

Sustainable Agriculture

As much of agriculture trends toward larger farms where an emphasis is placed on increased efficiency and cost control, there is a segment of farmers who wish to remain on the land and yet make different choices other than industrialization.

The industrialization of agriculture shifts the farm from being a place where a family works with the natural rhythms of life to something that more closely resembles a factory. Small farms are likely to go out of business if they try to compete in the market place with large industrialized and highly specialized farms. The sustainable agriculture program introduces students to alternatives. The alternatives include producing crops and raising livestock organically.

The certification process is complex and people need to be aware of how to manage an organic farm. Other farmers may not wish to become certified organic, but wish to manage their farm using minimal inputs. Low-input agriculture does not restrict the use of synthetic fertilizers or pesticides, but when possible, these farmers look for holistic ways to keep their land, crops, and animals healthy. People are also searching for markets to purchase local fruit, vegetable, cereal, meat, and dairy products.

Students in the Associate of Science degree program in sustainable agriculture will learn about successfully marketing through farmer's markets, roadside stands, community supported agriculture, and local institutions. Students will learn about agro-tourism, which connects people living in cities and towns with the country.

As consumers become more aware and involved in deciding how and where their food comes from, some are demanding greater accountability and care for the environment and for the farmer's livelihood. This program is designed to meet the needs of those students who wish to seek careers in sustainable agriculture. The courses will focus on viewing the farm as a holistic agro-ecosystem where the economic, environmental, and social needs are

Sample Courses

Introduction to Sustainable Agriculture
Introduction to Environmental Science
Principles of Food and Resource Economics
Introduction to Animal Sciences
Introduction to Soil Science
Managerial Records and Analysis
Sustainable Agriculture Methods

met through the production of crops and animals. Students will learn skills and knowledge to prepare them for the important role providing healthy food to the community while protecting natural resources for future generations to use and enjoy.

Career Prospects

- Market Gardener/Garden or Farm Manager/Farmer
- Sustainable Agriculture Consultant
- Fresh Produce Manager/Buyer/ Farmer's Market Manager
- Researcher/Instructor/Extension Agent/Farm Advisor
- Pest Control Advisor
- Sustainable Livestock Production/Ranch and/or Rangeland Manager
- Sales, Marketing & Outreach
- Food Manufacturing, Processing, Preparation
- Handling, Packaging, Shipping
- Compost Production and Sales
- Organic/Sustainable Retail & Support Services (organic fertilizers, seeds, equipment)
- Organic & Sustainable Certification Services, Organic Inspector
- Chef/Restaurateur
- Sustainable Landscape Design/Nursery Sales/Garden Center

Facilities

At Ohio State ATI, students have access to facilities and equipment such as:

- 1,700-acre farm laboratory
- 845 tillable acres for soybean, corn, wheat, and alfalfa production
- Sprayer, combine, and tractors with GPS guidance systems
- Variable rate drill