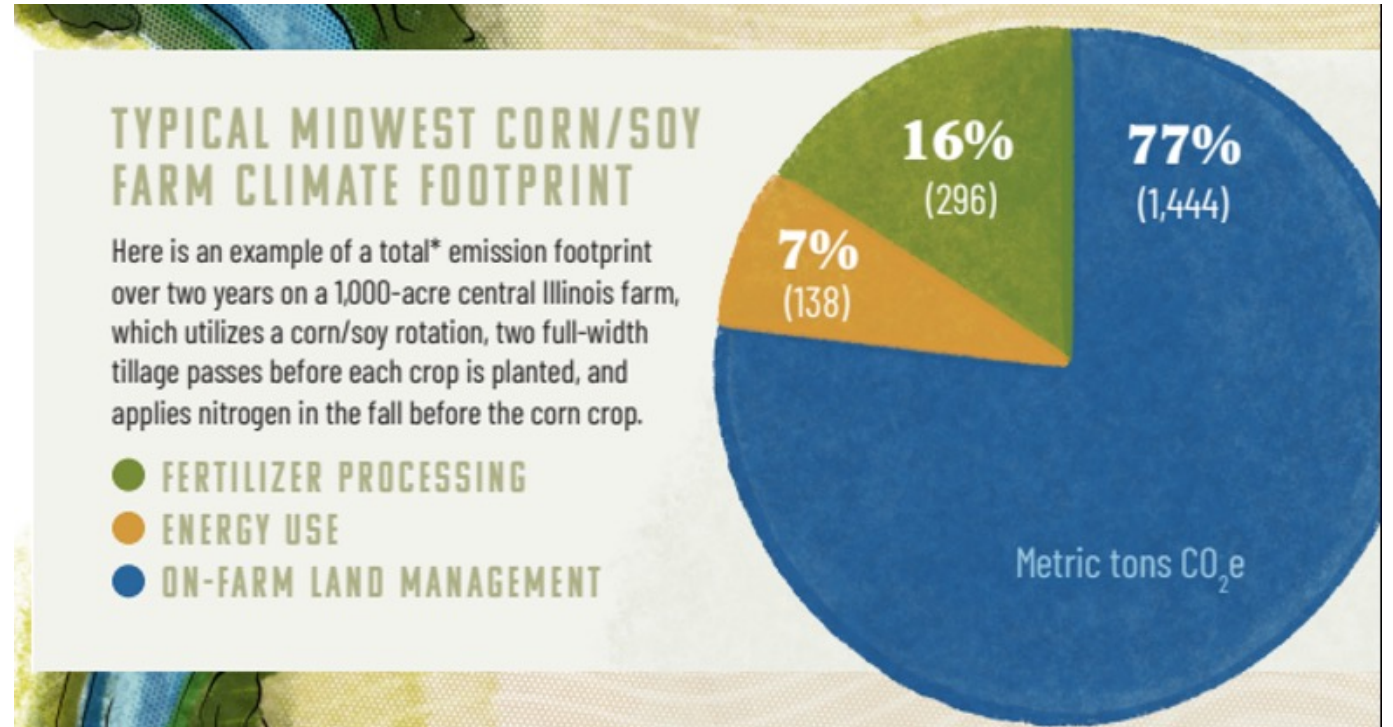


16 CO₂e

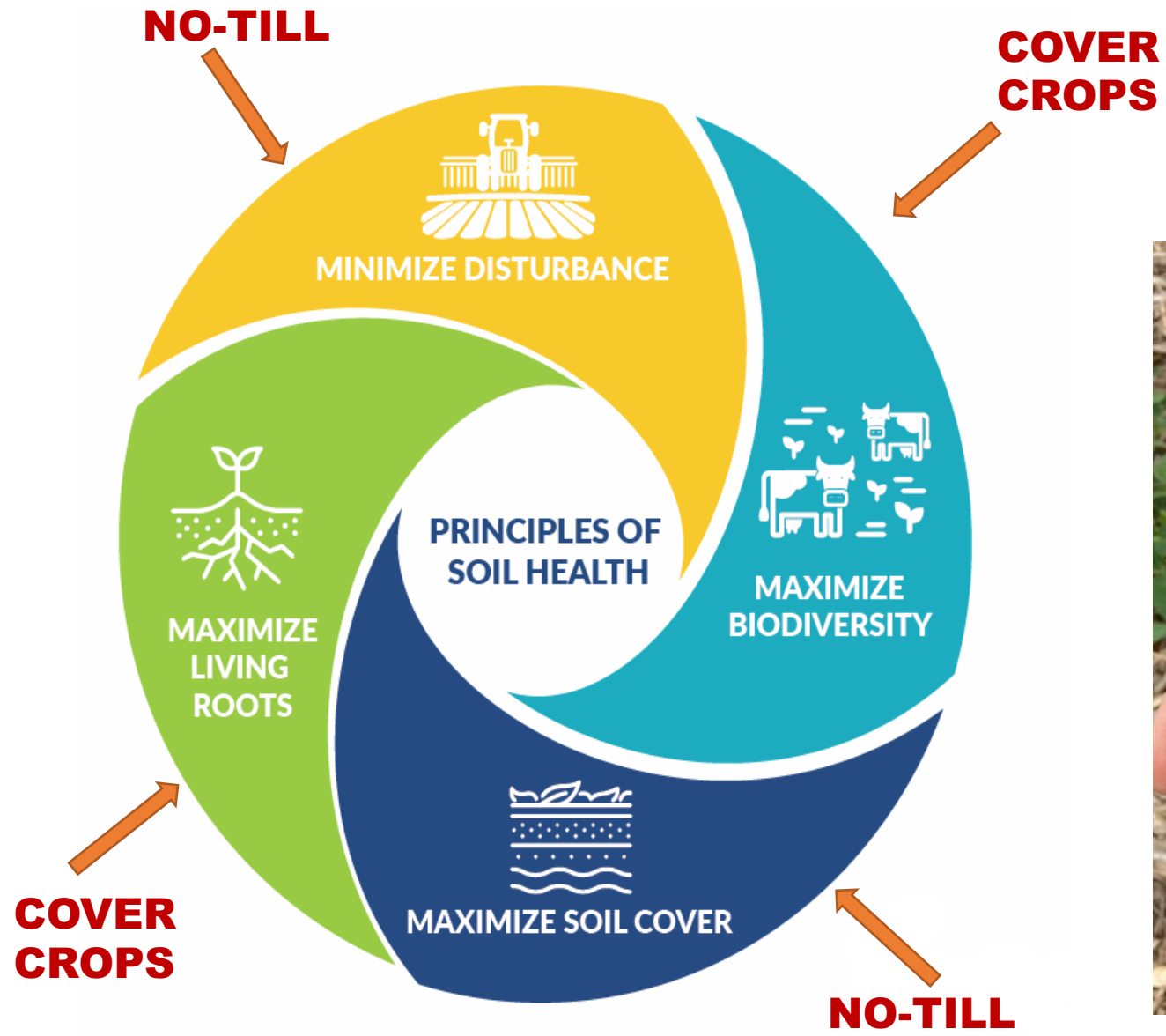
Plant cover crops on a 100 acre farm

MORE WAYS TO LOWER THE FARM FOOTPRINT

- » Reduce farm fuel when converting to no till
- » Offset farm electricity by adding renewable energy
- » Consider beyond-the-farm-gate impacts by reducing commercial fertilizer



**From Wisconsin Land & Water



From Casino to Church

- Build a good church
- Understand the people



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Are you being a missionary?



Work with the Community

- Who already cares about the work?
- Who obviously benefits from the work?
- Who is already doing the work?
- What does the community care about?



The Congregation



The Choir



Looking Outside the Church

- Who needs to change for the cause to succeed?
- Who helps those people make decisions?
- Who is benefiting from the status quo (for whom will change be very scary?)



Agricultural Stakeholders

- Farmers
- Landowners
- Agronomists
- Farmer supply industry
- Market



Farmer Survey Attitudes

- 100% of farmers felt positive towards “soil health”
- 86% of farmers strongly agreed they have a responsibility to minimize erosion on their farms. 0 disagreed at all.
- When asked to rate how their neighbors felt about those words, one quarter felt their neighbors responded negatively to the phrase regenerative agriculture.

Farmer Survey Actions

- 64% reported using cover crops on some of their acres. 44% use cover crops on less than a quarter of their acres while only 8% use cover crops on more than three quarters of their acres.
- 46 farmers said that cover crops are important for soil health. Over those, 7 reported they do not use cover crops on any of the acres on their farm.
- 62% of farmers are doing some fall tillage

From Casino to Church

- Build a Good Church
- Understand the People
- Understand the setting



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The Setting

- Why are people at the casino?
- What does the church feel like inside?
- What does the road look like between?

The Casino is Comfy



*"You been
farming
long?"*

God said...

