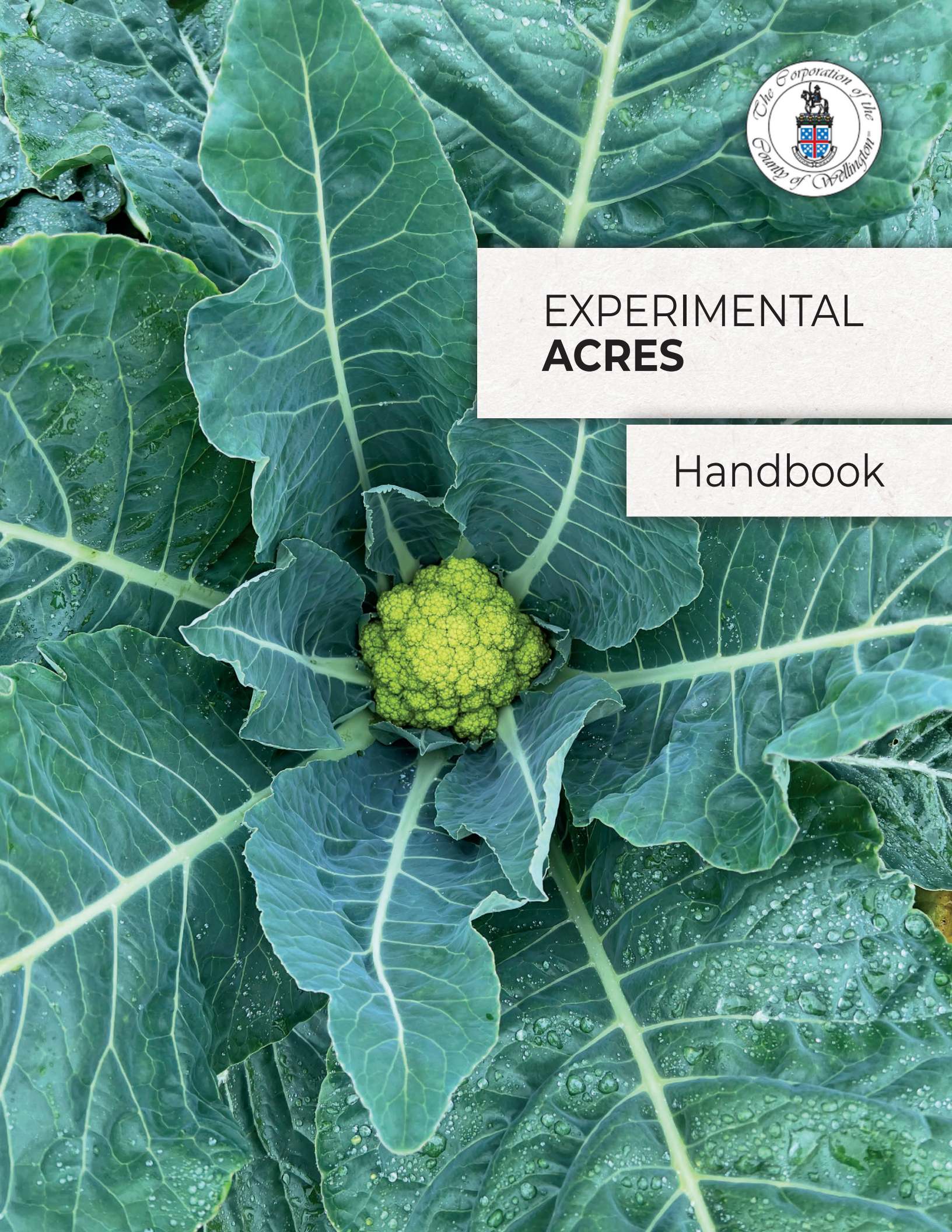


EXPERIMENTAL **ACRES**

Handbook

Foreword

Food is a necessity of life – and perhaps more than any other product, it is an expression of its place. When the County of Wellington joined the Our Food Future Circular Economy project (2020-2023), we took a place-based approach to understanding agriculture in our region; we also applied a climate lens to learn what works for sustainable production, how things are changing, and whether our municipal climate goals are within reach.

What we learned is that a circular and regenerative food system can offer farming the support it needs to restore the carbon sequestration potential of soil – which is enormous. Farms are sitting on Canada's most promising carbon sinks, but we can't expect producers to transform their practices into climate-focused ones without help.

We also learned that the carbon credit markets are starting to support very large agricultural operations but are not ready for the small and medium producers. For farmers in our region to be successful in shifting their best management practices, the landscape of support around them should be one where a diversity of farms can find a foothold. A resilient future will require farms to produce both food **and** the goods and services of a regenerating ecosystem: greater biodiversity, more carbon-hungry soil, healthy watersheds, increased pollinator habitat, and bioregion stability. At present, the available funding structures aren't enough to deliver this.

Achieving a resilient and equitable food system will require support up and down all levels of government, and across the entire food value chain. With coordinated and climate-focused support, we should be able to grow food while lowering GHG emissions and activating our soil's carbon-storing potential.

Municipal governments care about climate goals, and they care about being a home for thriving agri-food businesses. The 'common ground' of soil health brings these into alignment. We created the Experimental Acres as a way for municipalities to be part of the solution by offering a first step on the path towards other funding and by supporting communities of learning. We hope this handbook offers a useful template for other local governments to create their own place-based support, while enabling us all to build a collective solution.

