



EESI
Environmental and
Energy Study Institute

Materials will be available at:
www.eesi.org/061622ag
Tweet about the briefing:
[#eesitalk](https://twitter.com/eesitalk) [@eesionline](https://twitter.com/eesionline)

CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING
Pathways to Regenerative
Agriculture
Farm Policy for the 21st Century

Thursday, June 16, 2022

About EESI



Non-partisan Educational Resources for Policymakers

A bipartisan Congressional caucus founded EESI in 1984 to provide non-partisan information on environmental, energy, and climate policies



Direct Assistance for Equitable and Inclusive Financing Program

In addition to a full portfolio of federal policy work, EESI provides direct assistance to utilities to develop “on-bill financing” programs



Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice

We recognize that systemic barriers impede fair environmental, energy, and climate policies and limit the full participation of Black, Indigenous, people of color, and legacy and frontline communities in decision-making



Sustainable Solutions

Our mission is to advance science-based solutions for climate change, energy, and environmental challenges in order to achieve our vision of a sustainable, resilient, and equitable world.

Polycymaker Education

Briefings and Webcasts



Live, in-person and online public briefings, archived webcasts, and written summaries

Climate Change Solutions



Bi-weekly newsletter with everything policymakers and concerned citizens need to know, including a legislation and hearings tracker

Fact Sheets and Issue Briefs



Timely, objective coverage of environmental, clean energy, and climate change topics

Social Media (@EESIOnline)



Active engagement on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and YouTube