It had to be somebody
who'd plow deep and straight
and not cut corners.

Somebody to seed, weed, feed, breed,
and rake and disc and plow and plant
and tie the fleece and strain the milk
and replenish the self-feeder
and finish a hard week's work
with a five-mile drive to church...

So God made a

FARMER

— Paul Harvey



What Does the Choir Look Like?



Where's the Casino Again?

“Farmers have
a target on
their back.”



Why so Sensitive?

ST. CROIX 360

River stories to inspire stewardship.

[SHARE NEWS](#)

Large dairy makes a lot of milk and manages a lot of manure

One of the biggest farms in the St. Croix River region has taken several steps to be better stewards of soil, water, and cows.

By [Greg Seitz](#) | December 17, 2021 | 8 minute read

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[More](#)



Karen [REDACTED] says

DECEMBER 17, 2021 AT 7:25 PM

Horrific operation. Factory farming has killed this planet, and now a Hog CAFO as well?

The Importance of Identity & Shame

- No ability to grow in a shame mindset
- Farming is more than a business – it's an identity tied to generations of family.
- If you're asking people to give up themselves, they have nothing else to give.



Come for the Jokes, Stay for the Soil Health



Get me to the Church On Time

Don't just point at a locked door. Bust off the lock,
provide cab fare, coffee, and belonging.

Making the Church Inviting

- The RSVP is always no if you never invite them.
 - They won't always come
 - They won't always listen
 - 8 Times Average
 - Rejection is scarier beforehand than after

