

Agricultural Environmental Management Systems and Green Tier

The business and environmental case

1. The motivating factors for Ag EMSs and accreditation align with Green Tier
 - ◆ Improving farm management skills
 - ◆ Reducing the risk of regulation
 - ◆ Health protection of families
 - ◆ Instilling public confidence in agriculture and produces
 - ◆ Producers acknowledging social responsibilities
2. Green Tier allows third party verification by trade groups but with the protection against conflicts; the EMS can be a due diligence tool by incorporating practices recommended by the Wisconsin Agricultural Stewardship System;
3. A commodity group can provide a verifier thoroughly knowledgeable in agriculture who practices bio-security better than a generalist environmental inspector;
4. Verification can apply to locally required practices, product safety, worker safety, animal welfare, environmental protection, anti-biotic practices, value chain management and more;
5. Verification can produce a label for branding and relationship marketing that can draw a premium, protect market share or build product identity;
6. Green Tier allows producers of varied sizes to live in harmony in a chartered landscape setting that provides buffers and protection against land use conflict and delivers aesthetic value compatible with community needs;
7. Green Tier charters and contracts are adaptive sufficiently to meet the needs of large commodity groups (guaranteeing raw material over time that instills processor and investor confidence) or small producer groups for options such as grazing, community based agriculture, organic, etc.
8. Charters and contracts for bio-mass energy can reduce the negative impact of the bio-mass (animal material) and transform it through the certitude of contracts into green energy income. Place-based management contracts also can be used for renewable energy resources. Verifiable land-based energy EMSs can be used to implement carbon sequestration contracts.
9. The surface management attributes of the charters and contracts can tap natural systems and low input practices to protect the environment for fiscal consideration or regulatory avoidance. Fiscal value can be derived from wetlands management and forage agriculture, for example, to manage flow and protect aquifers.
10. Contracts can compensate land-owners for the social value they produce, such as restoration, reclamation and preservation activities (oak savanna, prairies, wetlands, etc.). Agreements are possible with government, the public (users), businesses (hospitality), and third party managers (such as The Nature Conservancy).

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