

Eco-Ag is Regenerative Ag — and Vice Versa!

Acres U.S.A. has both deep roots and new shoots to help drive the transition to ecological and profitable agriculture

BY LYDIA LAZAR



When I first joined the Acres U.S.A. team in April 2021, I was impressed by the knowledgeable and committed staff, the amazing event speakers, and the extraordinary content that we deliver to you, our community. When I was asked to step into the executive director role, I did so with a feeling of gratitude and excitement for the road ahead, combined with deep respect for the ecological values this community holds close to its heart.

As we look to the future of Acres U.S.A, we are mindful — and proud — of the prescient and innovative role this publishing house has played in what is now called the regenerative agriculture movement, and we are ready to both “stay the course” and evolve with the times.

We will be steadfast in our commitment to the founding principles of Charles Walters and William Albrecht, so that in every magazine and book we publish and at every event we convene, we reinforce their guiding insights that “to be economical, farming must be ecological” and that “our national strength lies in the

fertility of our soil, and our future survival in the wise management and utmost conservation of it.”

We will grow our impact through honoring these principles, and by raising up the voices of today’s kindred spirits. We will amplify the work of today’s agricultural leaders and innovators and support all efforts to increase the resilience of our farms and ranches — and the people who anchor and feed our nation. We will share resources and knowledge freely, since a scarcity mindset is a constraint we cannot afford to cultivate, and we will seek partners in this work, so that we learn as much as we teach and are able to widen our circle of influence through the power of networks.

My own life journey has taught me the importance of continuous learning with a “beginner mind” — and I have been avidly soaking up new information since I first opened our magazine and read Gary Zimmer’s approach to soil health and his advice to those who are contemplating a transition to organic production. In the nearly two years since then,

I have been thrilled to help bring these ideas to new audiences, and I see a lot of opportunity to leverage the strengths of our community’s leading thinkers.

For example, through an exciting partnership with the Colorado Department of Agriculture, we have been working to develop educational materials for the STAR program. Saving Tomorrow’s Agricultural Resources is a program that started in Illinois and is spreading across the nation. Another partnership we have initiated is with the National Association of Conservation Districts — we have curated a book collection for their members, and we look forward to strengthening that partnership in the days ahead. Finally, as the USDA Climate Smart Commodities’ grants begin to flow into communities, we see numerous opportunities to support grassroots as well as national organizations.

So, stay tuned, and please do reach out directly to me with your ideas, referrals and suggestions for ways to enhance our impact in the months and years ahead. ACRES.