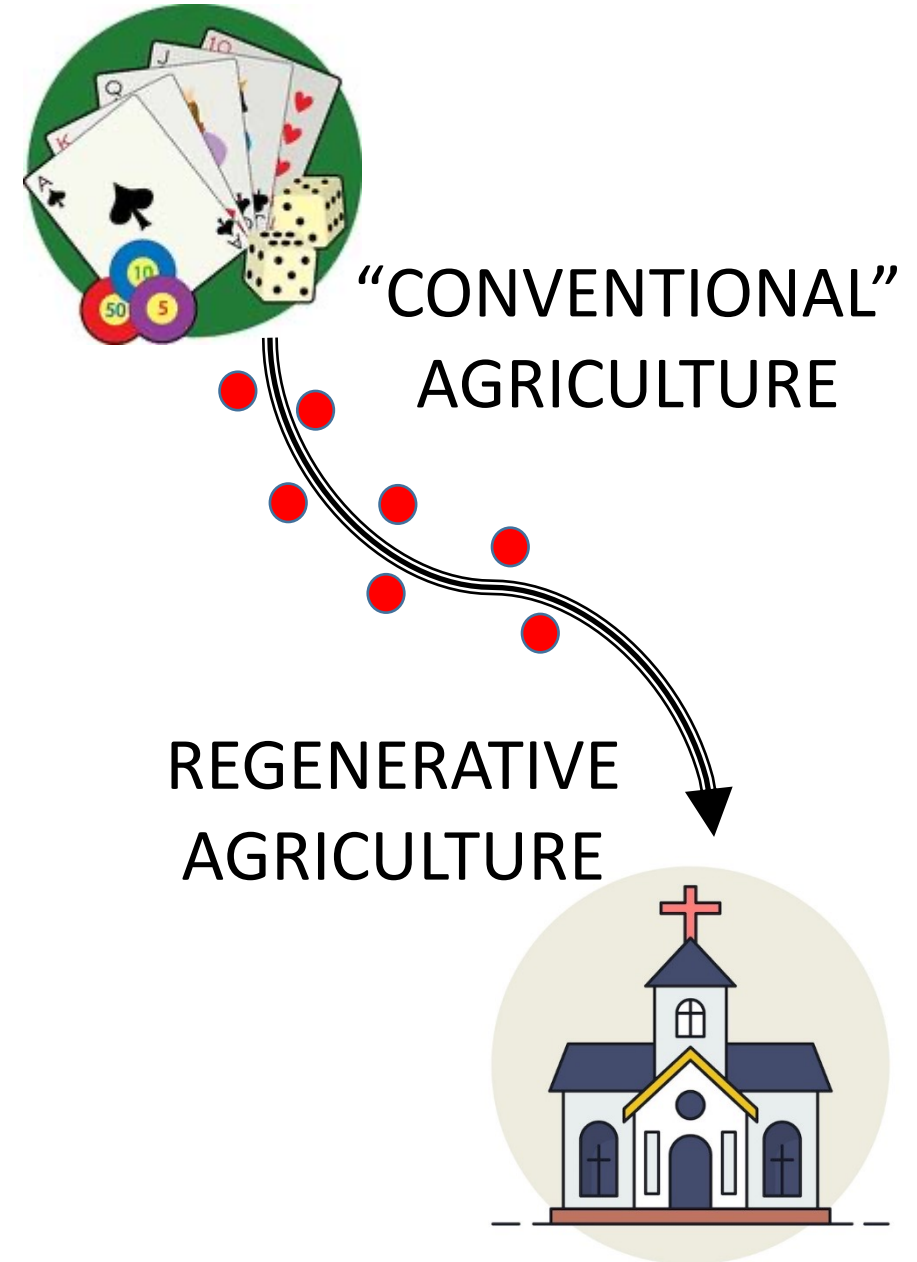






From Casino to Church

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- Understand the people
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- Create Shared Objectives



Make Sure Goals Meet Everyone's Needs

Do the desired outcomes mean a better community for all?

Are there new stakeholders with your added objectives?

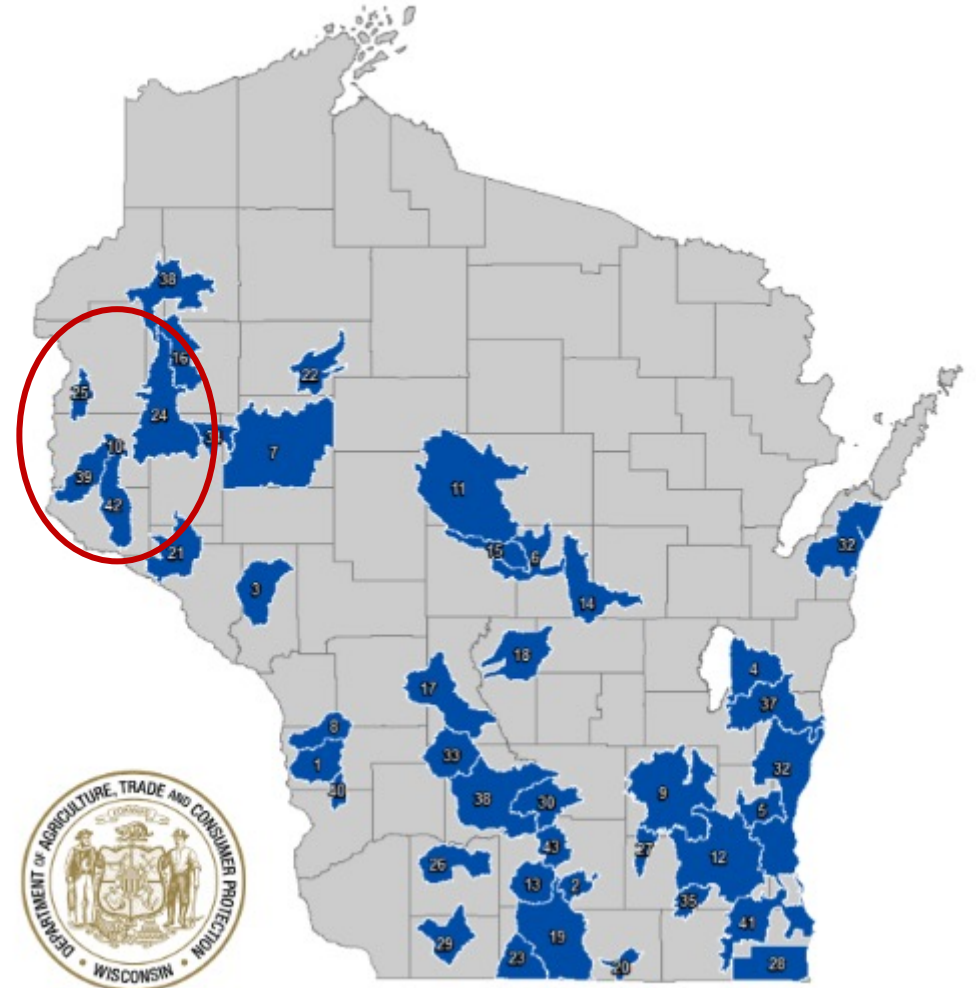
Intro Farmer-Led Councils

Goal: Improve soil health on farms and reduce water pollution in rivers, lakes, and aquifers

How: Farmer-Led groups provide funds to farmers for education and conservation agriculture practices – fully voluntary.

