

# What is Sustainable Agriculture?

Perham Oasis 218.346.7810  
 Ottertail Oasis 218.367.3626  
 Dent Oasis 218.758.3300  
 Menahga 218.564.5264  
 Park Rapids 218.237.2667  
 Akeley 218.652.2665  
 Clarissa 218.756.3324  
 New York Mills 218.385.2060  
**Bulk, LP, Gas & Diesel**  
 Perham 218.346.3500  
 Toll Free 866.346.5601



Lakes Area Cooperative  
**Perham 218.346.6240**  
 lakesareacoop.com  
 Administrative Office:  
 PO Box 247, Perham, MN 56573

Locker Div. 218.346.6245  
 Fertilizer Div. 218.346.2355  
 Milk Div. 218.346.6240  
 Battle Lake Coop 218.864.5574  
 Vergas Country Store 218.342.2441  
 Wolf Lake Coop 218.538.6660  
 Menahga Farm 218.564.4453

**Feed**  
 Perham 218.346.7075  
 Menahga 218.564.4421  
 Toll Free 800.935.8951

## ALBERS REALTY

Office 218-631-2585 Cell 218-639-8007 Hwy. 10 E, Wadena

*There is a good demand for hunting land, farm land and all properties.*

*Call Garth today to list your property!*

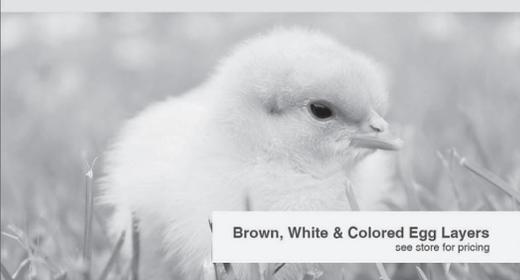
**We also have many properties for sale.**

**"BUYING, SELLING, THINKING" — CALL ALBERS!**

 **www.albersrealty.com** 

### Cornish Rock Broilers & Assorted Egg Layers

*Now available in store through May*



Brown, White & Colored Egg Layers  
 see store for pricing

**Cornish Rock Broilers**  
**Straight Run**

Buy 1-49	\$1.54 ea
Buy 50-99	\$1.48 ea
Buy 100 or more	\$1.44 ea

*Special orders on exotics, ducks, turkeys and guinea keets. See store for pricing.*

*We proudly carry Starter/Grower, Layer & Broiler Feeds From Country Feeds, Nature Wise, Heim's & Big 6ain*

**Mark's Fleet Supply** 218-346-6275  
 945 Market Street, Perham, MN 56573  
 Mon-Fri 8 am-7 pm, Sat 8 am-6 pm, Sun 9 am-4 pm

BEHIND EVERY PROJECT IS A True Value

There's a transformation taking place on farms across the United States. For decades, we've produced the bulk of our food through industrial agriculture — a system dominated by large farms growing the same crops year after year, using enormous amounts of chemical pesticides and fertilizers that damage soils, water, air, and climate. This system is not built to last, because it squanders and degrades the resources that it depends on. But a growing number of innovative farmers and scientists are taking a different path, moving toward a farming system that is more sustainable — environmentally, economically, and socially. This system has room for farms of all sizes, producing a diverse range of foods, fibers, and fuels adapted to local conditions and regional markets. It uses state-of-the-art, science-based practices that maximize productivity and profit while minimizing environmental damage. Some proponents of industrial agriculture claim that its impacts are the price we must pay to "feed the world." In fact, a growing body of scientific evidence has debunked this claim, showing that a more sustainable model can be just as profitable — and can meet our needs for the long haul.

**Sustainable agriculture 101**  
 OK, so sustainable agriculture is the wave of the future. But what is it, exactly? In agriculture, sustainability is a complex idea with many facets, including the economic (a sustainable farm should be a profitable business that contributes to a robust economy), the social (it should deal fairly with its workers and have a mutually beneficial relationship with the surrounding community), and the environmental. Environmental sustainability in agriculture means good stewardship of the natural systems and resources that farms rely on. Among other things, this involves: Building and maintaining healthy soil  
 Managing water wisely  
 Minimizing air, water, and climate pollution  
 Promoting biodiversity  
 There's a whole field of research devoted to achieving these goals: agroecology, the science of managing farms as ecosystems. By working with nature rather than against it, farms managed using agroecological principles can avoid damaging impacts without sacrificing productivity or profitability.  
**Does Sustainable = Organic?**  
 While most Americans may not have heard of hairy vetch, prairie strips, or other core features of sustainable farms, anyone who has been to a supermarket lately knows about organic food. The organic farming movement, which dates back to the early 20th century, incorporates a system of sustainability practices that have been codified into specific certification standards by the US Department of Agriculture. Farms that comply with the stan-

dards can label their produce as "USDA Organic" — a feature that more and more food shoppers are looking for. "Organic" and "sustainable" aren't quite synonyms: current organic standards leave room for some practices that are not optimal from a sustainability point of view, and not all farmers who use sustainable practices qualify for USDA certification or choose to pursue it. Still, the certified organic fruits and vegetables at your supermarket are highly likely to have been produced more sustainably than their conventionally grown neighbors. So if your rule of thumb is "look for the organic label", you're unlikely to go wrong.  
**Sustainable agriculture practices**  
 Over decades of science and practice, several key sustainable farming practices have emerged — for example: Rotating crops and embracing diversity. Planting a variety of crops can have many benefits, including healthier soil and improved pest control. Crop diversity practices include intercropping (growing a mix of crops in the same area) and complex multi-year crop rotations. Planting cover crops. Cover crops, like clover or hairy vetch, are planted during off-season times when soils might otherwise be left bare. These crops protect and build soil health by preventing erosion, replenishing soil nutrients, and keeping weeds in check, reducing the need for herbicides. Reducing or eliminating tillage. Traditional plowing (tillage) prepares fields for planting and prevents weed problems, but can cause a lot of soil loss. No-till or reduced till methods, which involve