Regenerative Agriculture: Farm Policy for the 21st Century

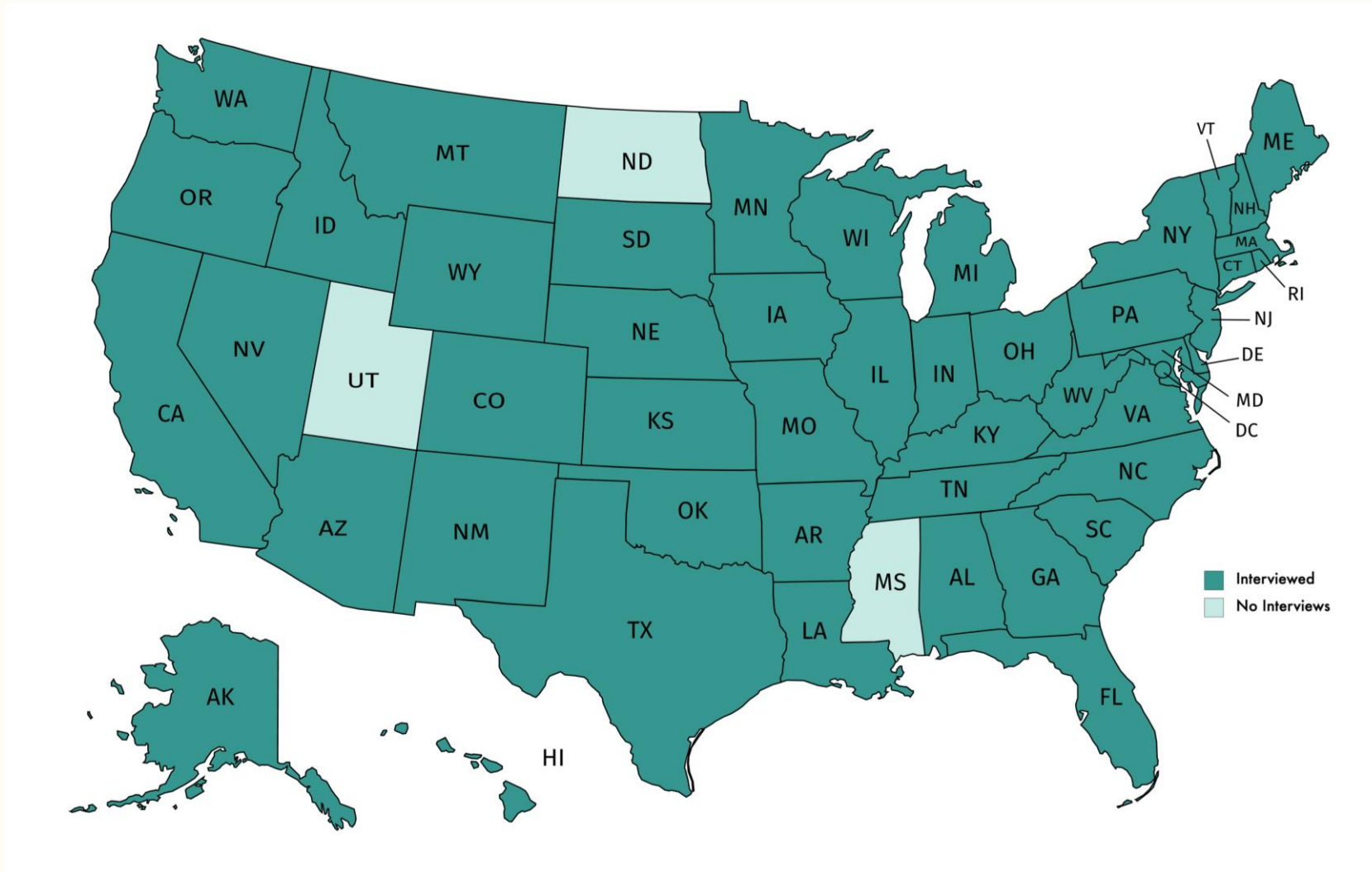
Arohi Sharma

Deputy Director of Regenerative Agriculture



asharma@nrdc.org

113 Interviews





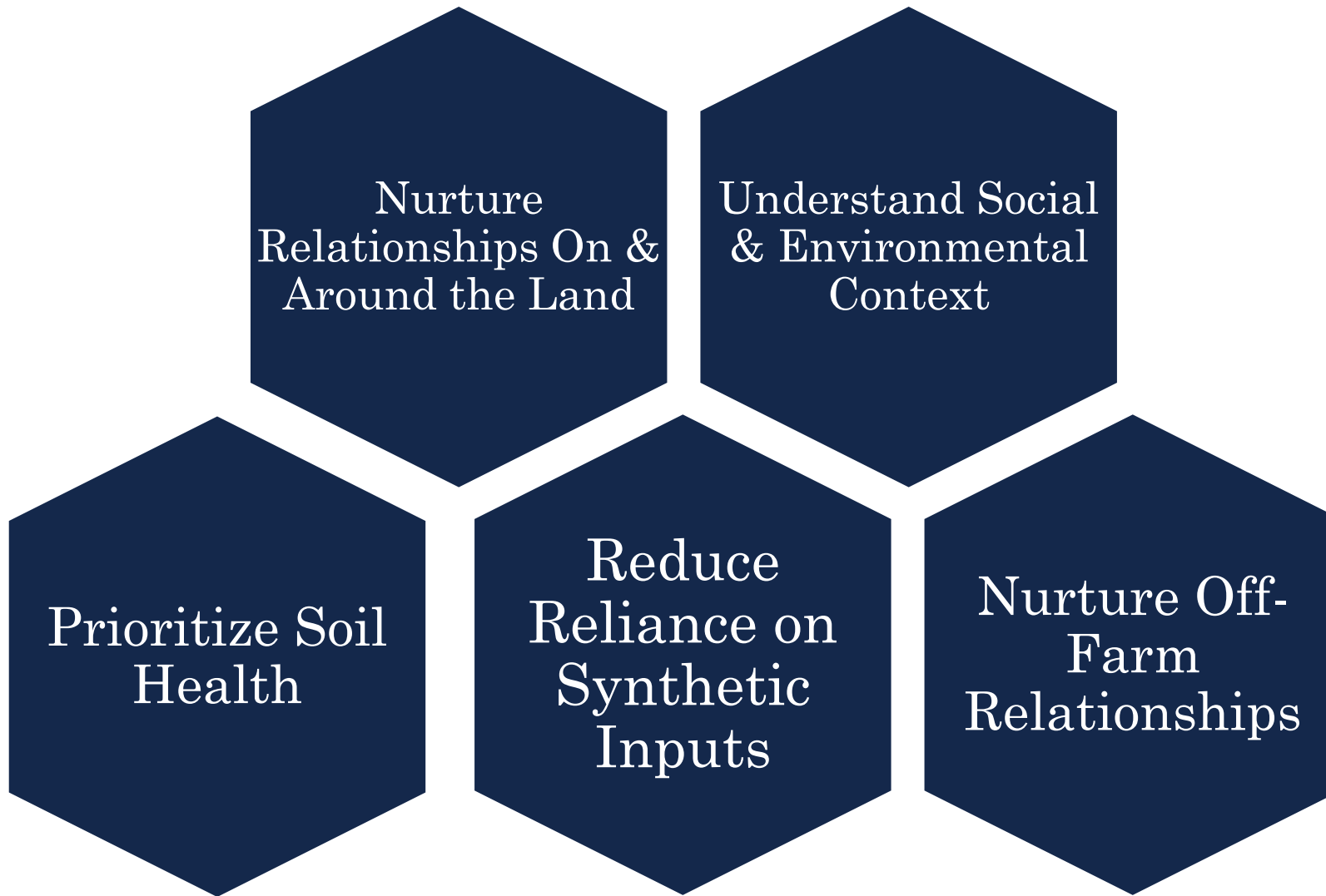
Regenerative Agriculture is Rooted in Indigenous Wisdom



