



Agriculture has a major impact on Idaho's economy, resources, and people. In 2017, agribusiness accounted for 13% of the gross state product, 18% of total sales and 123,000 jobs. An industry that touches nearly every aspect of life in Idaho, agriculture also holds the potential to unlock solutions to some of our most complex environmental challenges.

To sustainably feed a growing world population and support both a healthy environment and thriving communities, we need more Idaho farmers to employ regenerative agriculture. Practices such as planting cover crops and reducing tillage can build healthier soil, improve water quality and enhance nature's resilience, while maintaining focus on the bottom line.

By shifting our food system to regenerative practices that restore nature instead of deplete it, we can improve yields and profits, meet consumer demand and support the livelihoods of farmers for generations to come.

The Nature Conservancy is working with farmers across the Snake River Plain to implement partnership projects—mitigating financial risk and providing technical support and soil analysis to support them as they transition their farms to regenerative practices. TNC has seven grower partnerships currently underway. Here are just a few highlights.

#### FARM PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2021, The Nature Conservancy partnered with Todd Ballard to launch a 30-acre regenerative agriculture demonstration farm near Twin Falls, ID, that is testing cropping techniques in the Magic Valley and expanding public awareness of soil health. The demonstration farm builds on TNC's relationships with Idaho's agriculture community, bringing together the ingenuity of local farmers and TNC's conservation experience to transform agriculture. The demonstration farm will provide an on-the-ground laboratory where regenerative agriculture practices can be refined and outcomes shared, contributing to the knowledge base of effective practices in this geography and expanding opportunities for farmers in the Snake River Valley to implement proven methods on their own farmlands.

With regenerative farming practices, we have the opportunity to create better economic and environmental conditions for Idaho's agriculture community.

—BRAD JOHNSON  
Agriculture Strategy Manager



- Chris Unruh farms 2,500 acres near Grandview, ID, growing timothy hay, corn, alfalfa, wheat, barley, sunflowers for seed and mint. Through increased crop diversity practices, TNC is helping the Unruhs increase soil health, eliminate erosion, utilize fewer inputs of synthetic pesticides and fertilizer and increase carbon storage. Practices introduced include planting alternating rows of peas and corn into an established stand of timothy hay. TNC is stop-gapping potential losses during the trial period, providing financial assistance by purchasing a portion of the required seed and advising the Unruhs on regenerative agriculture practices.

- In the small, central Idaho town of Shoshone, father-and-son team Fred and Cooper Brossy grow food for the well-known organic food company, Amy’s, on their 500-acre farm. After years of growing organically, the Brossys are partnering with TNC to build soil health by moving to organic no-till production. To do this, they are employing a technique called “planting green,” through which crops are planted into a living cover crop. When the living cover crop is terminated, the dead plant material acts as a mulch, preventing all or most of the weeds that would germinate. No-till organic production is a difficult farm practice that has a very steep learning curve. TNC is supporting the Brossys with soil health consultation and financial risk mitigation for revenue loss through the transition.



### PROGRAM GOALS

- Restore soil, conserve water and store more carbon in the ground to mitigate climate change.
- Support the economic viability of Idaho’s agriculture community.
- Ensure a resilient water supply.
- Catalyzing widespread adoption of regenerative practices across Idaho.

### JOIN US IN SEEDING SUSTAINABILITY

Our goal is to grow this program and have contracts with 20 farmers. Each farm requires an investment of about \$33,000.

We hope you will join our “Seeding Sustainability” project with an investment towards this work. Your investment will help grow this program and recruit new farmers to join our efforts.

TNC’s program focuses on implementing six key principles of regenerative agriculture.

#### Soil Coverage

Soil coverage in the form of cover crops or crop residue enhances soil health, reduces erosion and helps sequester carbon in the ground.

#### Living Roots

Keeping a living root in the soil for as long as possible helps maintain soil structure, sequester carbon and promotes biodiversity.

#### Minimal Tillage

The goal of minimal tillage is to reduce the amount of soil disturbance to help build soil structure.

#### Diversity

Rotating crops, or growing multiple crops on the same field, can help control pests and disease, create biodiversity and even provide opportunities to diversity farm income.

#### Livestock

Integrating livestock increases nutrient cycling and microbial activity in the soil.

#### Context

Regenerative agriculture is not one-size-fits-all—it needs to be tailored to every farm’s unique context and climate.