Justine Dainard
Smart Cities Project Manager

Jordan Grigg
Sustainability Programme Coordinator

Table of Contents

Regenerative agriculture treats farms as part of the ecosystem. Animals, plants and soil life are all needed to cycle nutrients.

1.0 Programme Introduction

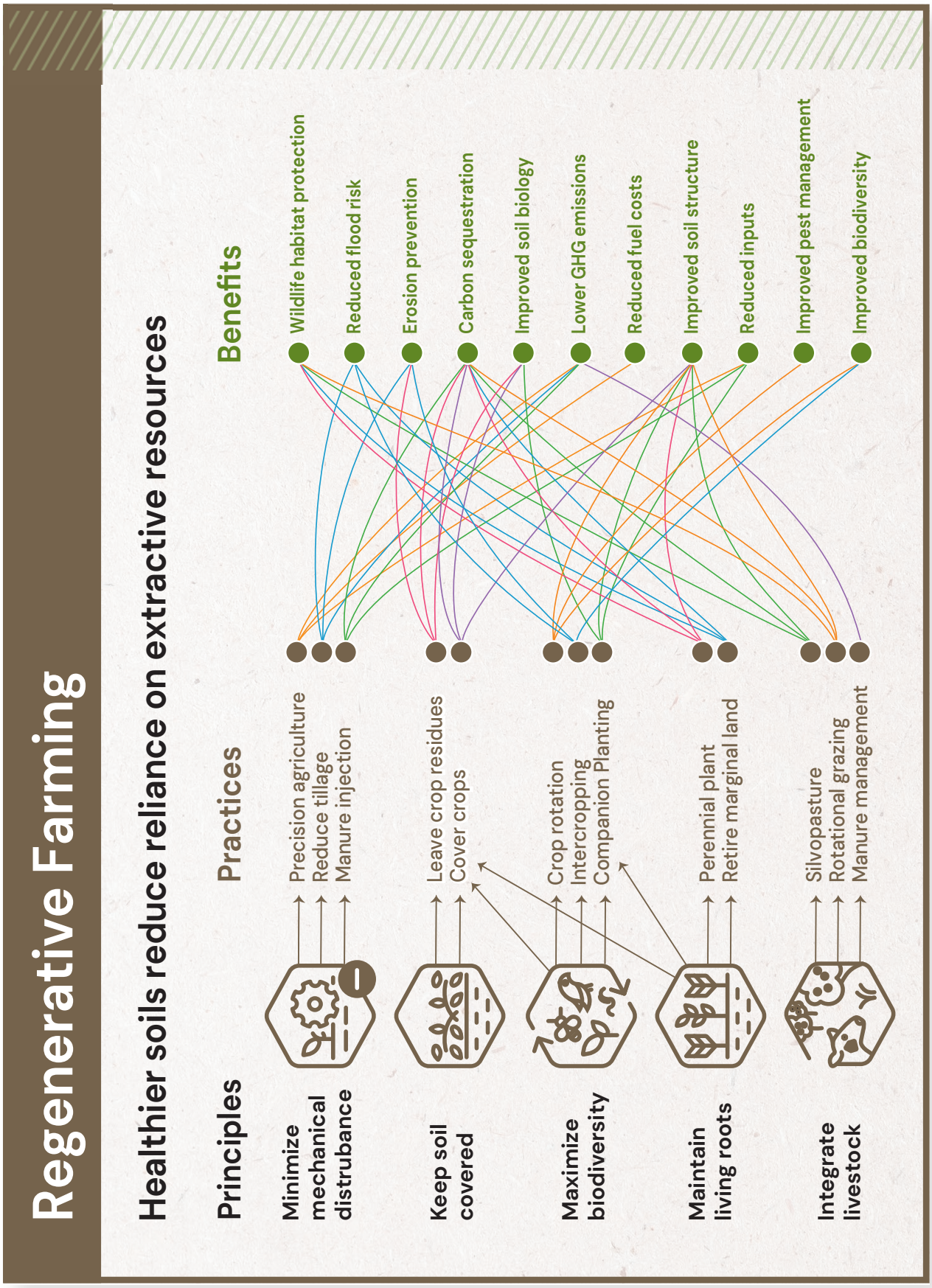
Why Regenerative Agriculture?

Agroecosystems exist at the intersection of natural environment and human management.

Precipitation, topography, and soil type co-create microclimates which are naturally occurring. These parameters cannot be altered by humans yet have a huge influence on how we practice agriculture. Best management practices are created to be widely applicable, but without a local context implementation can be difficult. Agricultural practices can have both a positive and negative impact on the soil health and biodiversity that develop in these micro-climates. A municipal programme allows us to collect place-based knowledge.

The inherent qualities of the natural environment don't follow fence rows or county boundaries and add complexity to the story of a farm field.

Regenerative farming encompasses many practices. Many practices can be layered upon one another to build the benefits to soil, water and air quality.



Regenerative agriculture is an approach which looks at farms as part of a wider and deeper ecosystem, recognizing that the complex layers of life which show up on a farm will be different from field to field. From the networks of life within the soil to the range of crops, field edges, and local pollinators, each place where food is grown will have a unique biodiversity footprint which affects its potential to produce using the sun-to-soil-to-food energy path developed over thousands of years of evolution. In general, regenerative agriculture aims to minimize petroleum-based inputs and equipment disturbances while improving biodiversity, soil health and overall long-term environmental sustainability. Many regenerative practices are not new ideas. Regenerative agriculture builds upon Indigenous principles that were practiced long before the emergence of industrial farming.