**Regenerative Agriculture is
Rooted in Indigenous Wisdom**

**Land Management Philosophy
of Growing in Harmony with
Nature**

Principles of Regenerative Agriculture





Regenerative Agriculture Practices

Cover Cropping	Rotational Grazing	No-till	Crop Rotations
Reduced or No Pesticides or Chemical Inputs	Perennial Plants & Diversified Crops	Silvopasture	Hedgerows
Contour Planting	Agroforestry	Pasture Cropping	Solar Panels
Animal Integration	Animal Welfare	Compost & Compost Tea	Dry Farming



////////////////////////////////////

4 Pathways for Regenerative Agriculture

Level Federal Investment
Playing Field & Invest in
Regenerative Agriculture

Invest in Decentralized
Food Systems
Infrastructure

Support Farmers &
Ranchers

Fund Regenerative
Agriculture Research and
Extension

Summary of Farm Bill Recommendations

Summary of NRDC Policy Recommendations for the Farm Bill, from our 2022 report, *Regenerative Agriculture: Farm Policy for the 21st Century*

LEVEL THE FEDERAL INVESTMENT PLAYING FIELD AND INCENTIVIZE REGENERATIVE STEWARDSHIP	SUPPORT REGENERATIVE FARMERS AND RANCHERS
<p>PRIORITY: Make permanent a crop insurance incentive for cover crops. (Congress)</p> <p>PRIORITY: Direct the USDA to act on its existing authority to provide a performance-based crop insurance discount to adjust insurance rates for practices proven to reduce risk of crop failure. (Congress)</p> <p>PRIORITY: Coordinate agroforestry capabilities across USDA. Support farmers and ranchers with integrating trees on land as a way to transition more acres to regenerative stewardship. (Congress)</p> <p>Increase staff training and resources for Whole-Farm Revenue Protection under existing authority. (USDA)</p> <p>Reform Federal Crop Insurance Program by eliminating yield-exclusion provision, reducing subsidies that don't provide conservation benefit, applying income caps for eligibility, and expanding conservation compliance provisions. (Congress)</p> <p>Amend USDA Disaster Assistance Programs to reward farmers and ranchers who participate in conservation programs that build soil health. (Congress)</p> <p>Authorize an increased level of baseline funding for federal conservation programs. Appropriate full conservation spending on authorized level through annual appropriations. (Congress)</p> <p>Increase acreage and authorized funding for Conservation Reserve Program and fully fund through annual appropriations process. (Congress)</p>	<p>PRIORITY: Create a transition program to fund comprehensive investments in regenerative and certified organic agriculture. Transition program can be funded by redirecting or using existing USDA resources. Alternatively, Congress can create a mechanism to use crop insurance savings from risk-reducing practices to help fund transitions to regenerative agriculture. (Congress)</p> <p>Increase funding for Rural Cooperative Development Grant Program and raise the cap for Socially Disadvantaged Groups Grants. (Congress)</p> <p>Fund robustly the support for socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers and ranchers in Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach (FOTO) Program, and include soil-health education and measurements in FOTO grants. (Congress)</p> <p>Increase funding to New Farmer Mentorship program and recruit more BIPOC mentors and mentees. Compensate mentors and mentees for their time through existing funding. (USDA)</p> <p>Revise Natural Resource Conservation Service's (NRCS) practice standards to be more inclusive of practices used by Indigenous farmers and ranchers. (USDA NRCS)</p> <p>Appoint a committee to work with Indigenous producers to ensure that ranking systems and practice standards are inclusive. (USDA NRCS)</p> <p>Allocate at least 10 percent of all federal Farm Bill conservation program funding to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. (Congress)</p> <p>Include language that recognizes tribal customs and practices and increase overall funding for Indigenous farmers and ranchers and tribal land throughout Farm Bill programs. (Congress)</p> <p>Include tribal groups and organizations in Farm Bill program design and implementation. (USDA)</p>
INVEST IN MORE DECENTRALIZED AND DIVERSE FOOD SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE	FUND REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION
<p>Reduce federal spending on CAFOS by removing Farm Bill language requiring 50 percent of EQIP funding to go to livestock. (Congress)</p> <p>Increase funding for Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program through annual appropriations. (Congress)</p> <p>Set aside at least 10 percent of VAPG program funding for underserved producers and create an additional set-aside for tribal applicants. (Congress)</p>	<p>PRIORITY: Authorize \$100 million in annual funds for the Soil Health Demonstration Trial. Increase funding for other on-farm research opportunities. (Congress)</p> <p>Authorize \$1.1 billion for conservation technical assistance to provide consistent, stable, and adequate funding for conservation districts. (Congress)</p> <p>Fully fund USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program at the \$60 million level that has already been authorized. (Congress)</p>







