

Info

How can agreements for long-term land access achieve multiple goals?

Working Trees



▶ Long-term lease agreements can support a wide range of operations and provide benefits to both farmers and landowners. (USDA photo by Preston Keres)

Agroforestry Farmers Can Use Long-Term Leases and Other Agreements

Beginning and experienced farmers alike seek long-term access to land; however, many don't have the funds to purchase land outright. Long-term leases and other land access arrangements allow the farmer to secure long-term land tenure without requiring a lot of money upfront.

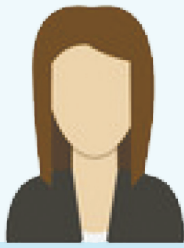
The long-term lease allows the farmer to secure long-term land tenure without requiring a lot of money upfront.

Long-term leases are particularly important for farmers engaged in agroforestry because perennial woody crops inherently require extended time before becoming economically productive and can remain productive for many years. The farmer needs predictable, long-term land access to make such an investment of time and resources worthwhile.



For the Farmer

- Gain affordable long term tenure of land
- Build skills and experience
- Establish a profitable business and build capital
- Share in innovation of agroforestry practices
- Develop a model to be replicated elsewhere
- Create a rewarding and enjoyable livelihood
- Attain legacy of revitalizing the land



For the Landowner

- Receive consistent income
- Have a caretaker of the property
- Option to share in profits
- Gain improvements to the property
- Have a presence on the land
- Realize increased property value
- Attain legacy of revitalizing the land

Landowners Can Benefit from Long-Term Leases and Other Agreements

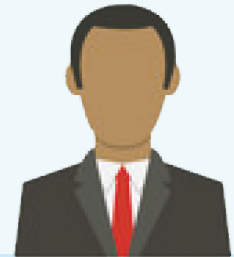
Owners of agricultural land—whether they’re aging, absentee, non-farmers, only cultivating part of their land, institutional landowners, or want to join forces with another farmer for other reasons—often want their land maintained or used for farming, but don’t have the time, resources, or desire to do it themselves. They may want additional income as well.

Long-term land access arrangements allow them to secure a long-term relationship with a farmer who they can count on, as well as supplemental income. By prescribing sustainable and conservation-oriented practices, a long-term lease can also help facilitate ecological restoration and protection of the land for the benefit of heirs and future generations.

Organizations Can Support Long-Term Leases and Other Agreements

These arrangements can also serve the goals of other organizations, including state, local, and federal government agencies, conservation districts, and non-profit organizations, as well as other institutional landowners like municipalities, faith-based organizations, schools, land trusts, and businesses.

Supporting the use of agroforestry through innovative land access arrangements provides a new tactic for achieving conservation goals. Diversified perennial systems are an important way to improve soil health, reduce nutrient and sediment pollution, grow food, increase carbon sequestration, and provide important habitat for wildlife and pollinators.



For Organizations and Public

- Keep land in agricultural or forested land use
- Support rural communities
- Increase perennial vegetation on the landscape
- Meet conservation goals without special funding
- Attain a legacy of revitalizing the land

Long-term land access agreements for agroforestry help meet an organization’s conservation, philanthropic, or financial goals and benefit the public. These arrangements may also reduce the cost to taxpayers for incentivizing conservation, provide a market-based mechanism to sustain conservation practices beyond program contract periods, and diversify rural economies by adding sustainable enterprises and specialty crop processing and distribution businesses.

Organizations can support these long-term arrangements by connecting farmers and landowners, sharing examples of existing arrangements for long-term land access for agroforestry through publications, workshops, or other demonstrations, or leasing land they manage to farmers for agroforestry.

Long-term leases, licenses, and easements between farmers and landowners can help build agroforestry systems and accomplish conservation goals for the public. For more information about this topic, see *Inspirations for Creating a Long-Term Agricultural Lease for Agroforestry: A Workbook* at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/nac/assets/documents/morepublications/longterm-lease-workbookbook.pdf>, published by the Savanna Institute and Farm Commons, with support from the USDA National Agroforestry Center at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/nac/>.



Contact: USDA National Agroforestry Center, 402.437.5178 ext. 4011, 1945 N. 38th St., Lincoln, Nebraska 68583-0822. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/nac>

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