

# Planning Your Sustainable Operation

---

## **A Video-Based Instructional Module Designed for High School Students and Adult Learners**

Table of Contents:

Defining Sustainable Agriculture . . . . . 2  
High School Students in a 45-minute class period

Defining Sustainable Agriculture . . . . . 5  
High School Students in an 80-minute class period

Sustainable Agriculture . . . . . 9  
Two-hour Presentation for Adult Audiences (Extension)

Worksheet: Planning Your Sustainable Operation . . . . . 14  
High School Students

Worksheet: Planning Your Sustainable Operation . . . . . 17  
Adult Learners

*This program was funded by:*  
University of Illinois Extension  
SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education),  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Dudley Smith Initiative,  
College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences,  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION**  
College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences



20	Video	<p>Dialog: Now that you have recorded some of your ideas about what sustainable agriculture is, we are going to watch a video to further clarify any questions you may have. Please feel free to take notes on your post-it for our next activity.</p>	Sustainable Agriculture Video
8	Class Discussion	<p>Once students have viewed the video, conduct a class discussion to form your own definition of sustainable agriculture.</p> <p>Record key ideas and statements on your chalkboard or whiteboard for all students to view.</p> <p>After compiling a listing of key words and phrases, work with the class to develop a definition of sustainable agriculture for your classroom.</p>	<p>Chalkboard</p> <p>Poster board, markers, tape</p>

7	Review	<p>Dialog: As you have seen through our activity today, there are numerous definitions of sustainable agriculture...it means something different to everyone but they all include community, environment, and economic impacts!</p> <p>Ask the class the following questions to make sure your class definition includes all three elements of the sustainability diagram. Make changes as needed.</p> <p>Dialog: Now that we have a definition, let's evaluate it based on what we learned from the video.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does the definition include environmental impacts of agriculture?</li> <li>2. Does the definition include economics for the producer? Can it be done?</li> <li>3. Does the definition include the community and how agriculture can serve the people in the area?</li> </ol> <p>You may use poster board and markers to record and display this definition for the remainder of the unit if you are going to continue studying sustainability in your classroom. Refer back to this definition often as you draw connections between upcoming lessons and your working definition that you have developed in your classroom.</p>	
---	--------	--	--

# Defining Sustainable Agriculture

**Unit/Program:** Sustainable Agriculture

**Video:** Illinois Examples: Sustainable Agriculture

**Problem Area/Topic:** "Defining Sustainable Agriculture"

**Situation:** High school students in an 80-minute class period.

**Learning Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

1. Define sustainable agriculture.
2. Collaborate with classmates toward a common goal.
3. Demonstrate awareness of economic, environmental, and community impacts of agriculture.

Time	Teaching Method	Dialog, Instructions & Learning Activities	Materials & Resources
10	Introduction	<p>Ask students the following guiding questions and wait for dialog to promote a class discussion.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What do you think the goal of agriculture in today's society should be?</li> <li>2. Should producers or farmers be conscious of how their actions affect the land or should the focus of production agriculture only be increasing production?</li> <li>3. What could happen to small communities if there are fewer family farms and more mega-farms?</li> </ol>	
	Objectives	<p>Dialog: By the end of the day we should be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Define sustainable agriculture.</li> <li>2. Collaborate with your classmates toward the common goal of defining sustainable agriculture.</li> <li>3. Demonstrate an awareness of the economic, environmental, and community impacts of agriculture.</li> </ol>	
	Overview	<p>Dialog: Therefore, today we will be working to define sustainable agriculture with the help of a video about sustainable agriculture and how this theory or goal of farming is being used in Central Illinois.</p>	

10	Activity	<p>(While you prepare the video instruct the students to complete the following activity.)</p> <p>POST-IT ONE:  Dialog: On one of your post-it notes please write your own definition of sustainable agriculture. Do not be intimidated if you do not know what the definition of sustainable agriculture is right now; our video will help to answer any questions you may have.</p> <p>POST-IT TWO:  Dialog: On your second post-it note, please write down what you think agriculture’s role should be in protecting the environment. What are some of the concerns producers need to address or be conscious of in order to protect the environment?</p> <p>POST-IT THREE:  Do we need small farms in our local communities? If so, what could be done to help preserve family farms or what could producers do to maintain their small family-run operations?</p> <p>If students do not require the full ten minutes to complete this activity you may have them share their ideas in a small group of three-five students prior to watching the video. You will complete a full class discussion after the video.</p> <p>Instruct students to keep their post-its at their desks and add any additional notes to them as they watch the video.</p>	Three Post-It Notes (or index cards) per student.
20	Video	Dialog: Now that you have recorded some of your ideas about agriculture and sustainability, we are going to watch a video to further clarify these key ideas. Please feel free to take notes on your post-its for our next activity.	Video: <a href="#"><u>Illinois Examples: Sustainable Agriculture</u></a>