Kris Reynolds - American Farmland Trust

PATHWAYS TO REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE: FARM POLICY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



SAVING THE LAND THAT SUSTAINS US



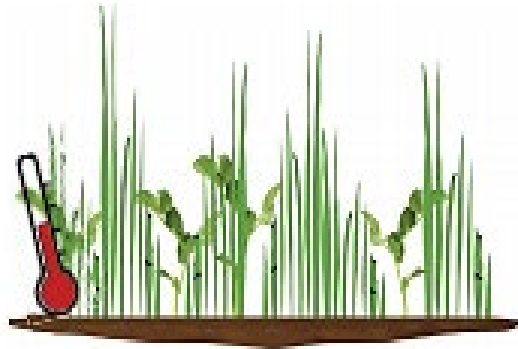
- Protecting farm and ranch land
- Promoting sound farming practices
- Keeping farmers on the land





Cover Crops on the Farm!

Co-benefits of Cover Crops & No-till



SOIL TEMPERATURE AND MOISTURE REGULATION



WINTER AND EARLY SEASON WEED SUPPRESSION



IMPROVED SOIL STRUCTURE



REDUCED SOIL LOSS FROM WIND AND WATER



INCREASED DIVERSITY OF SOIL BIOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES



NUTRIENT CAPTURE AND AVAILABILITY

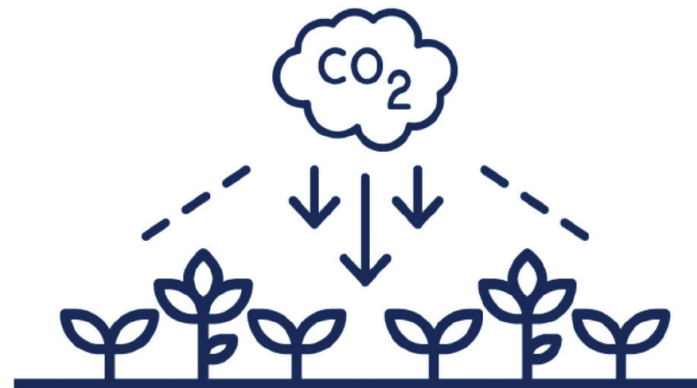
Illinois Fall Covers for Spring Savings





Crop Insurance Premium Discount Program

Leveraging State, Federal and Private funding



IF COVER CROPS WERE PLANTED ON
25% OF ROWCROP ACRES IN
ILLINOIS, IT WOULD BE EQUAL TO

REMOVING 633,323

PASSENGER VEHICLES FROM THE
ROAD FOR A YEAR

*Innovative, efficient
approach to accelerating
cover crops on a big scale*

Federal Crop Insurance Program (FCIP)

Managed by USDA's
Risk Management
Agency (RMA)

Market-based risk
management tool to
strengthen the economic
stability of ag producers
and rural communities.

In 2019, covered 380
million acres of cropland

Farmers use indemnities
to pay off short-term
operating loans

Maintains agriculture
financial services
industry

Farms enrolled in crop
insurance survive 7
years longer

FCIP Risks

Value of insured crop is a major factor in determining value of premium subsidy and indemnity payment.

