

# **Agroforestry:**

## ***What is USDA Doing?***

### ***Taking it to the “next level”***

**(The View from Washington DC)**

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Agroforestry Academy

Columbia, Missouri

August 5, 2013

# Today's Topics

- Is agroforestry important at the U.S. Department of Agriculture?
- *USDA Agroforestry Strategic Framework, FY 2011-2016*
- *Agroforestry: USDA Reports to America, Fiscal Year 2011-2012 (in press)*
- Taking agroforestry to the “next level” ....what’s it gonna take?

# Is agroforestry important at USDA?

*“I came to the USDA with this perspective that we have under-thought and under-utilized agroforestry as a strategy for diversification for our farmers, but now”, she added, “The timing is right.”*

Kathleen Merrigan, USDA Deputy Secretary  
May 2010, Agroforestry Roundtable Workshop

# Is agroforestry important at USDA?

*“...at USDA we ought to be looking at ways in which we can reduce manmade barriers to **multi-cropping**...another strategy for **managing risk**...whether its double-cropping or cover crops or an integrated crop-livestock arrangement or even **agroforestry**”*

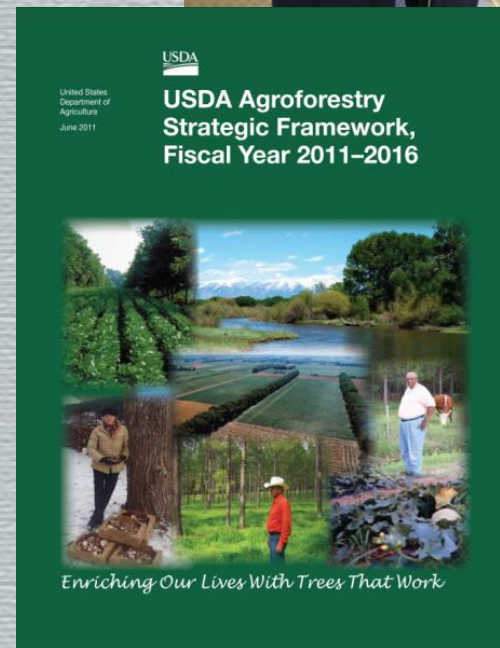
Tom Vilsack, USDA Secretary

February 2013, USDA Ag Outlook Conference

“Managing Risk in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

# USDA Agroforestry Strategic Framework, 2011-2016

- **Released June 2011** by USDA Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan, NAAC, Athens, GA
- **Developed by interagency team** (five USDA agencies, Natl. Associations of State Foresters & Cons. Districts)
- **Input from 90+ stakeholders** (Agroforestry Roundtable Workshop, May 25-26, 2010)



# *USDA Strategic Framework for Agroforestry, 2011-2016*

## Purpose:

- Increase awareness & support for agroforestry
- Identify future USDA emphasis areas for agroforestry R&D and technology transfer

## Three Goals:

- **ADOPTION** – Increase use of agroforestry by landowners and communities
- **SCIENCE** – Advance the understanding and tools
- **INTEGRATION** – Incorporate into an all-lands approach to conservation and economic development

# ***USDA Strategic Framework for Agroforestry, 2011-2016***

Nine Objectives, including:

## **Educate Professionals (Obj. 1.2)**

- ***Enable natural resource professionals to provide technical, educational, financial, and marketing assistance***

## **Institutionalize (Obj. 3.1)**

- ***Incorporate agroforestry into USDA policies, programs, and activities***

## **Communicate Results (Obj. 3.3)**

- ***Promote awareness and appreciation for agroforestry***

# ***USDA Strategic Framework for Agroforestry, 2011-2016***

## **Key accomplishments:**

- **USDA Agroforestry Executive Steering Committee**  
(guides *Strategic Framework* implementation)
- **USDA Departmental Regulation on agroforestry**  
([http://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/Agroforestry\\_DR\\_2013.pdf](http://www.ocio.usda.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2012/Agroforestry_DR_2013.pdf))
- **Completed USDA Agroforestry Communication Plan**  
Coming soon: enhanced USDA agroforestry web pages and “This is Agroforestry” posters
- **First-ever USDA report on agroforestry (in press)**  
FY 2011-12 financial commitments, accomplishments, case studies, next steps



# *USDA Strategic Framework for Agroforestry, 2011-2016*

## **USDA Agroforestry Executive Steering Committee established in November 2011:**

- ✓ Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)
- ✓ Agricultural Research Service (ARS)
- ✓ Farm Service Agency (FSA)
- ✓ Forest Service (FS)
- ✓ National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)
- ✓ National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
- ✓ Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- ✓ Rural Development (RD)

**Current Chair: Wayne Honeycutt, NRCS Deputy Chief**

# Agroforestry: USDA Reports to America, Fiscal Year 2011-2012 [in press]

## Overview

- *Comprehensive* (~180 p.) & *in brief* (~30 p.) versions
- Federal Fiscal Years 2011-2012
- **\$333 million invested by USDA (FY 2011-12)**
- Maps (e.g., agroforestry practices applied by state)
- 15 case studies – feature producers, scientists, partnerships, others
- Organized around Strategic Framework goals – *Adoption, Science, Integration*
- 15 “Next Steps” planned by USDA

# Agroforestry: USDA Reports to America, Fiscal Year 2011-2012 [in press]

## \$333 million invested in agroforestry (FY 2011-12)

- < 1 percent of USDA's total obligations
- 95% (\$328 million) supported technical and financial assistance to help landowners apply practices
  - ✓ 99% to riparian buffers and windbreaks
  - ✓ 1% to alley cropping, multi-story cropping/forest farming, and silvopasture
- Primary programs (USDA agencies):
  - ✓ Conservation Reserve (FSA)
  - ✓ Environmental Quality Incentives (NRCS)

