Adoption and the Human Factor

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Adoption and the Human Factor

Everybody loves progress but nobody likes change

From fortune cookie opened in Blacksburg 9/9/13

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Silvopasture

Unique and Complex Set of Considerations
Landowners, Resource Professionals, Policy Makers and Funders
Silvopasture
Unique and Complex Set of Considerations
Landowners, Resource Professionals, Policy Makers and Funders

Focus primarily on landowners and adoption
But also the role of professionals
What we know and is underway

what landowners know and need; how professionals can help those that are interested or have adopted; and what is happening presently in Virginia and beyond

Awareness and interest
Perceived benefits and challenges
Needs of adopters and potential adopters
Initiatives
Agroforestry?

Silvopasture?
Forest Farming?
Alley Cropping? etc.

Awareness is low

Landowners, agricultural specialists, foresters, policy-makers, and so on (Williams et al. 1997; Lassoie and Buck 2000)

In the South, silvopasture falls out in middle to bottom in terms of understanding and practice (Workman et al. 2004)

However! 40% are interested in learning more and it tends to be one of the more commonly referenced agroforestry practices
Notable progress in temperate systems in the past 20 years
Production and conservation
Awareness and adoption are some of the biggest hurdles
5% target – matching the practice to the practitioner
More research needed

Agroforestry Basic Science

Photo courtesy of John Fike
Landowners

Who is interested and why?
What do they think?
What do they need?

**Less Interested** (Arbuckle et al. 2009)

- absentee owners
- non-operators
- older farmers
- tenant farmers

**More interested** (Raedeke 2003; Workman et al. 2005)

- multiple objective owners
- new producers
- intergenerational forest grazers
Landowners

Who is interested and why?
What do they think?
What do they need?

Why? (Workman and Nair 2002; Arbuckle et al. 2009)

Another income stream compatible with livestock
More completely utilize fertilizer inputs and reduce nutrient losses
Avoid regulation for non-point source pollution
Adding small animals to diversified systems (Workman and Nair 2002)
Aesthetics and wildlife
Forestry experience
Landowners

Who is interested and why?

What do they think?

What do they need?

Stewardship and satisfaction prized as a strength, followed by diversification of income and risk reduction (Srestha et al. 2004)

Opportunities

wildlife and environmental conservation (Workman and Nair 2002)

farm buffer

long-term income

Challenges

soil quality and regulation (Srestha et al. 2004)

complexity and infrastructure

culture and time
Landowners

Who is interested and why?
What do they think?
What do they need?

Recent study in VA found perceived risk to be the most influential factor driving interest in agroforestry systems (Trozzo et al. in press)
Landowners

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Livestock operators more likely to emphasize production objectives in terms of “making the case”

Were not altogether averse to the idea of using trees

Made it clear they are keen on understanding the costs and benefits
Landowners

Who is interested and why?
What do they think?
What do they need?

Potential Adopters

Know something

Awareness
How-to
Principles
Landowners

Who is interested and why?
What do they think?
What do they need?

Potential Adopters

Have a reason
Relative advantage
Compatibility
Complexity
Trialability
Observability
Landowners

Who is interested and why?
What do they think?
What do they need?

Adopters

Have a reason to stick with it
Payoffs and markets
Adaptation and consistent technical support
Sense of relevance
Landowners

Who is interested and why?
What do they think?
What do they need?

Requests and Ideas

Demonstrations
Active training
Budget examples
Interaction with resource professionals
Peer-to-peer education
Networking
Professionals

Need to know more also (Workman et al. 2005)

Only just over half even recognized the term

Impacts potentially big but many programs are just starting (Jacobson and Karr 2013)

Not many states with active Extension and private or public consulting

Old adage holds true, the right fit is still influenced by contact
Initiatives

Drivers are diverse globally
(Cubbage et al. 2012)

Benefits and fit are possible

Workman, S. W. and P. K. R. Nair "Agroforestry and Farm Diversification in the Southeastern United States."