

# 2022 POLICY GUIDES

## Regenerative Agriculture

### ISSUE

There are many buzzwords surrounding agricultural production. From organic and cage-free to sustainable and farm-raised, there isn't a shortage of words to describe the practices farmers and ranchers use on a daily basis to raise food, fuel, and fiber. However, "regenerative agriculture," the latest phrase being used to describe a desirable form of agricultural production has no formal definition in law and the metrics surrounding its use differ from company to company. Nebraska Farm Bureau is asking members to better define the phrase and to also determine if farmers and ranchers see the movement to promote it as a threat, opportunity, or combination for Nebraska's farm and ranch families.

### BACKGROUND

Over the past few years, a number of corporations, including many large commodity and food companies, have made formal announcements indicating they plan to source inputs and farm commodities from "regenerative agriculture" sources. A few of these announcements include:

- Danone in November 2017 announced its regenerative initiative to work with 58,000 farmers worldwide to focus on regenerative agriculture.
- General Mills announced on March 4, 2019, the intent to advance regenerative agriculture on 1 million acres of farmland by 2030.
- Cargill in September 2020 announced the intention of advancing 10 million acres of regenerative agriculture in North America by 2030.
- Walmart in September 2020 set a goal to become a regenerative company by protecting, managing, or restoring at least 50 million acres of land and one million square miles of ocean by 2030 and have zero emissions by 2040.

While these are just a few examples, an interesting aspect of these goals is each announcement uses different metrics to achieve regenerative agriculture. Depending upon the source, some definitions of regenerative agriculture focus on the agronomic processes, such as eliminating tillage or avoiding synthetic crop inputs, while other definitions center around environmental outcomes like improved soil health or water quality. The 1990 Farm Bill codified the term "Sustainable Agriculture," and the National Organic Program defines organic agriculture, however there is no such definition for "regenerative agriculture." Given the lack of a formal definition in federal statute, farmers and ranchers are left with many questions on what practices they will be required to adhere to in the future.

### FARM BUREAU POLICY

No policy on the topic currently exists.

### QUESTIONS

1. "Regenerative agriculture" is being used without a standard definition. Does our policy at the state or federal level need to have a clear and purposeful definition of the term?
2. How would you define "regenerative agriculture"?