



Figure 1

(From S.R. Gliessman (2004): the functional and structural components of the ecosystem converted to a sustainable agroecosystem)

The heralded triple bottom-line: People, Profit, and Planet, the proverbial three-legged stool. Take one of these pillars away and the stool eventually comes crashing down. Farmers and commercial landscapes have long contemplated and advanced through nutrient, water and pesticide management that improves plant growth and crop yield. New concerns about water scarcity, climate change, water and air pollution increasingly show up on their radar today. Their legacy matters.

It is easy to see from the diagram above how complex a farm is. All landscapes are complex agroecosystems, but if a few trees in a park suffer, even if a golf green is lost, the economic impacts are nothing compared to a crop failure over as little as 100 acres. A plan must be developed and evaluated at the field level periodically to show where, when, and which best management practices work most effectively to protect and preserve natural resources, enrich our lives, and keep land managers profitable. Food security, at home and abroad, is a global security imperative.