CLIMATE CONNECTION

Methane, nitrous oxide, and carbon dioxide are all greenhouse gases associated with agricultural production. Animal production and improperly stored and applied manure contribute to methane emissions. Nitrous oxide is released from poorly managed soils. However, agriculture also has the potential to store atmospheric carbon while reducing emissions, making it essential to climate solutions.

What is Experimental Acres?

Agriculture is a complicated industry. Changing climate, increasing input costs and an aging workforce are putting additional burdens on an already stressed industry. Traditionally, few municipalities have engaged directly in agricultural supports, pointing instead to the provincial and federal government or commodity organizations, or sometimes providing indirect funding through bodies like Conservation Authorities.

Guelph-Wellington's Our Food Future project allowed us to take a circular economy approach to designing a programme which can contribute to system-wide change. It was also important that the programme allow meaningful engagement with the agricultural community so that our municipality can fully understand what's needed for this sector to thrive.

Experimental Acres is intended to support a farmer-led discovery of regenerative agriculture. Acting as an on-ramp to a coordinated and system wide shift, Experimental Acres offers a de-risked learning season for testing best management practices (BMPs) on-farm. By supporting small-scale farmer-created research plots, Experimental Acres offers the financial and research support to help the farmer test a practice before scaling up to the whole operation.

Encourage regenerative agriculture practices on a small scale.

Offer monetary and educational supports to producers interested in applying regenerative agriculture practices.

Provide a social support group to help producers adopt regenerative agriculture practices.

Experimental Acres formalizes farmer curiosity and can link to larger funding opportunities. We see experimentation as the first step in the continuum of accessing support.

Farmer Curiosity	Experimental Acres	Local or Regional Funding	Federal or Provincial Funding
• Small scale, informal trials • Qualitative data points	• Small scale, formalized experimentation with BMP • Data gathering for baseline measurements • Mix of qualitative and quantitative analyses • Few requirements to join programme **Funding Support:** **$**	• Field scale BMP implementation • Continued monitoring • Stricter entry requirements • More intense reporting **Funding Support:** **$$**	• Operation-wide BMP implementation • Tied to Federal or Provincial goals (i.e. Climate Action) • Sector specific actions • Specific requirements for entry • Rigorous data collection and reporting **Funding Support:** **$$$**

Because it can take a few years for a shifted practice to show financial benefits to a farm, the risk of trying something new is usually borne solely by the farmer. Localized, small-scale help, like Experimental Acres, can overcome the financial, knowledge and social barriers of a learning season.

CLIMATE CONNECTION

Experimental Acres is not just for farmers. As more and more municipalities reflect on their greenhouse gas emissions, the agriculture sector can show up on both sides of the ledger. Agriculture often registers as a large source of community emissions, but through practice shift could become a greater sink for sequestration.

How was Experimental Acres Designed?

Experimental Acres was planned and launched in 2021 after a year of surveys, discussions, and consultation with the local agricultural community. The programme design was a collaborative process between two departments at the County of Wellington (the Smart Cities and Climate Change offices) in partnership with Guelph-Wellington's Our Food Future project and the Arrell Food Institute.

Knowing that we wanted to evaluate the municipal role in supporting agriculture, we invited neighbouring counties to join our learning phase. Experimental Acres was first piloted in Wellington and Dufferin Counties in 2022 and expanded to include Grey County in 2023. By running the programme at a municipal level, the importance of place-based knowledge is reflected and allows local growing conditions, innovative on-farm leadership and policy impacts to be fully identified.

Programme Summary

Experimental Acres was built with two simple principles in mind:

1. **Farmers know their farm best.**
   Prescriptive practices don't work for everyone. Experimental Acres doesn't direct action, it supports individual pathways towards best practice adoption by asking farmers to suggest what their farm should try next.

2. **Don't be annoying.**
   We recognize that farmers have very long, busy days and already do a lot of data reporting. The Experimental Acres paperwork has been kept to a minimum to save our hosts' time.

Co-benefits

Farmers are being asked to do a lot. Their fields are where the world is hoping to store carbon and their products are what we depend on globally for food security. Some on-farm adaptations are just good business, but still carry significant risk to the financial security of the operation. Through participation in this programme, farms receive some compensation for the services that provide widely felt benefits. Sometimes the most effective learning is through the casual conversations that happen when people get together. Creating a community of practice can amplify the learnings from Experimental Acres beyond participants in the programme and offer an opportunity for local knowledge to be exchanged.

Benefits to the farms:

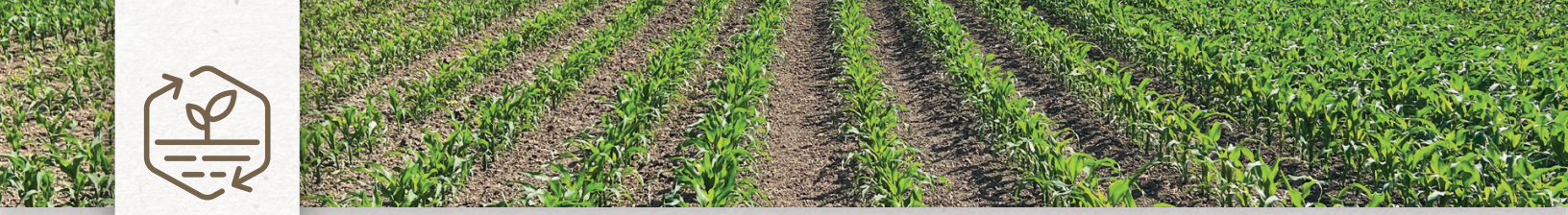
- Small scale funding to de-risk their trial
- Baseline soil test done where appropriate
- Research support from staff
- Community of practice connections through peer events

A municipality's goal is to see their region thrive. Preparing for climate resiliency requires a new kind of horizon planning. Accurate climate reporting and adaptation planning needs to be informed by an understanding of local agricultural trends. Adaptation will require innovation. From farmers welding equipment to fit their needs to international businesses looking for the next disease resistant hybrid, innovation is at the core of the agriculture industry. A municipality connected to ideas growing in the field is well positioned to help attract agri-food investment to their region.

