FOUR FARMS GRID

What type of farming?

Urban, organic, regenerative, or conventional? Look for clues. Write your group's guess for a, b, c, and d on a sticky note.









Photo c courtesy of SOVA Farm

FARMING GUIDE 1



1 Conventional Farming

Read your guide twice. Underline 2 or 3 phrases in each section. **Bold words** are vocabulary words from this lesson. Then fill in your column on the Farming Comparison Chart.

What is conventional farming?

Conventional farming is the most widely used farming system. It focuses on growing large amounts of food as efficiently as possible.

Farmers often plant their fields with a single crop, such as corn, soybeans, or wheat. This is called a monocrop, which means growing only one type of crop over a wide area. This reduces **biodiversity**, the variety of different plants and animals living in a place.

To help crops grow quickly, farmers may use synthetic **fertilizers** (human-made plant food) and **pesticides** (chemicals used to kill pests such as insects or weeds).

Why do farmers choose this method?

Conventional farming can produce big harvests. High production helps supply grocery stores, restaurants, and food banks. Because farmers grow food efficiently, food prices may stay lower for shoppers.

Environmental impacts

When rain falls on fields, fertilizers and pesticides may wash into nearby streams, rivers, or lakes. This is called runoff. Runoff can affect water quality and harm fish and other wildlife.

Growing the same crop every year may reduce soil health. Farmers may then need to add more fertilizer to keep crops growing well. In some places, heavy machinery and repeated planting can cause soil erosion, where soil washes or blows away.

Impacts on people and communities

Conventional farming provides large quantities of food at affordable prices. However, it often depends on expensive equipment and chemicals. Farm workers must follow safety rules to stay safe around pesticides.

FARMING GUIDE 2



2 Organic Farming

Read your guide twice. Underline 2 or 3 phrases in each section. **Bold words** are vocabulary words from this lesson. Then fill in your column on the Farming Comparison Chart.

What is organic farming?

Organic farming avoids synthetic **fertilizers** and **pesticides**. Instead, organic farmers use natural methods to grow crops and manage pests.

For example, farmers may use compost (broken-down plant material) to add nutrients to soil. They may rotate crops, meaning they grow different plants in the same field each season. Crop rotation helps keep soil healthy.

To call their food organic, farmers must follow special rules and have their farm checked.

Why do farmers choose organic?

Many farmers choose organic methods because they want to protect soil, water, and wildlife. Organic farming encourages **biodiversity**, supporting many different plants and animals in the area.

Some families choose organic food because they believe it is healthier and better for the planet. Organic foods sometimes cost more because they take more work and careful planning.

Environmental impacts

Organic farming reduces the amount of pollution entering the water, land, and air. Soil may improve over time through compost and crop rotation. Organic fields can hold more water during droughts.

Impacts on people and communities

Organic farms can be safer places for farm workers. They may support local restaurants and farmers' markets. Organic farming works well in areas where shoppers are willing to pay higher prices and where farmers have time to take care of the soil.

FARMING GUIDE 3

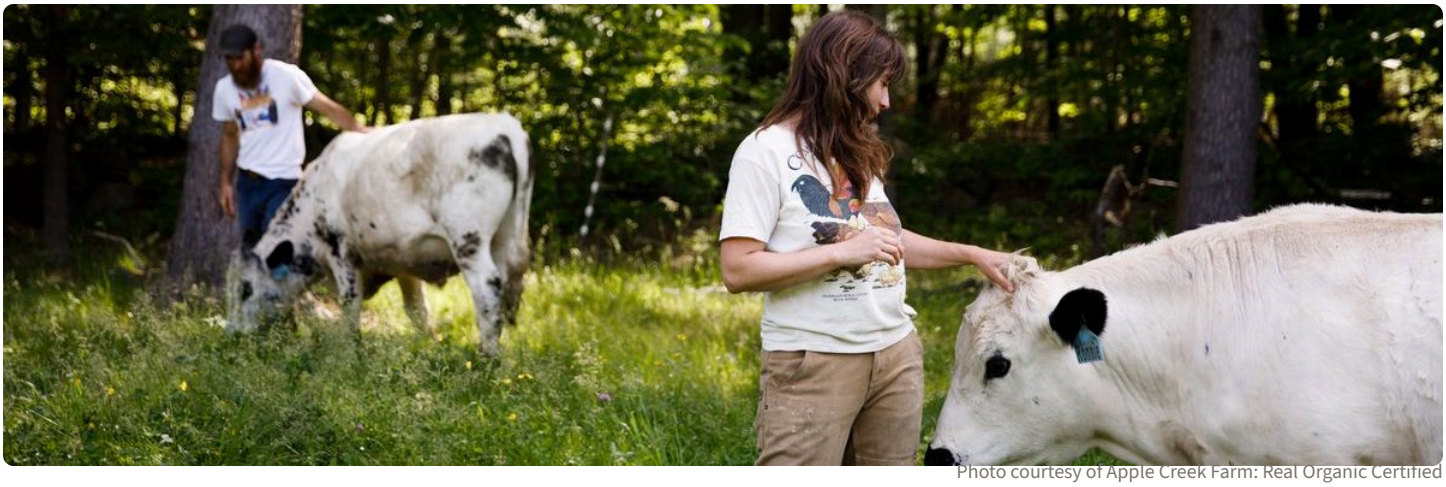


Photo courtesy of Apple Creek Farm: Real Organic Certified

3 Regenerative Farming

Read your guide twice. Underline 2 or 3 phrases in each section. **Bold words** are vocabulary words from this lesson. Then fill in your column on the Farming Comparison Chart.