inserting seeds directly into undisturbed soil, can reduce erosion and improve soil health. Applying integrated pest management (IPM). A range of methods, including mechanical and biological controls, can be applied systematically to keep pest populations under control while minimizing use of chemical pesticides. Integrating livestock and crops. Industrial agriculture tends to keep plant and animal production separate, with animals living far from the areas where their feed is produced, and crops growing far away from abundant manure fertilizers. A growing body of evidence shows that a smart integration of crop and animal production can be a recipe for more efficient, profitable farms. Adopting agroforestry practices. By mixing trees or shrubs into their operations, farmers can provide shade and shelter to protect plants, animals, and water resources, while also potentially offering additional income. Managing whole systems and landscapes. Sustainable farms treat uncultivated or less intensively cultivated areas, such as riparian buffers or prairie strips, as integral to the farm — valued for their role in controlling erosion, reducing nutrient runoff, and supporting pollinators and other biodiversity. A key theme connecting many of these practices is diversification. "Keep it simple" is good advice in many situations, but when it comes to agriculture, the most sustainable and productive systems are more diverse and complex — like nature itself.



## Farm safety tips - stay focused

Agriculture has the dubious distinction of being one of the most dangerous occupations in the United States. Make this year the safest year on your farm yet by setting goals to get more training and education for yourself and your employees. Farmers, and others working in agriculture, need to be aware of, promote and practice safety measures on a year-round basis. Take advantage of farm safety training when it's offered by area equipment dealerships, cooperative extensions or farm organizations. Additionally, it is advisable to simply slow down, assess any possible safety challenges, and apply a healthy dose of common sense, maturity and a sense of responsibility to any safety situation.  
**Safety tips**  
 Here are 15 safety reminders that all farms, farmers and farm families should observe. You may want to add your own safety reminders to this list. Farmers need to do daily safety and maintenance checks on all tractors used to perform farm work. Farm tractors have one

seat. This means one operator and no extra riders on fenders, hitches or in front-end loader buckets. All farm tractors and any attached or trailing farm equipment must display the triangular, orange Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) emblem. All operators of newer tractors equipped with a 2-point or 4-point ROPS (Rollover Protective Structure), must also wear the seat belt provided in order to be protected in a backward or sideways flip. Be cautious around all livestock that have given birth. Be aware of potentially deadly silo gas when chopping and placing corn silage in an upright silo. Be aware of a potentially deadly outcome when working around or in a grain bin or storage. Never trust any hydraulically-raised equipment, such as front-end loaders, dump trailers, etc. Be aware of steep hillsides when harvesting any crop on the farm. Never step-over a running PTO shaft. Be sure all PTO shields and other safety shields are in good repair and properly se-

cured on all farm equipment. When work has to be performed on a farm implement, be sure that the PTO has been shut off and that all machine movement has ceased. Always wait for a hot engine to cool before attempting to re-fuel a tractor. Never start a tractor in a closed garage or shed. The carbon monoxide (CO) threat can cause a human and/or animal fatality. Keep well-ventilated. Be sure to match farm equipment/implements to a tractor that is compatible to that equipment/implement.  
**Be safe**  
 Consumers across the globe rely on a small number of dedicated farmers to keep the word fed. Food producers can stay safe by making good decisions when working with their farm machines and livestock. We suggest a large dose of respect for the potential of a farm accident, and continuous vigilance for the many and diverse farm safety challenges. Remember, farm safety is no accident.

## HERE TO HELP YOU GROW.



**TruStar**  
 Federal Credit Union  
 www.trustarfcu.com

Insured by NCUA



## "YOUR POLE BARN HEADQUARTERS IN MENA HGA"

POLE STRUCTURE OR STUD FRAME AVAILABLE



AG SHOPS • STORAGE BUILDINGS • LIVESTOCK BUILDINGS

**SPECIALIZING IN CUSTOM AGRICULTURAL BUILDINGS**  
 CUSTOMIZE YOUR BUILDING - WE CAN BUILD WHAT YOU DESIRE WITH A GUARANTEED PRICE!  
 PICK YOUR SIZE - PICK YOUR EXTRAS - PICK YOUR WALL HEIGHT - DESIGN YOUR WINDOWS & DOORS

Call or stop in for all your building needs.

**Spirit Lake LUMBER**  
 Hwy. 71 South • PO Box 287  
 Menahga, MN 56564

**218-564-4940**  
 Fax 218-564-4910  
 Monday - Friday 8am-5pm • Saturday 8am-Noon

## NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK

**STAY SAFE ON THE FARM**

"Friendliest Butcher In Town"

*We support our area farmers!*

**Mills Locker Plant**  
 AND MEAT MARKET  
 Custom Processing, Retail Sales, Wildgame Sausages

Regular Hours: Open M-F 8 am-5 pm & Sat. from 8 am-noon

**218-385-2875**  
**NEW YORK MILLS, MN**