Benefits to the municipality:

- Alignment with municipal Climate Change Mitigation Plan targets
- Close relationships and dialogue with our agricultural sector
- Understanding of local best practices, common barriers, collective potential
- Greater number of local farms with baseline soil tests
- Opportunity to promote other local business supports to ensure a thriving sector

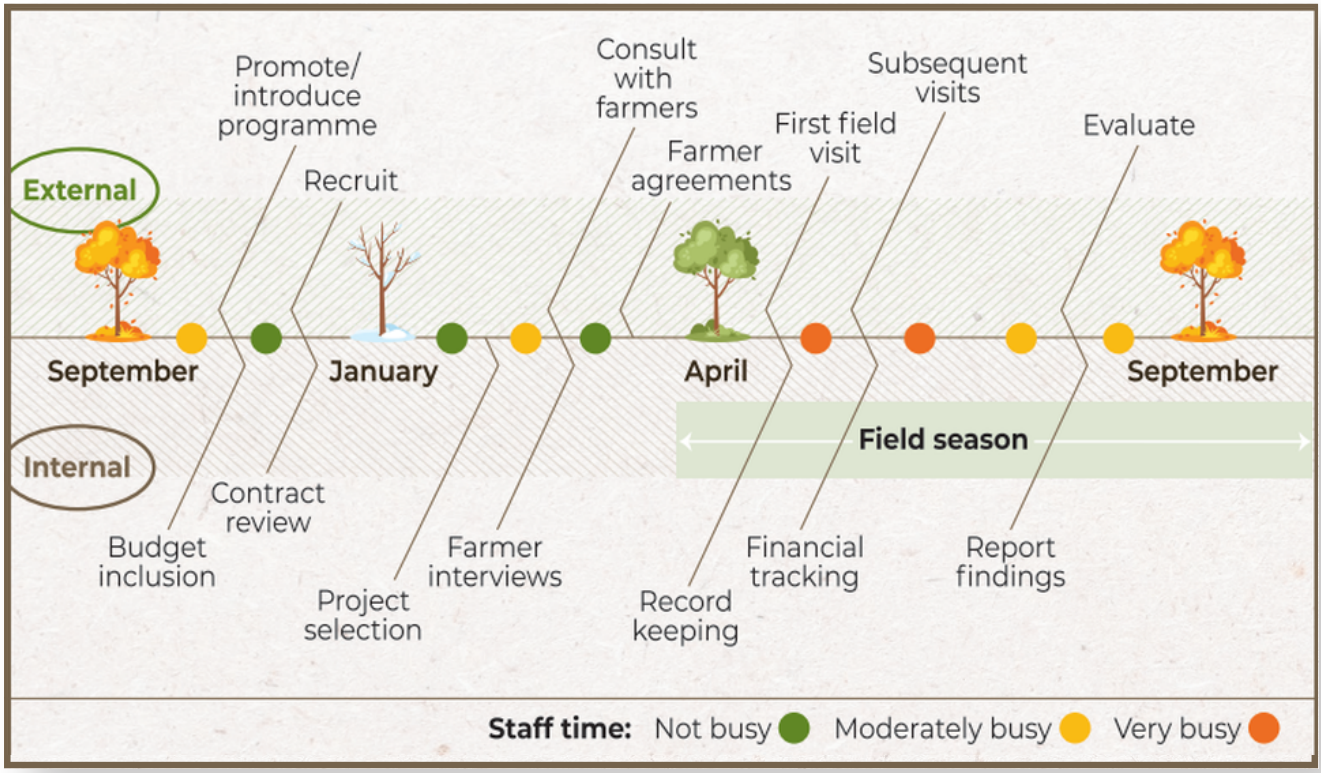
Farmer Lydia Dyck of Saugeen Rivers CSA



2.0 Programme Implementation

Launching a new programme takes time and planning. Note that the municipal budget year doesn't always align with the cadence of the growing season; recruitment of participants will begin before upcoming year's budgets are confirmed. It may be useful to think in 18-month cycles in order to build the programme.

The following resource section is arranged by the calendar order in which the activities will need to roll out. Forms, checklists, and support documents can all be found in the appendices at the end of the handbook. Please contact ecdev@wellington.ca if editable versions are required.



Internal Timeline

The internal timeline describes activities done by staff that may not be seen by the public.

Budget Planning
The budget for Experimental Acres can be flexible in the sense that it is scalable to the number of farmers invited to participate. Unlike many funding opportunities Experimental Acres does not mandate a particular farm size, commodity, or practice type. The programme often reaches those farms that employ new and/or equity deserving farmers.

The costs can be divided into two categories: Producer-associated costs (calculated per participant) and administrative costs (calculated per season).

