

Interviews with Growers: Increasing Grower Support

Growers play a vital role in our food system, but they often face challenges that can slow down their progress. To better support growers, we conduct anonymous interviews to understand their experiences firsthand and identify practical steps to help overcome barriers and succeed.

This session focuses on the challenges and opportunities that nut tree growers face when exploring regenerative agriculture. Barriers discussed include hurdles like SGMA and FISMA, risks of transitioning practices, grant support, and communication gaps with researchers. This session emphasized the importance of meeting growers where they are and providing targeted and practical support to transition into regenerative agriculture practices.

Engagement with Growers

We should be working with growers to include sustainable practices as solutions to growers' agronomic challenges instead of focusing on just the environmental benefit. Providing case studies of peers would help increase interest and lower fear.

Technology and Grant Access

Accessing tech and grants can be challenging and often rooted in lack of networking or resources. If stronger connections and systems were built, they could bridge the gap and make tech assistance and funding more accessible.

Skepticism from Advisors

Doubt of the benefits of regenerative practices is due to lack of clear validation. Sharing peer stories that reflect the regenerative journey can create clarity in practices and encourage the practice.

FISMA & SGMA Concerns

The cost and unpredictability of the two act limits growers' crop yield, act compliance, and decision-making. Organizing panels or workshops with diverse stakeholders like conventional farmers and policy influencers could possibly resolve these concerns.

HOW WE CAN TAKE ACTION:

1. Come together and create a resource hub for growers looking for tech/grant support.
2. Build networking opportunities with growers, advisors, and anyone already experienced in accessing funds.
3. Highlight steps to comply with FISMA/SGMA while using regenerative methods
4. Focus on the growers. Assign facilitators trained in engagement to ensure quieter voices are heard.