

THE HENRY A. WALLACE CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

*Research, Policy Analysis, and
Capacity Building for Sustainable
Farms and Communities*



WINROCK
INTERNATIONAL

Putting Ideas to Work



THE HENRY A. WALLACE CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Improving Agri-Environmental Management

In a market-based economy, the choice of policy tools and incentive mechanisms is critically important in ensuring good agricultural as well as environmental management. The Wallace Center is developing performance-based and business-led environmental management strategies for solving environmental problems related to water quality, biodiversity, and climate change. Such policies result in benefits for farmers, society, and the environment.

Identifying Environmental Services from Agriculture

Agriculture can provide many public goods, including clean air and water, healthy soils, and pleasing landscapes. The Wallace Center uses economic and policy expertise and cutting-edge simulation techniques to identify and develop agricultural production systems and landscape-scale approaches that improve environmental quality, protect natural resources and biodiversity, and enhance rural economies.

Assessing Agricultural Biotechnology

Biotechnology has the potential to improve agricultural production and environmental conditions, yet it also introduces economic,

ecological, and social risks. Genetically modified crops, for example, pose environmental risks, including increased resistance to pesticides, gene flow into related plant species, negative effects on non-target organisms, and reduced crop and ecosystem diversity. Wallace Center analysts and partner scientists are reviewing the forces driving the development of agricultural biotechnologies and the knowledge about their risks, in order to inform policy decisions.



backgrounds provide diverse perspectives for analysis of cross-cutting issues. It also maintains an extensive countrywide network of farmers, ranchers, scientists, educators, and organizers that contributes to policy debate. Using a systems process, the Center helps groups at the local, regional, and national levels to understand and bridge their

differences and to increase understanding and collaboration to enhance agricultural and food systems. The Center assists organizations in planning and implementing policy and development projects. It offers a unique complement of management and analytic services that extend the capacity of an organization's staff and help maneuver around roadblocks that impede timely progress.

Building Policy Expertise

The Wallace Center helps rural and agricultural communities to develop the skills necessary to identify, initiate, and implement institutional and policy changes to sustain local economic and community development efforts. Greater local understanding and participation in the policy arena lead to more balanced approaches and heightened attention to local needs and priorities. The Center also assists organizations in presenting their findings to Congress and other government agencies.

Working Globally with Other Winrock Units

Most systems approaches and policy skills are as important and useful overseas as within the United States. Wallace Center staff are collaborating with their Winrock International colleagues to add value to projects here and abroad in agriculture, forestry and natural resources, clean energy, ecosystems services, and leadership development.

Convening Diverse Groups

The Wallace Center brings together leading thinkers from the agriculture, environment, and rural development sectors, whose ideas and

Henry A. Wallace Center
for Agricultural &
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Policy Projects

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The Wallace Center uses its expertise in research, policy analysis, and capacity building to foster agricultural and food systems that are equitable, economically viable, and environmentally sound.

Projects are a unique mix of applied research and capacity building through collaborations with other scientists, public and private organizations, and policy-makers. The Center also provides leadership within the U.S. sustainable agriculture and conservation communities and delivers news and information to a broad audience.



Challenges to Farmers, Rural Communities, and the Environment

The U.S. agricultural and food system has undergone significant change over the past few decades. Agriculture's structure is transforming rapidly, resulting in increased numbers of larger operations. For many farmers, their income from farming is shrinking, and they are facing numerous obstacles in getting their products to market. Some of the most fertile farmland in the world is being lost to development and urban sprawl. As a result, many rural agricultural communities are fighting to stay alive.

The effects of agriculture on the environment present other challenges. Despite decades of effort to improve farming practices through the adoption of resource-conserving technologies,

agriculture remains the largest contributor to nonpoint source water pollution. A host of other issues, including biotechnology, raise the question of how agriculture should meet society's needs, placing it center stage in national and international policy debates.

