Agroforestry Academy Background

An “Agroforestry Academy” is a term used to describe 3 to 5 day intensive agroforestry training courses. They have served as an effective “train-the-trainer” approach for increasing agroforestry adoption. The goal is to increase the number of natural resource professionals, extension agents, and agricultural educators, who can provide agroforestry assistance to landowners interested in implementing agroforestry practices on their land. Increasing familiarity with agroforestry among technical service providers can be especially important for landowners seeking financial assistance for agroforestry implementation through USDA programs.

Effective multi-day trainings include both classroom field experiences each day to keep participants engaged. Ideally, participants will visit a range of farms that have implemented different agroforestry practices. These multi-day trainings often involve a case study exercise, which allows training participants to think about what it’s like to work with a landowner to plan, design and implement an agroforestry practice. More information on agroforestry case study exercises is available on the [NAC training website](http://nac.unl.edu/tools/training.htm).

This model was developed out of a SARE Professional Development Project called [Increasing Agroforestry Adoption and Networking in the Midwest through Targeted Professional Development](http://mysare.sare.org/sare_project/enc12-129/). As part of this grant, the Center for Agroforestry at the University of Missouri with its partners in the Mid-America Agroforestry Working Group organized the first Agroforestry Academy in Columbia, MO from August 5-9, 2013 and a second Agroforestry Academy in Winona, MN from July 21-25, 2014. Each academy enabled natural resource professionals, extension agents, and other educators, to develop their agroforestry experience and competency and advance adoption of agroforestry as a cornerstone of productive land use in the Midwest.

This model was replicated again in Pine River, MN in June 2015 and in Columbia, MO in July 2015. The Pennsylvania Bureau of Forestry worked with its partners to adapt this model for the northeast and is holding trainings in 2016 and 2017. An Agroforestry Academy will also be held in Columbia, Missouri on July 25-29, 2016.

More information on agroforestry academies, including the Center for Agroforestry’s [Training Manual for Applied Agroforestry Practices](http://www.centerforagroforestry.org/pubs/training/index.php), is available at the Center for Agroforestry’s [Agroforestry Academy website](http://www.centerforagroforestry.org/academy/).