PHOTO CONTEST: Resilient Agriculture

From landscape scale to close-up, we're looking for gorgeous images that portray crop diversity, perennial crops, integrated forage-livestock systems, and conservation of soil nutrients.

A thriving resilient agricultural landscape in Iowa. (Photo credit: Iowa State University, Science-based Trials of Rowcrops with Prairie Strips.)

PHOTO SUBJECTS

We're interested in pictures that illustrate agricultural resilience and associated key concepts: crop diversity, perennial crops, integrated forage-livestock systems, and circular systems of soil nutrient cycling. These concepts are portrayed in the images below, and are described in further detail at the end of this document.
Crop rotations are a type of on-farm crop diversification. (Photo credit: Mark Moore, Farmers and Ranchers in Action.)

Students at University of Wisconsin examine Miscanthus, a type of perennial grass that is grown as a bioenergy crop. (Photo credit: Great Lakes Bioenergy Research Center.)

In some integrated crop-livestock production systems livestock are permitted to graze or forage among crops or crop residue. (Photo credit: Dave Scott and Tammy Howard, NCAT, 2019.)

Fencing keeps cows out of waterways and helps keep their manure on the soil where it helps soil fertility instead of causing pollution. (Photo credit: Pete Fox, UK Environment Agency.)

**IMAGE SCALES**

Agriculture happens within fields and pastures, and among farms and ranches. Together, farms and ranches occupy vast swaths of rural America. So, we're looking for images that portray the key concepts listed above from a variety of perspectives and at multiple scales. We seek images of the Big Picture - images that are an "establishing scene" in photographic and cinematic terms. We're also seeking intimate close-ups. There's plenty of story to tell in the mid-ground too, so we're also looking for images between landscape-scale and close-up.

**WHO CAN PARTICIPATE**

Everyone is welcome to submit entries for this competition, including hobbyists and professionals, youth and adults. However, images may only be submitted by the photographers who took them. Postproduction is acceptable, but postproduction may only be performed by the photographer who captured the original image.
Separate awards will be given for youth under the age of 18, and persons over 18. To qualify as a youth submission, the photographer must be under 18 years of age at the time of photo submission. (See submission guidelines, below.)

AWARDS

For adult and for youth, we will award a first place and a runner-up in each of the categories below. There will be 16 awards in total: four adult first place, four runners-up; four youth first place and four youth runners-up. First place winners receive a $50 Amazon gift card. Runners-up receive a $25 Amazon gift card. Plus, all awarded photos will be published on our future website and used in peer-reviewed Extension publications. This will give winning photographers citable photo credits. (All awarded photos become copyrighted material of the Resilience CAP.)

Perennial crops in cropping systems or crop rotations: Ideally, images in this category illustrate key benefits of perennial crops and cropping systems such as: land cover, soil conservation, reduced tillage, biodiversity, pollinator benefits, water pollution prevention.

Crop diversity: Images should illustrate diversity of crops within a cropping system or crop rotation. Perennial crops include grains, legumes, grasses, and plants used as forages.

Integrated forage-livestock systems: Images in this category must show livestock and/or dung as essential components of soil fertility. Additionally, photos in this category should show how integrated forage-livestock production systems help these nutrients stay on, or in the soil instead of being unused resources or lost to the environment where they can become waterway pollutants. Ideally, images in this category illustrate how well-managed, integrated forage-livestock systems contribute to healthy ecosystems and healthy waterways.

Agricultural Resilience: Images in this category should convey how resilience in agriculture is a benefit to farmers and ranchers, livestock, communities, and the environment.

EVALUATION

Our priority is for images that help tell the story of resilient agriculture involving diverse, perennial cropping systems and integrated forage-livestock operations. Our priority is also for images appropriate for use in scientific, extension, and education communications.

Photos may be staged or spontaneous. Post-production processes are permitted. Artistic expression is appreciated but we need images suitable for mass communication. Therefore, we won't be accepting "interpretive" and/or abstract submissions.

We welcome photos illustrating the key concepts described above, with or without livestock imagery. We will not accept photo submissions of livestock in Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), feedlots, transport vehicles, or slaughter facilities.

Submissions will be initially screened for compliance with general guidelines and overall appropriateness for this contest. All accepted submissions will be anonymously evaluated by a panel of judges according to the criteria below. Judges will score submitted photos according to a numeric rubric. Photos with the
The Resilience CAP, 2023

Highest cumulative score will be awarded first place, and the second highest scoring photo will be awarded runner-up. In the event of a tie, both photos will share a first-place and the third highest scoring photo will be awarded runner-up. All winners will be announced via email by Nov. 20th, 2023 and by social media as soon as possible thereafter. Gift card awards will be distributed no later than December 31st, 2023.

