

Hiring Northeastern farmers to grow deep-topsoil watersheds

Northeastern farmers are *producers* who have supplied critical ecosystem-services for hundreds of years, including forestry products, sheep, hay, beef, butter and milk. Today, demand for milk is diminished and pay-prices are less than the cost of production, but our communities and downstream neighbors desperately need watershed ecosystem-services like flooding reduction and clean water, all of which come from healthy topsoil and biodiversity.

It is time to hire our farmers to generate these other ecosystem-services. Doing so has the potential to double farmers' incomes while halving many taxpayer expenses.

To hire farmers to grow watershed ecosystem-services, we will need to measure their production of them, just as we measure the production of the ecosystem-service of milk to hire farmers to grow it.

The LandStream science and technology platform called the New Scale measures landscape-function and production of watershed ecosystem-services by farmers. Think of it as a milk-tank dipstick for every field that measures energy and water flows and stores, biomass production, soil-structure, infiltration and purification of rainfall, reduction of flooding and drought and more.

We propose that Northeastern farmers and industry partners lead the launch of pilot projects in which five or more farms manage aggressively for quantified production of watershed ecosystem-services - and are paid for them on a measured production basis. This approach would serve to illustrate the irreplaceable and massive creative power our farmers have to immediately generate critical watershed ecosystem-services and help evolve sound economic strategies to leave productive, deep-topsoil watersheds to our kids.