Producer-Associated Costs: project supplies, honorarium, lab costs.

This is a rough guideline. Projects may need more or less funding, based on their proposed plans. Producers are compensated through a reimbursement method after providing copies of receipts. Not all projects will reach their budget ceiling.

Table 1 Project Categories and Descriptions

Project Category	Project Funding (ceiling)	Description
Living Roots and Green Cover	$1,000.00	Projects promote regenerative agriculture principles of extending the time with living roots in the soil and maintaining a green cover. Examples: · Cover cropping · Perennial planting · Tree planting · Land retirement
Innovation	$2,000.00	Projects support regenerative agriculture principles through one or more ways. Examples: · Avoiding tillage via tarping · Alternate fertilizer trials · Hedgerows or windbreaks · Silvopasture
Integrating Animals on the Farm	$3,000.00	Projects bring animals onto the farm or alter traditional livestock practices to make them more sustainable. Examples: · Rotational grazing · Bale grazing · Moveable chicken coop

The funding is often a cost-share between the municipality and the farmer, as the project funding will not cover the entire infrastructure investment. For example, in 2022 a rotational grazing 'Cackellac' chicken coop cost $4,095.00. Experimental Acres contributed $3,000 to the project and the producer covered the remaining cost.

Table 2 Budget Associated with Producer-Associated Costs (per participant)

Project Category	Project Funding	Farmer Honorarium	Laboratory Analysis	Total
Living Roots	$1,000.00	$350.00	$80.00	$1,430.00
Innovation	$2,000.00	$350.00	$80.00	$2,430.00
Integrating Animals	$3,000.00	$350.00	$80.00	$3,430.00

Projects are not always successful, and that's okay. Experimental Acres is designed to create a safe space to try something new. Supply chain issues, poor weather and other unforeseen circumstances may occur. Farmer compensation is not conditional on a 'successful' project, but on a project that was sincerely attempted.

Administrative costs: staff salary, mileage, shared sampling equipment, promotional materials, postage.

Administrative costs may vary slightly from year to year. The following should be budgeted for administrative costs in the first year, which includes the purchase of field equipment.

Table 3 Administrative Budget for Experimental Acres

Staff Salary	Will reflect local pay grid
Staff Mileage	Estimate 4-6 round trips per farm per season
Field Equipment (see Appendix A for detailed list)	$1,000 - $1,250
Printing, postage, office costs	$250
Promotion and communication (newspaper and radio ads, social media buys, tradeshows, printing, etc.)	$2,000
Community of practice events (rooms, catering, honoraria, etc.)	$1,500

Staffing Requirements

Experimental Acres benefits from a dedicated full-time staff member but could also be split between an office staff (off-season administration) and a summer student (field work and seasonal monitoring). A sample job description and qualifications can be found in Appendix B.

When preparing a workplan or contract hire, the following estimates can be used:

- February to April: choosing applicants, meeting with farmers to confirm farm plans and preparing for the field season will require 6-8 hours a week.
- May to October: field work will generally require one visit per month per site. For a cohort of ten participants, this can be approximately 5-10 hours per week of site visits plus driving time and communication tasks. During this period of time, a contract hire or summer student could be the most economical.
- November to January: promotion and recruitment efforts take approximately 3 hours a week.

Staff support, research and advice should not replace local agronomic expertise. **Experimental Acres supports the development of soil health but does not provide direct farming advice.**

Consider looking for staff with non-traditional education backgrounds. Agronomic knowledge can come from many backgrounds and training grounds, including work on family farms or apprenticeships.

Farmer Contracts

A sample contract between the municipality and the farmer can be found in Appendix C. Contracts are highly specific to the farm and the plan for the summer. Financial support works on a reimbursement system, where the farmer completes a purchase and submits copies of receipts to the municipality.

Project Selection

Projects should be selected based on:

- Available research about topic
- Regional climate goals
- Representation of sectors within agriculture
- The chance of project success
- Alignment with other larger funding sources for producer

Selecting projects is fun! Enlist the help of local agriculture experts (local Federation of Agriculture, Soil and Crop Associations, etc.) for an additional perspective on local agriculture.

Farmer Shiying Lu of Brilliant Meadows Farm

Farmer Meetings
Farmer meetings before the project officially begins offer an opportunity to get to know the producer and understand their goals for the project. Interviews should happen in February or early March. Meetings will take approximately 45 minutes.

Topics to cover in the interview can be found in the Appendix D.

Internal Documentation and Reporting
Internal reporting is best completed in the fall, after most projects are completed. Throughout the season, farmers should be submitting receipts and being reimbursed on an on-going basis. While it can be useful to have a pre- and post- programme survey, it can be challenging to have a good response rate. Interviews with participants may be more successful to gauge programme success.

CLIMATE CONNECTION: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Experimental Acres also addresses the following United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (Take Action for the Sustainable Development Goals - United Nations Sustainable Development):

External Timeline

The external timeline captures the public-facing elements of the programme.

Programme Promotion, Farmer Recruitment and Applications
Remember Experimental Acres rule #2: don't be annoying. Promote the programme where producers are already looking and keep the application process simple. Please see Appendix E for a sample application. A mix of digital and traditional media is needed to reach all types of farmers. Keep in mind the busy seasons in agriculture are the spring and fall.

The County of Wellington has created "Experimental Acres" branded promotional material for use by others running the programme. Please contact ecdev@wellington.ca to request promotional templates.