The Wallace Center brings credible research and policy analysis, as well as balanced information, to decision-makers at the local, regional, and national levels. Programs that utilize a systems approach address the complex and evolving challenges that surround environmental quality and agricultural development.

Research Contributes to New Policies and Programs

The agriculture sector will not solve its production, social, and environmental problems without new policies and programs. Research into baseline conditions, comparative analyses, and case studies can provide policy options and new ideas for farming practices at both the farm and landscape levels. These approaches can also identify the extent of a need or problem and determine how conditions differ by region, crop, or practice. Wallace Center researchers use a variety of scientific tools to study problems and the technical assistance and resource needs of farmers and others. Using participatory techniques, they assess how existing programs can be improved and craft appropriate recommendations.



Promoting Agricultural Development

The economic survival of many farmers depends on their ability to diversify income sources. As consumers show more interest in regionally produced and environmentally friendly foods, farmers are looking at many marketing alternatives. The Wallace Center helps farmers and communities to analyze and implement the development activities best suited to their needs. At the same time, the Center works with rural and economic development experts and organizations to focus greater attention on the agriculture sector as a vehicle for change and to collaborate more effectively with local communities.

Bringing Diverse Viewpoints Together

People and organizations with different world views must come together to share information, concerns, and priorities for effective decision-making and policy development to occur. Often this can be a complex and sensitive process. The Wallace Center offers an unbiased and effective approach for convening stakeholders and helping them to negotiate the problem-solving and planning process. The Center uses a process model adapted specifically for use by agricultural communities, organizations, agencies, and experts. The methodology helps participants think systemically about the issues that form a problem and the full range of potential solutions. The process has guided participants at the local and national levels to a better understanding of and a clearer course of action for issues ranging from air quality to market access.

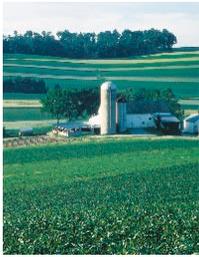




The Wallace Center Uses Research and Policy Analysis to Address Key Environmental, Social, and Economic Challenges

The Wallace Center focuses on four major initiatives:

- Promoting progress on key agri-environmental issues such as water quality and the environmental effects of biotechnology
- Increasing the economic viability and market power of small and mid-sized farms
- Increasing the participation of rural communities, organizations, and individual farmers in shaping agricultural and food policy at federal, state, and local levels
- Enhancing the capacity of rural people to engage in institutional and policy change and sustainable economic development



The Wallace Center A Record of Results

Developing a New Vision for Agricultural Policy

For decades, U.S. farmers have been rewarded for the overproduction of a small number of commodity crops. Although some government programs have attempted to address the negative consequences of overproduction, including decreased soil and water quality, diminished wildlife habitat, and depressed rural economies, their benefit-cost ratio has often been unfavorable. Through the Multiple Benefits of Agriculture project, the Wallace Center, together with its project partners, is developing policy tools that provide incentives to farmers to also enhance the public environmental and social benefits resulting from their farming activities. Efforts to quantify the non-market benefits and translate these findings into policy will create a new vision for agricultural policy that is cost-effective and compliant with international trade agreements.

Assessing the Environmental Impact of Transgenic Crops

Better research is needed to identify and fully understand the potential positive and negative environmental effects of transgenic crops. The U.S. regulatory process requires reform if the ecological risks of transgenic crops are to be managed effectively. This recommendation for further research and policy analysis came from an extensive review of data and research findings presented in *Transgenic Crops: An Environmental Assessment*. The report is cited worldwide and is linked to numerous websites concerned with agricultural biotechnology issues.

Facilitating National Policy Debate

The Wallace Center has convened stakeholders to address national agri-environmental policy issues. In the Midwest Region Commodities and Environment project, Wallace Center staff helped participants address short- and long-term approaches to reduce the negative environmental impacts of corn, soybean, and beef industries in the midwestern United States. The World Wildlife Fund and the American Farmland Trust used the discussions to identify



policy interventions to move these production systems toward environmental sustainability. At a separate workshop on the 2002 Farm Bill, the Wallace Center brought together national experts on natural resources and agriculture to evaluate the status of agri-environmental resources and identify policies to improve their management.