Currently over 40 in Wisconsin. I work with 4 of them.

2023 Funded Producer-Led Watershed Protection Groups



Sharing Pumpkins



Compromise vs. Collaboration

Everyone wants food.

Everyone wants clean
water.

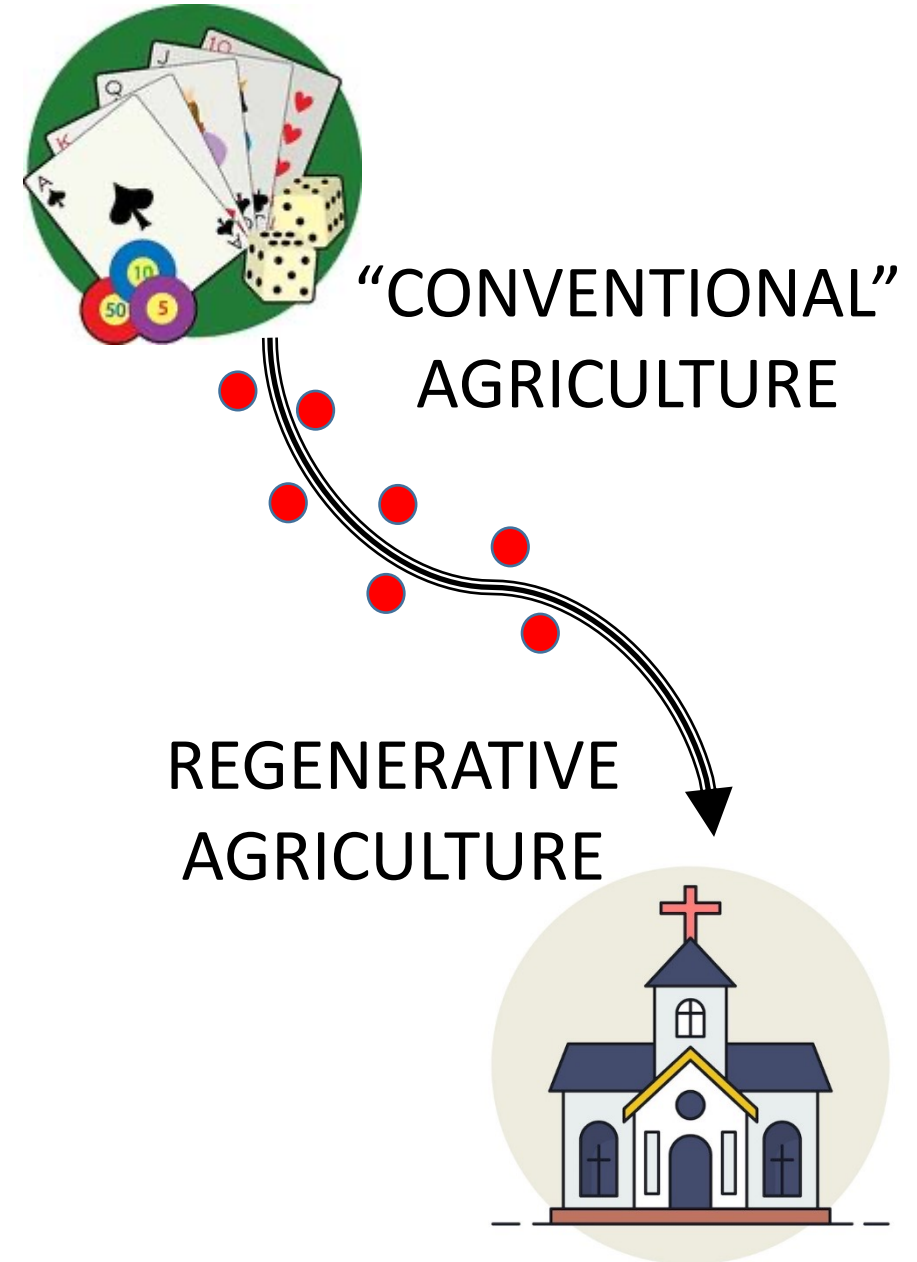






From Casino to Church

- Build a good church
- Understand the people
- Understand the setting
- Create Shared Objectives
- Provide real support



The Struggle Is Real

Photo posted 6/9/23
to “Everything Cover
Crops” Group



Really Real

Farmer asks “Is the cover holding to too much moisture or did the cover steal nutrients from soil?”




The Challenges on the Road

- Education
- Reimbursement
- Time
- Social Support

point.