Throughout this document we have used Foodicons. This is a useful visual language for communicating agricultural concepts. Foodicons are publicly available at: https://www.thelexicon.org/foodicons/

Site Visits and Field Work

An important piece of this programme is the interaction between the farmer and municipal government. This involves a joint monitoring effort throughout the project. The municipal staff member must be comfortable going to farm fields to conduct monitoring activities. Throughout the season, visits should be made monthly to each farm. After the first visit, the farmer does not need to be present.

A field work safety plan should be developed with staff members prior to starting field work. Being on farms offers different hazards than other field work, including encounters with livestock, working around large machinery or agrochemicals.

The First Visit

Additional time should be scheduled for the first field visit, and the farmer will need to be present. At the first visit the following should be identified:

- Site access
- Site history
- Plot locations (mark with flags, stakes or GPS points)
- Establish planting/implementation timeline
- Baseline soil test locations (within experimental plot and control, consider topography)
- Baseline qualitative points

Soil Sampling and Data Collection

One of the major benefits to farmers is data from the soil samples collected on their farms. Some farmers have never collected soil samples or are well past the recommended 3-year period between samples. Basic soil tests offer a look at important nutrients (phosphorus, potassium, magnesium and calcium), soil organic matter and pH. More extensive soil samples can offer a look at soil texture, microbiology or metals. Refer to Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Publication 811: Agronomy Guide or Publication 611: Soil Fertility Guide to understand ideal nutrient levels for different crop types.

There are different methodologies for soil sampling. Always check with the farmer to see if they work with an agronomist and what details they may have about their strategy for sample collection. Sampling methods include:

1. **Bulk Sampling:** randomly collecting a soil across the entire field, mixing and submitting one sample for the whole area. If the area is very small, this can work. Bulk samples taken from larger areas will not show the in-field variation.

2. **Grid Sampling:** grid sampling creates discrete, equal areas across the field (like a grid laying over the field) to address some of the variability within the field. However, it also reinforces the false notion that soil variability follows human created boundaries. Within each grid square, three to five sub-samples should be taken, mixed and submitted to the laboratory as one sample.

3. **Zone Sampling:** zone sampling groups areas of the field that are similar. At a precision agriculture scale, scans of the field would be taken to determine similarities across the field. For the smaller scale Experimental Acres works on, a topography-based perspective can work (i.e., take samples from the top of the landscape, middle and bottom). Three to five subsamples should be taken within each zone, mixed and submitted as a sample.

As Experimental Acres works on smaller scales, a soil sample within the experimental plot (3-5 subsamples) and a control plot would often suffice. Beyond soil sampling, additional qualitative testing can be completed. Infiltration, compaction and green cover testing are very useful. Additional testing may be relevant to individual projects. The Soil Health Coalition of Erin and Credit Valley Conservation collaborated to create the Soil Health Assessment guide, which outlines test procedures, and provides record keeping information. Please email ecdev@wellington.ca for access to this document.

Subsequent Field Visits

Subsequent visits will be monitoring visits to continue collecting qualitative data points and photos. Equipment needed for these sampling activities can be found in Appendix A. The farmer's presence is not needed at the subsequent visits.

3.0 Reflection

Over the course of two years, we were able to provide direct support of approximately $55,000 to 30 farms in Wellington, Dufferin, and Grey Counties. This in turn, produced projects which have environmental benefits and build local resiliency. A few farmers participated in both years, giving us a better sense of how longer-term projects turned out. Several farmers went on to access larger funding programmes (Rural Water Quality Programme, On-Farm Climate Action Fund, Yield Enhancement Network) which will help them scale up the work started in Experimental Acres. Not wanting to limit our support to participants, we also tried to provide value to the wider farming community. During our recruitment period, we received inquiries about Experimental Acres from many farmers, even ones outside of the participating municipalities. In these cases, staff helped connect residents with funding programmes that better matched their needs. We provided farmers with connections to other local municipal supports like The Green Legacy Tree Nursery, Community Improvement Plan programmes and Our Food Future's Community Agriculture Challenge. Local organizations invited us to their events to speak and listen, starting to build the foundations of a solid relationship with the agricultural community.

There were a number of lessons learned along the way. Some agronomic – like double-checking herbicide interactions with intercropping – and some about communication styles (most of our farmers prefer calls or texts to email). We also became better connected to our local community, meeting many citizens who are engaged in growing and excited by soil health. Finally, we learned that flexibility is the most important quality: things often won't go exactly to plan, but plan B can sometimes work just as well.

Experimental Acres succeeded for two reasons: we weren't annoying, and we listened to the farmers. They do this work every single day and understand the intricacies of their land and their operation like no one else can. Most producers want to be good stewards for their land. Their livelihoods are connected to the soil, the livestock, the climate, and many are motivated to pass these on in good health when they retire. Moving towards regenerative practices sometimes means going against the current of what's traditional in farming, and when you only get one chance a year to ensure financial success it can be hard to justify trying something new. Experimental Acres reduces this risk – we are there to listen, research and support farmers while they try something new.

Acknowledgements

The County of Wellington Smart Cities Office would like to acknowledge the many collaborators and funding bodies involved in the Experimental Acres:

- Experimental Acres was a pilot under the Our Food Future project. Funded by Infrastructure Canada's Smart Cities Challenge, Our Food Future was a partnership project between the City of Guelph and County of Wellington.
- The County of Wellington Climate Change and Sustainability office was a key collaborator and funder.
- Dufferin County and Grey County provided project funding for farmers within their municipalities.
- Maple Leaf Foods was an early financial supporter of this regenerative agriculture pilot.
- The Scotiabank Net Zero Research Fund provided support to Our Food Future which further enabled this work in climate-focused regenerative agriculture.