What is regenerative farming?

Regenerative farming works to rebuild soil health and improve ecosystems. Instead of just keeping farmland the same, regenerative farmers work to make it healthier each year.

Farmers may plant cover crops, which are crops grown to protect soil between main growing seasons. Some regenerative farms use rotational grazing, where animals are moved between pastures to allow grass to recover.

Why do farmers choose regenerative methods?

Healthy soil can store more water and nutrients. Some scientists believe regenerative farming may help slow climate change by holding carbon (a gas that warms the planet) in the soil.

Environmental impacts

Regenerative farming usually reduces erosion and helps the soil hold water. It also increases **biodiversity**, supporting more plants and animals in the area.

However, regenerative methods take time. Farmers may not see results immediately. Farmers also need to learn new methods and try them out carefully.

Impacts on people and communities

Regenerative farming supports long-term land health, which can benefit future generations. It can strengthen rural communities that depend on farming.

This type of farming works best when farmers have time to plan ahead and care for the soil.

FARMING GUIDE 4



4 Urban Farming

Read your guide twice. Underline 2 or 3 phrases in each section. **Bold words** are vocabulary words from this lesson. Then fill in your column on the Farming Comparison Chart.

What is urban farming?

Urban farming means growing food in cities. Crops may be grown in empty lots, community gardens, school gardens, rooftops, and greenhouses, and even at apartment buildings and senior homes. Urban farms are usually smaller than rural farms.

Why do people choose urban farming?

Urban farming brings healthy food closer to where people live. This reduces food miles, the distance food travels from farm to plate. Urban farms can bring fresh produce (vegetables and fruits) to neighborhoods without a grocery store nearby, sometimes called food deserts.

Some urban farms offer classes, youth programs, and volunteer days. They often become gathering places for neighborhoods.

Environmental impacts

Urban farming adds plants and gardens that make cities greener and healthier. These crops help clean the air by taking in carbon dioxide and giving off oxygen. Many urban farms use compost made from local food scraps to improve soil. Food grown nearby also travels a shorter distance, so it causes less pollution from trucks and airplanes.

Impacts on people and communities

Urban farming brings neighbors together to plant, garden, harvest, share food, and connect. Gardening and eating fresh foods can improve physical and mental health. Urban farms can also create jobs.

Urban farms are usually small, so they can't grow huge amounts of food on their own. They also need space, water, and sunlight, which can be hard to find in a busy city.

ACTIVITY: FOOD AND FARMING

Farming Comparison Chart

NAME _____ MY FARM TYPE _____

First, fill in the column for your Farming Guide: one bullet in each row. Then, as your Farm Team shares, fill in the other three columns.

	1 Conventional	2 Organic	3 Regenerative	4 Urban
1 **Why do farmers choose this type?** *goal or reason*				
2 **How does it affect the environment?** *soil, water, air, animals*				
3 **How does it affect people and communities?** *health, jobs, access to food*				

ACTIVITY: FOOD AND FARMING

Day 1 Solo Journal

If you had to choose one type of farm for our community right now, what would you pick, and why? Write 2 or 3 sentences.

Keep this private for now. You'll bring it to your Farm Team tomorrow.

ACTIVITY: FOOD AND FARMING

Farm Design Proposal

You will act as farming advisors. The Community Land Board near our school (a group of people who decide how land should be used) will review your proposal and choose the farm plan best suited for OUR community. Keep in mind the health and well-being of the land, animals, and people.

TEAM MEMBERS _____ **DATE** _____

1 Our farm name and logo

Name your farm something your community would remember. Draw a small logo or symbol that goes with the name.

Farm name _____

Logo or symbol

2 Chosen farming type

Our team chose ONE of these four:

☐ Conventional ☐ Organic ☐ Regenerative ☐ Urban

OR our farm is a blend of two types: _____ **and** _____

If blended, why we chose to combine them:

3 Crops and animals we will grow

What will your farm produce? Be specific: vegetables, fruits, grains, herbs, animals (if any).

4 Why is this the best choice for OUR community?

SENTENCE STARTER: "We are choosing this because _____ . Evidence from our Farming Guide is _____ ."

5 Two strengths of our farm

SENTENCE STARTER: "One strength is _____ because _____ ." "Another strength is _____ ."

6 One trade-off

Trade-off means giving up one thing to get something else. Every farm has at least one. Example: "We chose urban farming because it's close to people, but we have less space to grow large amounts of food."

SENTENCE STARTER: "A trade-off of our farm is _____ ."

7 Final statement to the Land Board

In 1–2 sentences, tell the Community Land Board why it should choose your farm.

SENTENCE STARTER: "The Land Board should choose our farm because _____ ."