- Make sure your planter is in good working order – planter units are tight, double disk openers have the



\$21,900
1994 John Deere 455
21st Century Gordon
Distance Away: 1031 Mi Year: 1994
Make: JOHN DEERE

[VIEW DETAILS](#)

23

property.

- Avoid using cast iron or rubber closing wheels under high pressure to get the seed slot closed. Spiked, rippled or posi-close closing wheels are available that do not excessively pack the soil on top of the seed

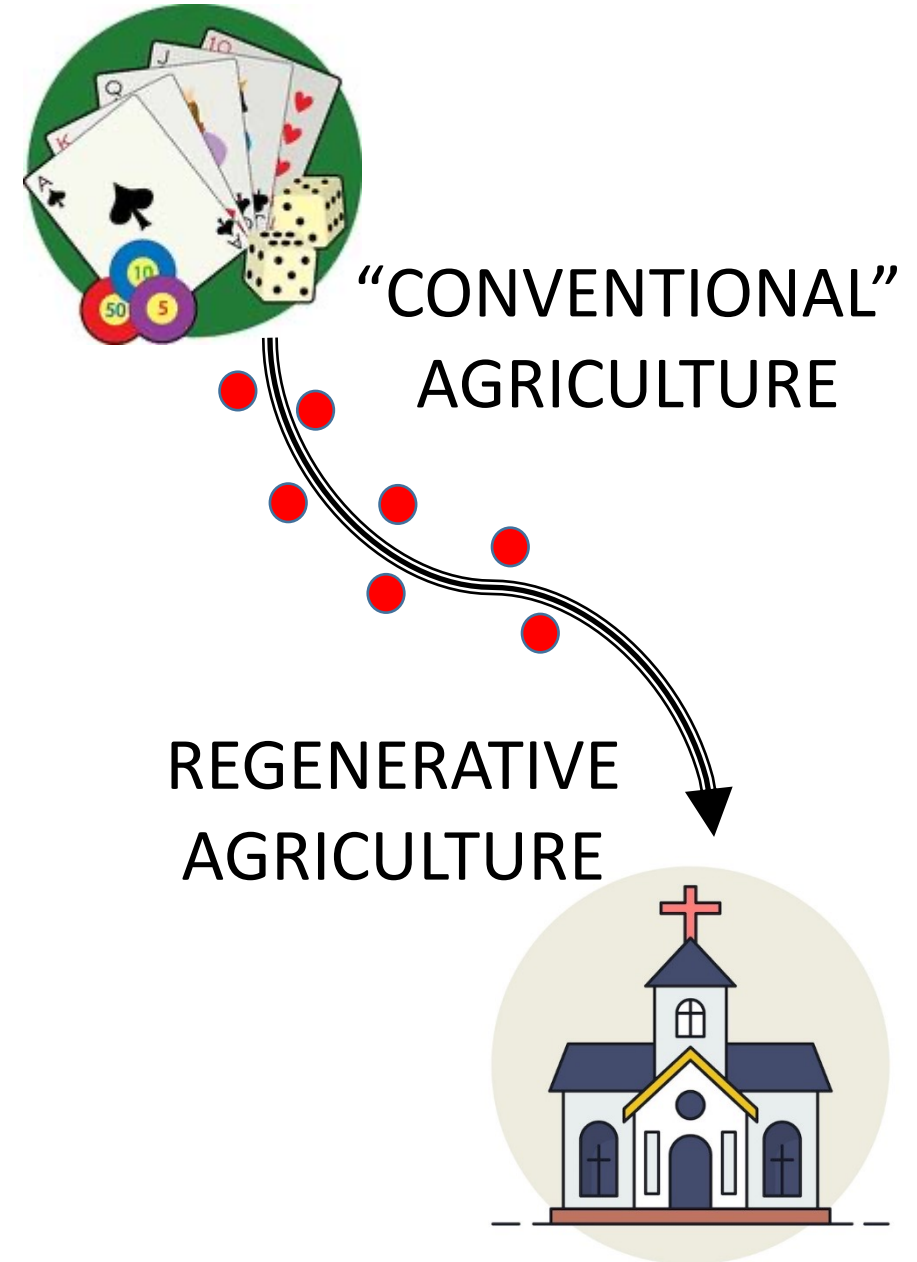
DATCP Financial Support

Producer-Led Grants Funding Summary 2016-2023