We would also like to acknowledge those who contributed to the creation and execution of the Experimental Acres Pilot:

- County of Wellington Economic Development Committee
- Mark Eastman, Weathered Rock Farm
- Melisa Luymes, Headlands Ag-Enviro Solutions
- Arrell Food Institute Scholars: Olatunbosun Ayetan, Havie Carter, Evan Tollenaar, Hannah Woodhouse, Brenda Zai
- Sara MacRae, County of Dufferin
- Rebecca Danard, County of Grey
- Linda Swanston, County of Grey

It took a village to create and deliver the Experimental Acres pilot. Many producers were consulted along the way and provided invaluable feedback.

Finally, we would like to extend a sincere thank you to all the farmers who participated in Experimental Acres. Without your willingness to try something new and learn alongside us, this pilot would not have been possible.

4.0 Appendices

Appendix A: Equipment List

The following equipment will be useful for setting up and monitoring Experimental Acres sites.

- ❒ Soil Probe or Dutch Auger
- ❒ Soil Sample Bags
  - Ordered from Lab or Ziploc bags
- ❒ 9" Infiltration Ring
- ❒ 3-450ml Water Bottles
- ❒ 3' Wooden Board
- ❒ Sledgehammer
- ❒ Penetrometer
- ❒ Smartphone with Camera
- ❒ Slakes App
- ❒ Canopeo App
- ❒ Backpack (for moving field equipment)
- ❒ Plastic Bucket
- ❒ Stakes or Flags
- ❒ Sunscreen
- ❒ Appropriate PPE
- ❒ Completed Employee Safety Plan

Appendix B: Sample Job Description

Partial Job description for the Sustainability Programme Coordinator at the County of Wellington.

PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Assist in the development, implementation and support of the Experimental Acres project, serving as a point of contact for project hosts.
- Provide outreach to farmers in assisting with navigation of climate-friendly farming resources.
- Identify and develop relationships with agronomists, agricultural contractors, farming organizations and soil researchers.
- Develop learning events and facilitate farmer-to-farmer education and related to climate friendly agricultural practices.
- Promote the Experimental Acres programme though attendance at public and industry events.
- Coordinate all details of planning and execution of Community of Practice events on regenerative agriculture, and other public events.
- Contribute to agricultural data collection.
- Provide updates to the webpage and social media content and contribute to marketing materials.
- Contribute to monthly and annual reports regarding the progress on climate friendly farming programmes.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

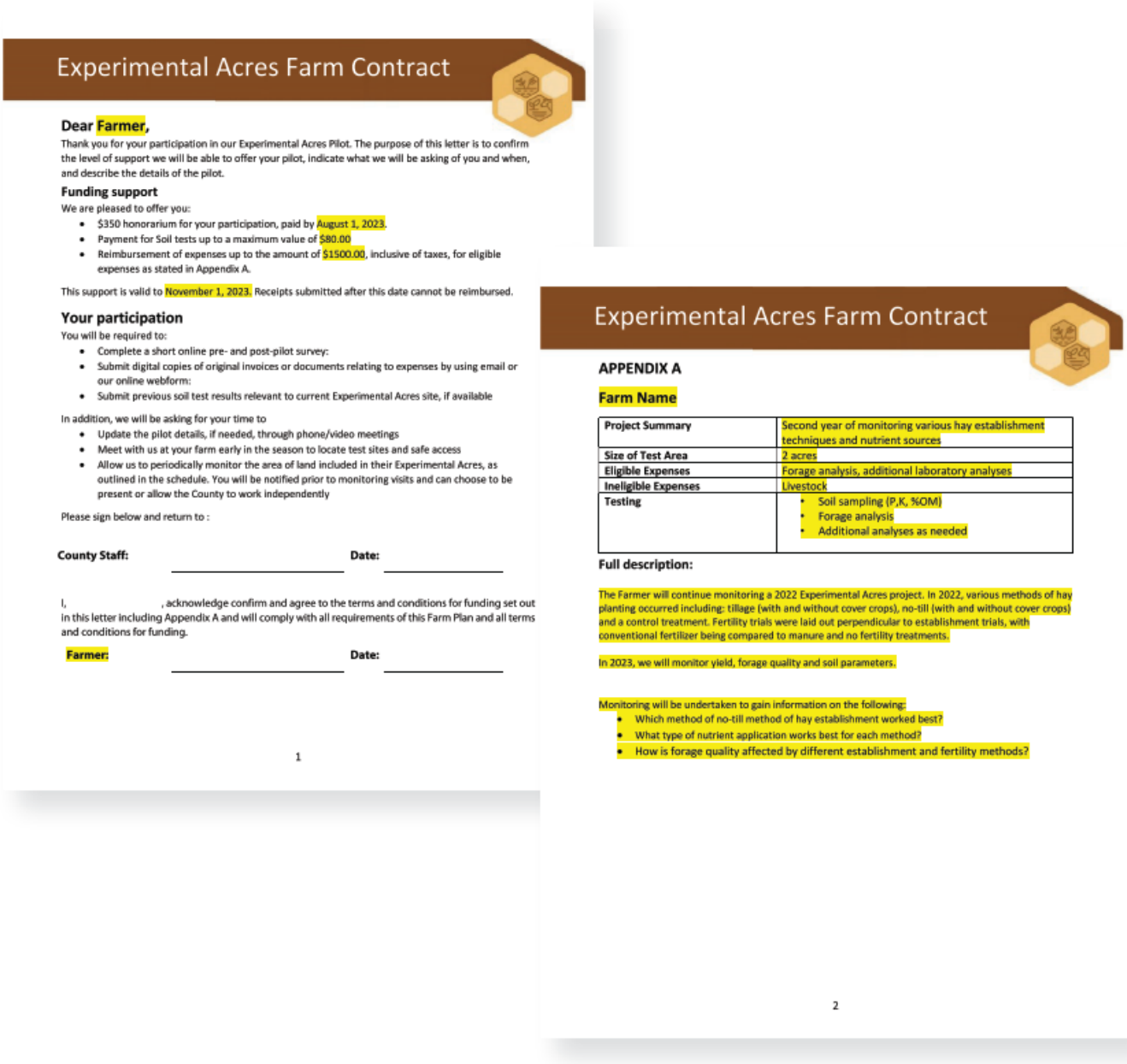
- Two year college diploma in Agriculture or a related field.
- Certified Crop Advisor or Professional Agrologist designation is an asset.
- Minimum three years of experience or equivalent in sustainable agriculture practices, such as cover cropping and no-till farming.
- Experience in community engagement and/or knowledge transfer is preferred.
- Experience or knowledge of diverse agricultural production systems will be considered an asset.
- Effective verbal and written communication and interpersonal skills with proven ability to work collaboratively with others.

SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES:

- Understanding of Regenerative Agriculture considered an asset.
- Excellent computer skills in a Windows environment; knowledge of MS Office and proficiency in MS PowerPoint.
- Ability to deal effectively with the public.
- Ability to work independently, creatively and be self-motivated.
- Project management and teamwork skills.
- Superior oral and written communications skills including communicating scientific information in plain language.

Appendix C: Sample Contract

This is an example contract for a participant in Experimental Acres. All highlighted content would change between farms.



Experimental Acres Farm Contract

Dear Farmer,

Thank you for your participation in our Experimental Acres Pilot. The purpose of this letter is to confirm the level of support we will be able to offer your pilot, indicate what we will be asking of you and when, and describe the details of the pilot.

Funding support

We are pleased to offer you:

- $350 honorarium for your participation, paid by August 1, 2023.
- Payment for Soil tests up to a maximum value of $80.00
- Reimbursement of expenses up to the amount of $1500.00, inclusive of taxes, for eligible expenses as stated in Appendix A.

This support is valid to November 1, 2023. Receipts submitted after this date cannot be reimbursed.

Your participation

You will be required to:

- Complete a short online pre- and post-pilot survey:
- Submit digital copies of original invoices or documents relating to expenses by using email or our online webform:
- Submit previous soil test results relevant to current Experimental Acres site, if available

In addition, we will be asking for your time to

- Update the pilot details, if needed, through phone/video meetings
- Meet with us at your farm early in the season to locate test sites and safe access
- Allow us to periodically monitor the area of land included in their Experimental Acres, as outlined in the schedule. You will be notified prior to monitoring visits and can choose to be present or allow the County to work independently

Please sign below and return to :

County Staff: _____ **Date:** _____

I, , acknowledge confirm and agree to the terms and conditions for funding set out in this letter including Appendix A and will comply with all requirements of this Farm Plan and all terms and conditions for funding.

Farmer: _____ **Date:** _____

1

Experimental Acres Farm Contract

APPENDIX A

Farm Name

Project Summary	Second year of monitoring various hay establishment techniques and nutrient sources
Size of Test Area	2 acres
Eligible Expenses	Forage analysis, additional laboratory analyses
Ineligible Expenses	Livestock
Testing	• Soil sampling (P,K, %OM) • Forage analysis • Additional analyses as needed

Full description:

The Farmer will continue monitoring a 2022 Experimental Acres project. In 2022, various methods of hay planting occurred including: tillage (with and without cover crops), no-till (with and without cover crops) and a control treatment. Fertility trials were laid out perpendicular to establishment trials, with conventional fertilizer being compared to manure and no fertility treatments.

In 2023, we will monitor yield, forage quality and soil parameters.

Monitoring will be undertaken to gain information on the following:

- Which method of no-till method of hay establishment worked best?
- What type of nutrient application works best for each method?
- How is forage quality affected by different establishment and fertility methods?

2

Appendix D: First Meeting Checklist

Farmer Meeting Checklist

- ❒ Introduction to your role
- ❒ Brief explanation of Experimental Acres
- ❒ Discussion of project budget
  - Determine eligible and ineligible costs
  - Farmer Honorarium
  - Soil Testing
- ❒ Reimbursement Process
- ❒ Farmer's goals in programme
- ❒ Farmer plan
  - Approximate start dates
  - Scale of project
  - Monitoring protocols
- ❒ Future communication plans
- ❒ Level of comfort with public acknowledgement of participation
- ❒ Paperwork that will follow call (contract, banking info, photo release, etc.).

Appendix E: Accessing Documents

Please contact ecdev@wellington.ca to access templates of the many documents referenced in this text including:

- Application questions
- Soil Health Assessment document
- Forms and checklists
- Programme tracking templates
- Sample Farmer Contracts

The County of Wellington looks forward to the programme growing into new jurisdictions. Please contact us for other ideas about extension events, communications templates, or for a more personalized way to get Experimental Acres started in your region.

Notes:

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