

The F.A.R.M.S. Initiative

Food and Resource Management Stewardship

Overview

The **F.A.R.M.S.** Initiative—Food and Resource Management Stewardship—is a practical, community-focused effort to strengthen local food systems, reduce waste, and promote responsible land and resource management. It encourages individuals, households, businesses, and farms to adopt the Principles of Stewardship in how food is grown, purchased, consumed, and discarded.

The initiative positions everyone—not just farmers—as active participants in a local, regenerative food economy that is economically sound, environmentally restorative, and socially connected.

Rationale

Food touches every aspect of daily life, yet modern food systems often operate in ways that disconnect people from where their food comes from, how it's grown, who grows it, and how much is wasted.

At the same time:

- Local farms struggle economically.
- Productive farmland is lost to development.
- Food waste contributes significantly to greenhouse gases and unnecessary resource use.
- Many families feel disconnected from the land and their local communities.

Initiative Concept

The F.A.R.M.S. Initiative promotes a practical stewardship approach based on three connected ideas:

1. Support Local Food Production

Encouraging households, businesses, and institutions to:

- Buy from local farmers whenever possible

- Participate in CSA programs
- Use local farm stands, co-ops, and direct buying clubs
- Advocate for protecting farmland and local growers
- Choose foods produced with stewardship in mind

2. Apply Stewardship Principles to Farms and Landscapes

For farmers, landowners, and facilities, this includes:

- Soil conservation
- Water management
- Habitat protection
- Reduced synthetic inputs where possible
- Pollinator-friendly practices
- Woodland, pasture, and hedgerow stewardship
- Farmstead energy efficiency

For homeowners and businesses, this includes:

- Creating wildlife-friendly landscapes
- Growing some of their own food
- Using compost to build soil health
- Reducing harmful chemicals
- Supporting land-based stewardship projects

3. Reduce Food Waste at Every Stage

Helping individuals and organizations:

- Plan meals to reduce over-purchasing
- Store food properly
- Use leftovers creatively
- Compost food scraps

- Support local food recovery and redistribution efforts
- Reduce waste in restaurants, schools, and workplaces

Intended Outcomes

1. Strengthened Local Food Systems
2. Reduced Food Waste
3. Improved Community Health and Resilience
4. Stewardship-Based Land Management
5. Economic and Environmental Benefits
6. Engagement with the American Stewardship Network

Why This Matters to the American Stewardship Network

F.A.R.M.S. reinforces the Network's commitment to:

- Economic Stewardship
- Environmental Stewardship
- Social Stewardship

Possible Future Components

- A Stewardship Guide: F.A.R.M.S. at Home
- A Local Food Challenge
- A Workplace Food Waste Audit Tool
- A "Grow Something" Campaign
- A downloadable checklist for reducing household food waste
- Partnerships with local farms in your three home regions
- A supplemental workbook or eBook
- Informational videos