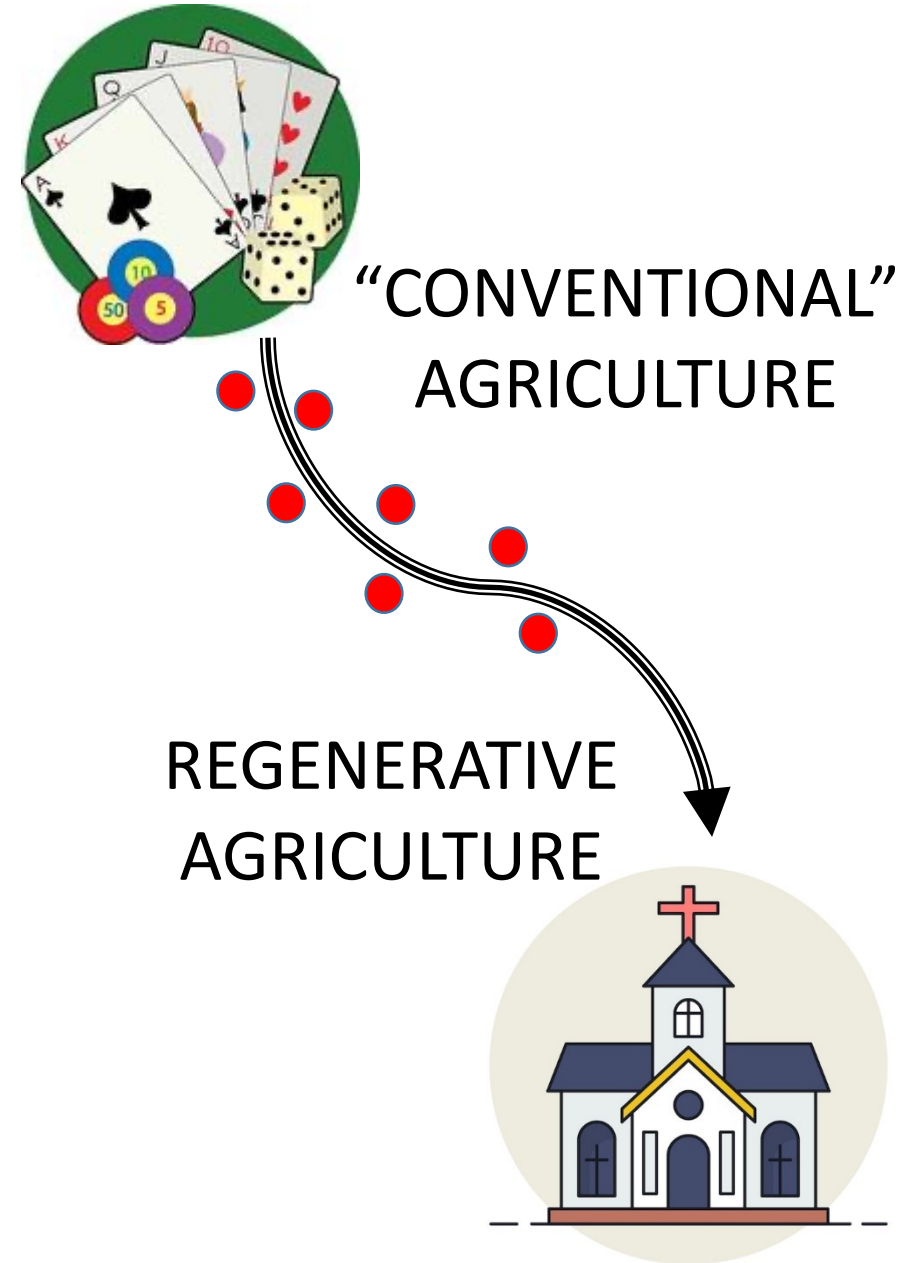
Fiscal Year	Total Requests	Total Awarded	Number of requests	Number of groups awarded
2016	\$262,550	\$242,550	15	14
2017	\$197,065	\$197,065	11	11
2018	\$619,721	\$558,246	21	17
2019	\$869,815	\$750,000	27	24
2020	\$1,051,871	\$750,000	27	24
2021	\$1,043,910	\$750,000	33	30
2022	\$1,194,543	\$1,000,000	36	36
2023	\$1,525,889	\$1,000,000	45	43

From Casino to Church

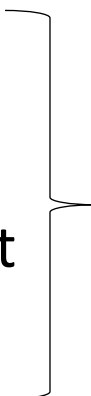
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Is the story good?