# Agroforestry: USDA Reports to America, Fiscal Year 2011-2012 [in press]

## Inside the other 5 percent (~\$15 million)

- **Agroforestry Research, Education, Extension:**
  - \$4 million - ARS (7 labs)
  - \$2.8 million - FS (7 labs, Natl. Agroforestry Center)
  - \$3.9 million – NIFA (41 land-grant univ., 6 others).  
(ARS & FS also supported extramural research)
- **Technology Transfer, Training/Workshops, Outreach**
  - \$3.9 - FS (all states except AK, AZ, OR, NM, WA)
- **Marketing, Rural Development**
  - \$800,000 – AMS, RD

# Agroforestry: USDA Reports to America, Fiscal Year 2011-2012 [in press]

## Adoption (Goal 1)

- Currently no national database of agroforestry plantings or landowners applying the practices
- **Application on <1 % of potentially suitable land**

### USDA assistance, 2008-2012:

- **336,000 ac. of buffers, windbreaks, alley cropping**  
(372 million ac. of cropland)
- **2,000 ac. of silvopasture**  
(179 million ac. of grazed forest land & pasture)
- **500 ac. of forest farming**  
(363 million ac. of ungrazed forest land)

# Agroforestry: USDA Reports to America, Fiscal Year 2011-2012 [in press]

## Adoption (Goal 1)

2012 Census of Agriculture includes the first-ever agroforestry practice question:

*“At any time during 2012, did this operation practice alley cropping or silvopasture as an integrated Agroforestry system?”*

- First data expected in February 2014
- **Makes possible:** follow-on surveys and analysis of producers who responded “yes” or “no”

# Agroforestry: USDA Reports to America, Fiscal Year 2011-2012 [in press]

## Adoption (Goal 1)

### *Supporting activities:*

- **Forest Farming Community of Practice established**
- **Multistate agroforestry working groups:** Chesapeake Bay, Midwest, Pacific Islands and Pacific Northwest (?)
- **USDA supported 40 agroforestry demonstration sites**
- **US-Canada agroforestry MOU signed** (USDA National Agroforestry Center – AAFC Agroforestry Development Centre)
- **First agroforestry academy** for resource professionals, supported by USDA SARE grant (2013–14)

# Agroforestry: USDA Reports to America, Fiscal Year 2011-2012 [in press]

## Science (Goal 2)

### *Selected accomplishments:*

- USDA supported 69 agroforestry research projects
- 200 peer-reviewed agroforestry publications by USDA scientists/partners at 47 institutions (41 land-grant)
- Agroforestry module added to the Forest\*A\*Syst, a web tool that helps landowners develop a mgmt. plan
- *Profitable Farms and Woodlands: A Practical Guide in Agroforestry for Landowners, Farmers, and Ranchers* published to help limited resource producers in SE



# Taking agroforestry to the “next level” ...what’s it gonna take?

## BIG PICTURE

*Desired Outcome: Landowners, managers, Tribes, and communities adopt agroforestry practices resulting in improved water, soil, and air quality; sustainable agriculture; product diversity; and rural wealth.* (Strategic Framework, Goal 1)

**Agroforestry applied = 5% of suitable lands in U.S.**

# Taking agroforestry to the “next level” ...what’s it gonna take?

## FIVE ACTIONS:

- 1) *Eliminate agroforestry illiteracy*
- 2) *Significant expansion of agroforestry research, education, extension at universities*
- 3) *Peer to Peer learning!*
- 4) *National inventory of agroforestry plantings and producers who are practicing agroforestry*
- 5) *Agroforestry defined and explicitly authorized in the next Farm Bill*

# Taking agroforestry to the “next level” ...what’s it gonna take?

## ACTIONS

### **1) *Eliminate agroforestry illiteracy***

(critical mass of nat. resource professionals!)

- Agroforestry academies expanded to Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, Northeast, Northwest
- National “Certified Agroforester” program (*Journal of Forestry* commentary, Dec 2012)
- Agroforestry 101 required for USDA employees

# Taking agroforestry to the “next level” ...what’s it gonna take?

## ACTIONS

### ***2) Significant expansion of agroforestry research, education, extension at universities***

- **Agroforestry majors/certificates/area of expertise** offered by universities in five major regions (NE, Mid-Atlantic, Midwest, SE, NW)
- **Regional agroforestry working groups** in same regions, each anchored by a land grant university
- **Tribal and Island agroforestry working groups**

# Taking agroforestry to the “next level” ...what’s it gonna take?

## ACTIONS

### **3) Peer to Peer Learning!**

(landowner to landowner; professional to professional)

- **Agroforestry demonstration sites in every state – strategically located, maintained and used!**
- ***eXtension Communities of Practice* established for all practices** (alley cropping, windbreaks, silvopasture, riparian & upland buffers) and Tribal agroforestry, island agroforestry

# Taking agroforestry to the “next level” ...what’s it gonna take?

## ACTIONS

### ***4) National inventory of agroforestry plantings and producers who practice agroforestry***

- Assess responses to the agroforestry practice question in the 2012 Census of Agriculture
- “Linear forests”, on both agricultural and urban lands, are included in the FIA program.

# Taking agroforestry to the “next level” ...what’s it gonna take?

## ACTIONS

### *5) Agroforestry defined and explicitly authorized in USDA/Farm Bill programs:*

- Conservation (e.g., EQIP)
- Forestry (e.g., Forest Stewardship)
- Research (e.g., Smith-Lever, McIntire-Stennis)
- Horticulture and organic agriculture (e.g., Specialty Crop Block Grant)

# Questions/Comment?

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