

1ST CLIMATE FARMING CONGRESS

09. — 11. NOVEMBER 2021

Manifesto

1. Vision

"More than a mere alternative strategy, regenerative agriculture represents a fundamental shift in our culture's relationship with nature."
— Charles Eisenstein

"All flourishing is mutual."
— Robin Wall Kimmerer

We believe that agriculture in Europe has a stronger potential to solve critical shared problems than is currently expressed and supported by policy.

In particular, regenerative agriculture can solve many of our most urgent and elusive problems simultaneously such as climate change, biodiversity loss, air quality, food system resilience, rural community, public health, etc. And when practiced at scale, it has unprecedented potential to increase system resilience.

Regenerative farmers all over Europe have already demonstrated these solutions in many different contexts.

We see a future where all of the food, renewable fuel, and fiber needs of Europe will be produced in a way that replenishes the natural resources, while strengthening communities and creating sound business models for farmers.

2. What is regeneration?

"Regeneration means bringing the earth back to life"
— Paul Hawken

Regeneration is about continuously increasing the life-holding capacity of a place, while fulfilling all human needs. It maximizes positive ecological-social-economic impact, rather than minimizing negative impact. Its objective is to facilitate the highest potential of an ecosystem. This is a continuous process.

We recognise that the roots of regenerative farming come from indigenous cultures. We consider ourselves listeners to such worldviews and wisdom. The term regenerative has a long history. There is already a lot of embodied knowledge, research, ecological understanding, farming methods and technology that we can build on.

3. Context-specific

Regeneration takes place within a given ecological, socio-cultural and economic context. Every soil, farmer, culture, climate, biodiversity and market is different. Restoring natural cycles necessitates the recognition, identification and understanding of the local dynamics, as well as the impact that land management has on the aforementioned.

The context includes multiple levels, including field level, farm level, landscape level, biomes level and food system level. It is essential to keep all these levels in mind when designing a regenerative (farming) system.

There is no single concept which can be replicated everywhere. While best-practices exist, thorough analysis of contexts result in unique (farming) system designs.

4. Outcome-based

It is necessary to measure outcomes to verify the regenerative effect on the social, economic and environmental ecosystem.

We are not dogmatic about farming practices and systemic approaches, but rather embrace the diversity of pathways towards regenerating in different contexts. No practice should be seen independently as harmful for ecosystems, before being assessed in relation to the specific context and the long term regenerative impact. We respect and celebrate the effort put in by farmers to steward their land.

A recognition that regenerative agriculture does not exist in absolutes is essential in this discussion. Regeneration is a spectrum that represents the evolution towards healthy and resilient ecologies. Given the fact that nature is inherently dynamic, the regeneration process can never be finished or static, but instead is a process of continuous improvement.

Outcomes should be clear indicators which reflect the full potential of the given context. The reference point is the status of the context when starting the regeneration process. Progress should be measurable, using qualitative and quantitative key performance indicators, and be comparable to the reference point. Impact performance should allow for linking farming efforts to economic value schemes, such as ecosystem service credits, markets and access to land.

5. Eco-centered approach; Farmers as stewards

We are a movement that was started by the farmers for both the farmers and the environment.

The natural ecosystem is at the centre of regeneration. The intrinsic connection between ecological outcomes and agriculture puts farmers in the important role of guardians and caretakers. Enabling farmers to be stewards of the land is at the center of solutions aimed at transitioning to a regenerative food system. As such agricultural policy, incentive programs and regulations need to enable and empower farmers to be these stewards.

This means that actors working with regeneration need to move beyond abstract concepts and talk directly to farmers. All farmers face social, economic and environmental challenges on a daily basis. A deep understanding of these socio-economic challenges is an integral part of regenerative agriculture. Regeneration means regenerating both the ecosystem but also the position of farmers in the value web. This is crucial to enable farmers to be long-term stewards of the land and empower them to improve their livelihoods.

Governance structures crossing the whole value web should ensure that power imbalances are resolved and actors across the value web have a voice in how the value web is governed and are compensated fairly for the value they add in the supply web.

6. Integrity of terminology

Attention on Regenerative Agriculture has been growing exponentially and this has resulted in the term being applied in very extensive and ambiguous ways.

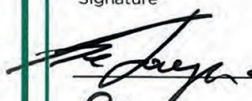



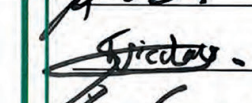
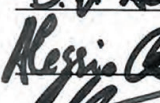
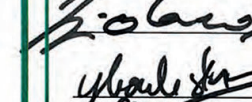

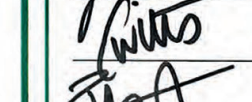





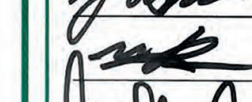


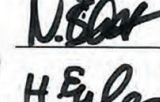






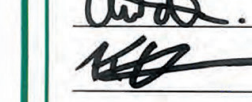
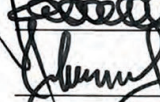




While we support the global transition of agricultural systems towards regeneration, we are acutely aware of the need to agree on a shared outcome-based definition of Regenerative Agriculture in order to maintain credibility and preserve the clarity of meaning while ensuring desired results.

When implementing regenerative agriculture at scale, systems need to be in place to ensure that the care for ecology, climate, soils, communities and economies are not compromised in the adoption of the terminology.

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