15	Class Discussion	<p>Once students have viewed the video, conduct a class discussion to review the students' comments recorded on the post-it notes prior to the video.</p> <p>On a chalkboard or white board write the three essential questions that were asked at the beginning of the course. Ask students to respond to the questions. Once they have shared their ideas have the student come forward and post their responses on the board.</p> <p>RESPONSE 1: What is sustainable agriculture?</p> <p>(Ask for responses and post responses on the board. Then form a definition as a class that answers this question by combining all of the key ideas presented by the students. This definition can be written on the board underneath the posted question.)</p> <p>RESPONSE 2: What can or should agriculture do to protect the environment?</p> <p>(Ask for responses and post responses on the board. Then form a definition as a class that answers this question by combining all of the key ideas presented by the students. This definition can be written on the board underneath the posted question.)</p> <p>RESPONSE 3: Do we need small farms in our local communities? If so, what could be done to help preserve family farms or what could producers do to maintain their small family-run operations?</p> <p>(Ask for responses and post responses on the board. Then form a definition as a class that answers this question by combining all of the key ideas presented by the students. This definition can be written on the board underneath the posted question.)</p>	Chalkboard or Whiteboard
----	------------------	---	--------------------------

10	Activity	<p>PLANNING YOUR SUSTAINABLE OPERATION</p> <p>Dialog: In the video we learned that sustainable agriculture combines elements of economics, the environment, and social or community aspects. Using this information and what we just discussed you will work with your small group to develop an agricultural business or farming operation that will meet all three of these elements and provide a viable business for your group. You can use the provided worksheet to help you record your ideas. After you have formed your businesses or farming operations we will share our ideas with one another through group presentations in ten minutes. Your presentation should be ____ minutes in length. (Determine length of presentations based on the size of the class and allotted time.)</p> <p>Divide students into groups of three-five to work on this project and distribute worksheets. You may chose to give each student a worksheet and only collect one at the end of the lesson or only distribute one copy of the worksheet per group.</p>	<p><a href="#">Planning Your Sustainable Operation Worksheet</a></p>
----	----------	--	--



10	Activity	<p>(While you prepare the video instruct the participants to complete the following activity.)</p> <p>POST-IT ONE:  Dialog: On one of your post-it notes please write your own definition of sustainable agriculture. Do not be intimidated if you do not know what the definition of sustainable agriculture is right now; our video will help to answer any questions you may have.</p> <p>POST-IT TWO:  Dialog: On your second post-it note, please write down what you think agriculture’s role should be in protecting the environment. What are some of the concerns producers need to address or be conscious of in order to protect the environment?</p> <p>POST-IT THREE:  Do we need small farms in our local communities? If so, what could be done to help preserve family farms or what could producers do to maintain their small family-run operations?</p> <p>You will complete a small group and full group discussion after the video.</p> <p>Instruct participants to keep their post-its at their stations and add any additional notes to them as they watch the video.</p>	Three Post-It Notes (or index cards) per participant.
20	Video	Dialog: Now that you have recorded some of your ideas about agriculture and sustainability, we are going to watch a video to further clarify these key ideas. Please feel free to take notes on your post-it notes for our next activity or for your own personal use.	Sustainable Agriculture Video

10	Small Group Discussion	<p>Form small groups for discussion. These groups can either consist of a pre-formed group at a table or you can instruct them to form small groups of three-five participants based on the number in attendance.</p> <p>Dialog: Now that we have viewed the video and learned more about sustainable agriculture we are going to form small groups to discuss some of the key issues and ideas from the video and from your first individual reflection activity.</p> <p>As a group re-answer the three initial reflection questions that you recorded on your post-it notes and form a group answer. In ten minutes I will ask for responses from each group.</p>	<p>Three large sheets of flipchart paper or poster board per group.</p> <p>Markers</p>
10	Small Group Presentations	<p>Ask each of the three initial questions and ask for responses from the groups. Ask for a response from each group before moving on to the next question. Also be sure to alternate the group response order to avoid one group sharing the ideas of all.</p>	
30	Activity	<p><b>PLANNING YOUR SUSTAINABLE OPERATION</b></p> <p>Dialog: In the video we learned that sustainable agriculture combines elements of economics, the environment, and social or community aspects. Using this information and what we just discussed you will work with your small group to develop an agricultural business or farming operation that will meet all three of these elements and provide a viable business for your group. You can use the provided worksheet to help you record your ideas. After you have formed your businesses or farming operations we will share our ideas with one another through group presentations in thirty minutes.</p> <p>Divide participants into groups of three-five to work on this project and distribute worksheets. You may give each participant a worksheet or only distribute one copy of the worksheet per group.</p>	<p><a href="#">Planning Your Sustainable Operation Worksheet</a></p>