Farmers incentivized to increase yield and revenue

Unintentional deprioritizing of risk-mitigating actions

Mitigates short-term financial risk at the expense of long-term production risk

Active Risk Management

- Understanding how human management systems interact with natural systems
- Reduce potential for disasters



Future Climate-Scenario

- NASA – 24% corn yield reduction in next 10 years
- EPA – Lower yields for all major commodities
- Increase in commodity prices
- Increase in FCIP costs



Stronger Pathways

- Climate-smart practices protect farm incomes and increase on-farm resilience
- Inter-Agency cooperation within USDA
- Additional premium discounts



Climate-Smart Conservation Practice Expansion

- Current conservation practice adoption low
 - 1/3 of cropland acres using no-till or strip-till
 - Less than 5% using cover crops
- Need for more assistance from state and federal government agencies
- Reduce risk by stabilizing yields and lowering input costs



Pandemic Cover Crop Program (PCCP)

- Offered by USDA in 2021 and 2022
- 12.2 million acres enrolled in 2021
- Cost of \$59.4 million
- \$5 per acre discount on crop insurance



COVER Act

- Extends \$5 per acre premium
- Voluntary
- Compliments existing USDA programs
- TA for outreach efforts
- Creates Soil Health Pilot Program





Saving the Land that Sustains Us

For more information, reach out to

Kris Reynolds: kreynolds@farmland.org

Max Webster: mwebster@farmland.org



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES

Natural Resources
& the Environment

Indigenous Regenerative Agriculture

By Michael Kotutwa Johnson, PhD
Assistant Specialist, University of Arizona
Indigenous Resilience Center



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
Cooperative Extension

Indigenous Regenerative Agriculture (IRA)

A photograph of a traditional stone building, likely made of stacked stones or bricks, situated in a dry, desert-like environment. The building has a simple, rectangular structure with a dark doorway. The ground is sandy and rocky, and the sky is clear and blue. The overall scene suggests a rural, arid setting.

“IRA is the process of incorporating place-based ways of knowing supported by culture, belief systems, and environmentally derived survival schemes over millennia.”

Kotutwa, 2022

Indigenous Biodiversity

- **Indigenous Peoples protect 80% of global biodiversity on a mere 25% of the planet's land with less than 5% of the world's population.**

Schuster, et al., 2019 & IPBES, 2018



Climate Adapted Crops



Human Well-Being



Recommendations (Legislative and Financial)

- Enforce existing legislation-American Indian Agriculture Resource Management act of 1993 (DOI) and Alternative Funding Arrangements 2018 Farm Bill (USDA-NRCS).
- Create funding mechanisms through legislations to support locally led small farms and regenerative agriculture initiatives.
- Fund initiatives geared toward agriculture related infrastructure as suggested in the Native American Agriculture Fund's (NAAF) Reimagining Food Economies Document. https://nativeamericanagriculturefund.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/NAAF_NativeFoodEcon_Spread.pdf
- Support adequate funding for the Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program through an act of Congress. [FRTEP_IndianCountryExtensionCommissionRecs_Summary_Final.pdf](https://www.frd.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/FRTEP_IndianCountryExtensionCommissionRecs_Summary_Final.pdf)
- Aid in the development of permanently funded regionally based or nationally based Native American policy and technical centers in the United States. <https://environment.arizona.edu/irc>
- Use the word “tribes” in federal legislation in the area of natural resource legislation.



Go Roam Free

NRDC Briefing









Go Roam Free

A rancher-owned regenerative meat company that sources direct from US farmers and ranchers restoring American grasslands and raising animals humanely.



WOMAN &
VETERAN OWNED









Extractive industrial agriculture is responsible for depleting 24B metric tonnes of topsoil each year and releasing carbon into the atmosphere at an alarming rate.

America depends on fertile topsoil to feed and fuel the world. If we do nothing, it is estimated to be gone by 2100.

This is the greatest challenge facing mankind. We MUST change.



A wide-angle photograph of a lush, green landscape. In the foreground, a herd of bison is scattered across a grassy field, some grazing and others resting. The middle ground features rolling hills with scattered trees and shrubs. The background consists of more rolling hills under a clear sky. The overall scene is vibrant and natural.

**The solution is regenerative
agriculture**



Brittany Masters
CEO Roam Free Ranch
Brittany@goroamfree.com
(425) 524-3387



EESI
Environmental and
Energy Study Institute

What did you think of the briefing?

Please take 2 minutes to let us know at:
www.eesi.org/survey

Materials will be available at:
www.eesi.org/061622ag

Tweet about the briefing:
[#eesitalk](https://twitter.com/eesitalk) [@eesionline](https://twitter.com/eesionline)

Thursday, June 16, 2022