Empowering Rural Communities

The Wallace Center's Agriculture Policy project engaged people from rural areas across the United States to identify agricultural and economic development problems facing their communities, and to develop long-term, proactive policies and programs to address these issues. Sessions at the local, regional, and national levels generated ideas in nine key areas ranging from market access to air and water quality. Following analysis by policy advisors and further review by collaborators, the Center produced 95 policy recommendations that were made available to community and government leaders for use in improving agricultural and food systems.

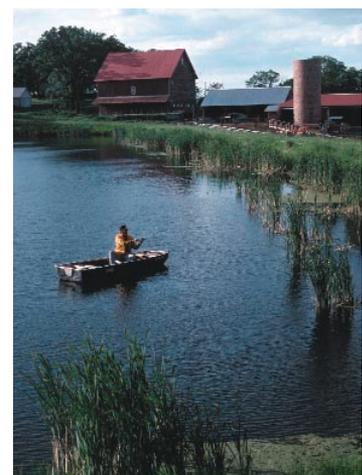
Offering New Ideas for Farmers

New marketing opportunities are vital for small farms in the Chesapeake Bay area. Farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture, and other alternative marketing systems can increase farm income and help secure the future viability of small to mid-sized operations. Along with other partners in the Chesapeake Bay Small Farms Success project, the Center is researching, analyzing, and publishing case studies and successful marketing practices that are enhancing business for small-scale farmers. Promising models will be shared with other area farmers and policy-makers.



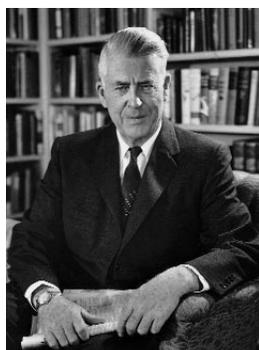
Integrating Agriculture and Rural Development

Small-scale processing, marketing, and other agriculture-related activities can be important components of rural development initiatives, providing a source of jobs and income. The Wallace Center is working to ensure that these efforts are included in more programs to boost development in rural areas. The Center brought together rural development practitioners to identify critical barriers and opportunities for integration. Strategic models are being developed for policies and programs that include agriculture in rural development initiatives.



The Wallace Center builds on nearly two decades of work in research, policy analysis, and education through its founding organization, the Institute for Alternative Agriculture. The Institute was established in 1983 as an independent, nonprofit organization to encourage and facilitate the adoption of low-cost, resource-conserving, environmentally sound, and economically viable farming systems. The *American Journal of Alternative Agriculture*, a scientific forum for disseminating research findings about such systems, was launched by the Institute in 1986.

Henry A. Wallace served as U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and Vice President in the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration. A leading advocate for conservation and sustainable agricultural practices, he worked to build and maintain a strong farm economy while protecting the nation's natural resources. The Institute adopted his name in 1993 to honor his manifold



Henry A. Wallace
An Advocate for Conservation and Sustainable Agriculture

contributions to agriculture and rural life, as well as to recognize longstanding and steadfast support from the Wallace Genetic Foundation. The Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture became a leading voice for alternative and sustainable agriculture in the United States. The Wallace Institute joined with Winrock International in 2000.

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*"...Knowledge grows or dies.
It cannot live in cold storage.
It is perishable and must be
constantly renewed."*

— Henry A. Wallace



Winrock International is a nonprofit organization that works with people in the United States and around the world to increase economic opportunity, sustain natural resources, and protect the environment. Winrock matches innovative approaches in agriculture, natural resources management, clean energy, leadership development, and policy with the unique needs of its partners. By linking local individuals and communities with new ideas and technology, Winrock is increasing long-term productivity, equity, and responsible resource management to benefit the poor and disadvantaged of the world.

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