25	Presentations	<p>Each group should present their agricultural business or production plan to operate a sustainable operation.</p> <p>At the conclusion of each group presentation ask the following questions to the audience members:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does your operation relate to or help the environment?</li> <li>2. How does your operation relate to economics for the producer?</li> <li>3. How does your operation relate to or help the local community?</li> <li>4. Could this be done? Is it realistic? If not, what could be done to make it more realistic for our area or the people who are in attendance?</li> </ol>	
5	Review	<p>Dialog: Through your group presentations, we have seen a number of very diverse businesses and farming operations that each address social or community issues, environmental concerns, and economics for the producer or agricultural business owner. Just as the video mentioned sustainable agriculture is not a set of steps, rather it is a goal or ideal related to agriculture and farming. There is no one definition for sustainable agriculture, nor is there one way to operate an agricultural business or farming operation using the ideals of sustainability. Ultimately, the decision to accept these practices and implement them is up to the producer in their goal to become viable in the agricultural industry and sustainability.</p>	

**Alternatives and Options to Consider:**

1. Invite a speaker to present to your group in addition to showing the video. This speaker could be a local producer who is utilizing sustainable practices, an extension agent, or a representative of a local organization related to or affected by sustainable agriculture practices.
2. Identify grant opportunities for implementing sustainable agriculture practices. A speaker could be invited from the State Treasurer’s Office, a local organization, or the extension office. If computers are available, participants could also search on-line for grant information.
3. Visit the websites listed at the conclusion of the video for more information about sustainable agriculture and what other producers are doing on their own farms. Participants could visit the sites independently in a computer lab or be directed through key points by the facilitator on an overhead projector through a computer

with internet access. The websites are: [www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org), <http://asap.aces.uiuc.edu/>, and <http://dsi.aces.uiuc.edu/>.

## Planning Your Sustainable Operation

**Directions:** Answer the questions below to design your own sustainable agriculture farm or agricultural business within your group. Your presentation should be presented as if your classmates are your prospective customers. Be sure to include how your business will positively impact the community, environment, and economics of your operation. Good luck with your new venture!

**Our presentation needs to be \_\_\_\_\_ minutes long and we each need to present part of the information for full credit!**

To get started, you will first need to name your farm.  
Our Operation Name is:

---

Who serves on your business planning team? (group members):

### **Economic Impacts:**

Product(s) Offered:

---

What is your operation or product slogan?

---

Who are your customers?

---

Who are your competitors?

---

What makes your product unique?

---

---

How will you distribute your products?

---

How will you promote your products to your customers?

---

---

---

**Social Impacts:**

How will your sustainable agriculture operation benefit your local community?

---

---

---

Answer the following questions for any three employees who make work for your sustainable agricultural business or farming operation.

Position

Skills Required to be Successful

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

In order to hire someone to fill one of these positions, you will need to write a descriptive and concise help wanted ad that will appear in your local newspaper. Be sure to list the type of position, skills needed, what the position will pay and contact information.

---

---

---

---

**Environmental Impacts:**

How will your sustainable agriculture operation benefit the environment in your local

community? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Planning Your Sustainable Operation

**Directions:** Answer the questions below to design your own sustainable agriculture farm or agricultural business within your group. Your presentation should be presented as if your fellow participants are your prospective customers. Be sure to include how your business will positively impact the community, environment, and economics of your operation. Good luck with your new venture!

To get started, you will first need to name your farm.

Our Operation Name is:

---

Who serves on your business planning team? (group members):

### **Economic Impacts:**

Product(s) Offered:

---

What is your operation or product slogan?

---

Who are your customers?

---

Who are your competitors?

---

What makes your product unique?

---

---

How will you distribute your products?

---

How will you promote your products to your customers?

---

---

---

---

**Social Impacts:**

How will your sustainable agriculture operation benefit your local community?

---

---

---

You can also benefit your local community through the creation on jobs. List three jobs below that will be formed due to your operation and skills required to hold this position.

Position

Skills Required to be Successful

<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>

**Environmental Impacts:**

How will your sustainable agriculture operation benefit the environment in your local community as compared to conventional farming practices? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

What practices will you implement to protect the environment or enhance the ecosystem for greater biodiversity?

---