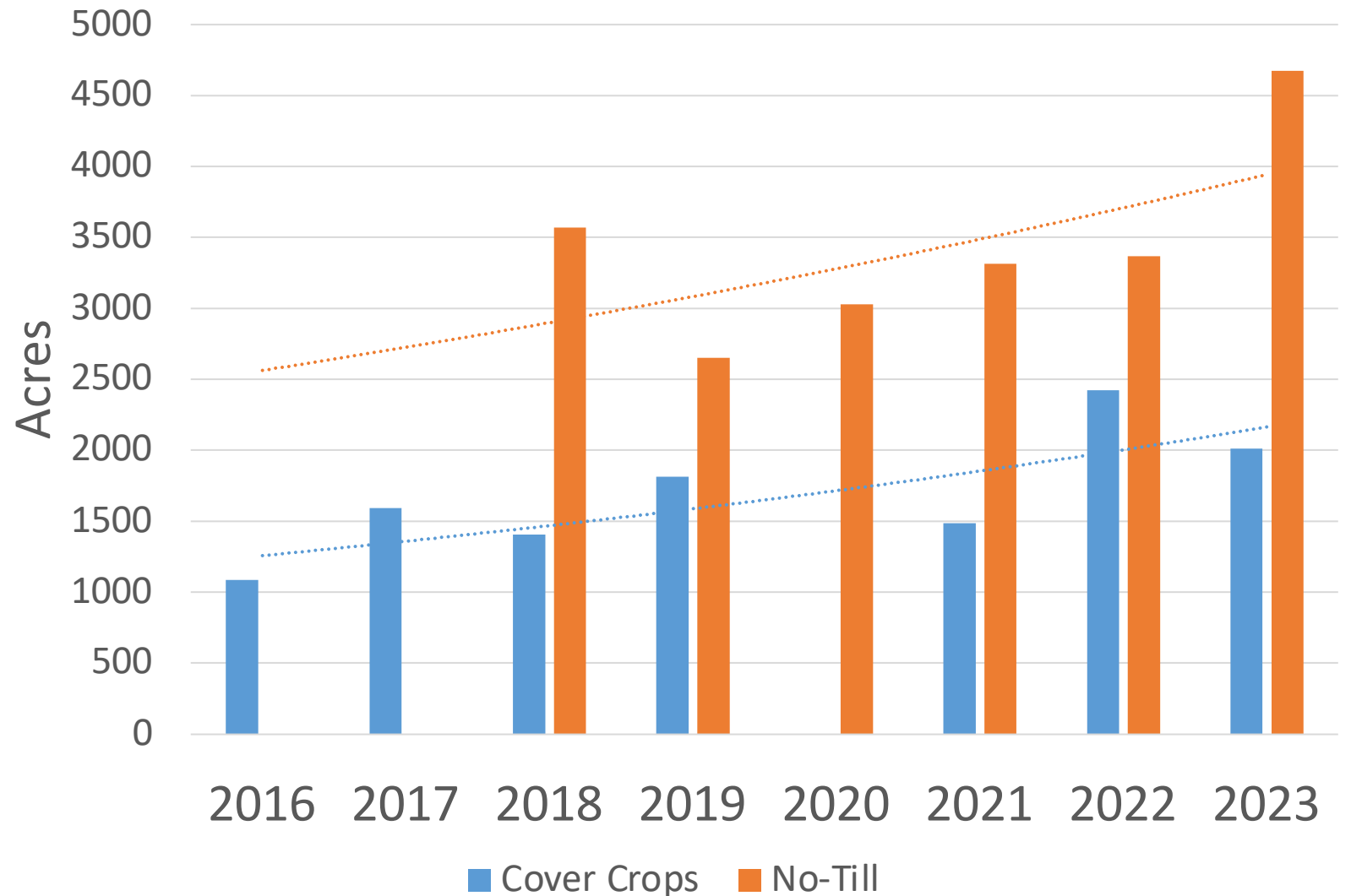
Is it Working? The Stats Across 4 Watersheds for 2022

- 3,575 acres of cover crops
 - 2,588 acres of nutrient management
 - 40.89 Acres of perennial establishment
 - **4,296** Pounds of Nitrogen
 - **3,543** Pounds of Phosphorous
 - **4,000,000 pounds** of sediment
- 
- kept out of waters compared to conventional management

Is It Working?

~26% no-till
~11% cover
crops

Cover Crops & No-Till in Horse Creek Area Watersheds



Questions?

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Farmerledwatershed.org

www.facebook.com/farmerledwatershed