Each accepted photo will be scored on the following criteria:

- Photographic composition: Narrative and overall attractiveness
- Accurate portrayal of subject matter
- Nuance of portrayal of subject matter
- Technical excellence
- Appropriateness for educational, outreach, and scientific communications
- Uniqueness of voice

**SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

*No more than three photos will be accepted per photographer.*

**Submission deadline is September 15th, 2023.**

Submit images as a file attachment using the file name <lastname_firstname_middleinitial> to Carol Williams, RCAP Coordinator, at clwilliams4@wisc.edu, with "RCAP PHOTO CONTEST ENTRY" in the subject line. Attach one file per email. Indicate in the file name if submitting more than one photo, for example, <lastname_firstname_middleinitial_1>.

For each submitted photo (file) include the following information in the body of the email:

- name of photographer
- whether entry is for adult or youth competition
- email of photographer
- technical photo info (camera and post-production details)
- date of photo
- location of photo
- category of entry
- suggested caption

You will receive a receipt for your entry within two business days of submission.

**MORE ABOUT THIS CONTEST**

This photo contest is part of a national agricultural research and extension project based at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and funded by USDA NIFA [AFRI Sustainable Agricultural Systems Coordinated Agricultural Project (SAS-CAP) grant no. 2021-68012-35917]. We’re seeking photographs from within the U.S. that illustrate thriving, resilient agriculture featuring perennial crops and forages. Winning photos will appear in public communications, scientific articles, and school curriculum about
agricultural resilience. We’re interested in outstanding compositions that tell the story of agricultural resilience involving perennial crops and forages, diverse pastures, and the integration of livestock in these production systems.

**KEY CONCEPTS**

Agriculture in the U.S. is a vital source of food, feed, fiber and fuel to the world, and provides livelihood and lifestyle for millions of Americans. Farmers, and the many agricultural businesses that support farming, add over $1 trillion to our national economy each year. Most of this productivity is based in commodity production, particularly annual crop monocultures that produce corn, wheat, and cotton. Livestock agriculture is also a major component in U.S. GDP. Although prevailing agricultural systems are highly productive, they are challenged by impacts of extreme weather, soil degradation over time, resource use intensity, and limited opportunities for new and beginning farmers. Fortunately, there are ways to increase agricultural systems' resilience to these extremes. Crop diversity, use of perennial crops in crop rotations, and integration of livestock with forage production systems can improve agricultural resilience and help farmers overcome extreme and catastrophic hardships.

**Agricultural Resilience**

Resilience is the ability of a system to withstand and recover from major disturbance or catastrophic events by adapting to change or by mitigating harsh impacts. Resilient agricultural systems are productive over time in the face of periodic or repeating extreme events like severe weather, prolonged drought, or persistently over-saturated soil.

**Crop Diversity**

We define crop diversity in two ways: as the production of multiple crop species in rotation within a field over time; and intercropping or co-planting of multiple crop species at the same time in the same field. Crop diversity can also include perennial mulches.

**Perennial Crops**

Perennial crops grow for two or more years and do not need to be replanted each year like annual crops. After harvest, perennial crops continue to grow or regrow. Perennial cropping reduces or eliminates the need for tillage and thus prevents soil loss. Many perennial crops have deep root systems which also helps protect soil. Perennial crops are generally more efficient users of agricultural nutrients compared to many annual crops. Perennial cropping can increase biological carbon sequestration and reduce waterway pollution due to agricultural runoff.

**Integrated Forage-livestock Systems**

These are agricultural management systems that rotate crop, pasture, and livestock uses. A key characteristic is that the outputs of one land use are used as inputs in another land use. Management practices include grazing livestock on pasture, crop residue, cover crops, and/or weeds, and the application of manure produced on-farm.

**Circular Soil Nutrient Cycling**
Sometimes referred to as "circular nutrient economy", circular soil nutrient cycling is an approach to nutrient management that seeks to recover agricultural nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen, and reuse them in agricultural production rather than allow them to become waste. Ideally, the nutrient cycle is a closed loop where feed, for example, is consumed by livestock where feed is produced, and crop residuals and manure are returned to the areas where the feed was produced.