Responsibilities of Agriculture

Major social issues related to global food security and meeting future production demands revolve around climate change and energy conservation. Climate change and environmental degradation are a threat to production sustainability. The Farmed Smart Sustainable Agriculture Certification plays a key role in addressing the National and Global resource challenges and demands we face:

- Produce enough food to feed 9 billion people by 2050
  Farmed Smart farms have healthy and productive soils and produce as much food with up to 40% less costs.

- Protect rivers, lakes, and oceans while keeping working lands working
  Farmed Smart farms have high residue, low disturbance, and precise placement of nutrients that reduce runoff and hold nutrients on the land, keeping the water clean.

- Reduce the impacts of climate change and mitigate air pollution
  Farmed Smart farms use less fossil fuels, emit fewer emissions into the atmosphere, and sequester carbon in their soils. Farmed Smart farms’ use of cover crops and residue to keep their ground covered throughout the year reduce dust storms and keep the soil and atmosphere cooler.

- Protect against drought and floods
  Farmed Smart farms allow 10-20% more water to infiltrate into the ground, reducing runoff and providing water to plants where they need it, when they need it.

- Farming in concert with the environment
  Farmed Smart farms increase wildlife habitat through the use of riparian buffers along streams improving fish habitat, keeping residue on fields providing forage and shelter, use diverse crop rotations and cover crops to provide natural weed and disease management, improve soil biology and nutrients in the soil.

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Certification Summary
A sustainable farm certification program has been developed by the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association and a conservation farming technical stakeholder committee, comprised of conservation producers, managers from conservation districts and Washington State Department of Ecology, and researchers with NRCS and Washington State University. The certification criteria was developed using best management practices from multiple environmental and conservation entities, including EPA, NRCS, and Washington State Department of Ecology. The certification program has been vetted by a 3rd-party certification company with positive feedback that this certification program provides defendable and auditable conservation standards that support environmental and market concerns.

Certification Objectives
- Define a set of conservation standards that provide clear understanding and quantifiable economic and environmental benefits.
- Certify dry-land farmers in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho that are utilizing these sustainable practices.
- Educate stakeholders and develop environmental markets and value for Farmed Smart certified products and farms.

Stakeholder Benefits
The Farmed Smart certification program provides different value and benefits for each of the stakeholder groups:

Farmers
- Receive regulatory assurance for meeting water quality standards.
- Eligible for environmental market programs such as carbon credits.
- Access to sustainable commodity markets, additional conservation programs, and incentives such as tax exemptions.

Environmental & Regulatory Agencies
- Proactive implementation of conservation practices proven to reduce soil erosion by 5 tons/acre/year, improve air quality, and improve fish and wildlife habitat.
- Supports voluntary conservation programs that reduce non-point source pollution and achieve TDML regulations.

Grocers and Food Manufacturers
- Access to large scale sustainable products and production regions with assurance products are grown under sustainable ag practices.
- Achieve corporate goals for sourcing sustainable products, reducing carbon footprint, and environmental impact within supply chain.

Consumer
- Meets consumer demands for sustainable products that are proven socially and environmentally responsible.

Certification Process
1) Become a member of the Pacific Northwest Direct Seed Association for $100 basic or $250 supporter membership.
2) Complete and submit Farmed Smart Application.
3) If notified to continue, pay certification fee and provide additional information on current conservation programs, RUSLE, nutrient management plans, etc.
4) Once payment and requested information is received an audit will be scheduled with a certified farm planner.
5) Farmer will be notified of certification decision.

Technical Review and Recertification Process
Certification Criteria Review
Each year the technical stakeholder committee will review the criteria against current best management practices, conservation practice standards, and any field expectations or criteria review requests that have developed over the year. The criteria will be updated as approved by the committee.

Recertification Process
Each year 10% of the currently certified farmers will be randomly selected for a recertification audit to ensure they continue to qualify for the current certification standards. They must show they are meeting or improving upon the certification standards to remain certified. Any producer implementing riparian buffers will be evaluated every two years to ensure they are meeting their phased-in certification standards.