



North Berkeley
WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Invest in Living

IMPACT

HIGHLIGHT REPORT

MARCH 2021

Cultivating Systemic Change

Part II: Soil Health and Societal Health

Certified



Corporation

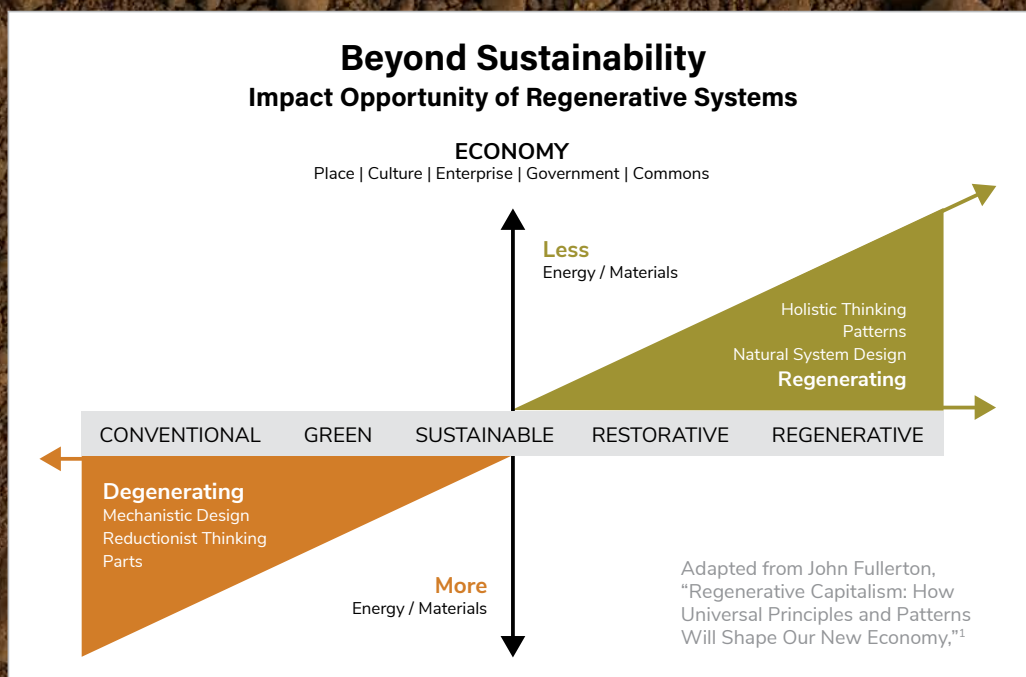
Soil Health and Societal Health are Intertwined

Impact investing creates innovative pathways for capital to support key stakeholders in a shared economy where people, planet, and profit are so intertwined. In our previous impact highlight report, **Cultivating Systemic Change, Part I**, we discussed efforts to eliminate harmful chemicals from our food system through shareholder resolutions. While these efforts take time, collaboration, and persistence, the outcome is improved microbial diversity of farmland, increased crop production, and healthier food for consumers.

The challenges are diverse, and so the solutions must be diverse as well. Another set of efforts for creating food security is stewardship of land for permanent, healthy food production and increased diversity of people who can farm in sustainable or regenerative ways. The process of launching a sustainable farm or converting to organic requires capital. Thus, it can create an opportunity for investors to align their financial resources with their values and desire to positively impact the planet.

Small farm owners understand how intertwined their livelihood is with nature, a connection often less visible to the end consumer. Increasingly, farmers are adopting regenerative principles to mitigate climate change, improve soil health, and build community resilience. Investment in regenerative agriculture practices is another way to help create a more circular economy. Such a system leaves fewer stakeholders behind, requires fewer inputs (what produces a crop), and brings together the wellbeing of the farmers (workers), soil health (planet), and production of healthy food (consumers).

Our latest impact highlight report explores **Iroquois Valley Farmland REIT**, a private investment that provides capital to support this interconnection between soil and society.



Impact Spotlight



Iroquois Valley Farmland REIT is one example of how investors are supporting the slow and circular nature of change.

This organic farmland finance company provides organic farmers with land security and financing through long-term leases, mortgages, and lines of credit. Since being founded in 2007, they have directed more than \$70 million in organic agriculture investments into 75+ farms in 15 states comprising nearly 14,000 acres.

Iroquois Valley partners primarily with established organic farmers as they take on new acreage to transition to organic.

Understanding Soil Health

Iroquois Valley takes a system-based approach to soil health, recognizing that soil health principles work together to maintain and improve soil function, and aims for continuous improvement over time. Iroquois Valley's operations strive to improve soil health through seven principles.



Adapted from Iroquois Valley Farmland REIT [website](#)¹



The Long Game: Deep, Diverse Roots

The characteristics of this private investment mean that it is not appropriate for all investors. How they measure their impact and create positive change offers valuable lessons to all investors.

In farming, deep roots are one key to solid production and longevity. In communities, the ability for diverse groups of people to put down roots has a similar impact. Communities grow stronger when members of that community – including historically disadvantaged groups – find meaningful work and produce a valuable product, such as healthy organic food.

Iroquois Valley is committed to diversity in operations, geography, practices, and by farmer. The majority of the portfolio supports multi-generational farms, 70% of which include women as part of the on-farm decision-making team.

Circular Impact

Many of the farms in the Iroquois Valley family practice some form of a regenerative farming system. These are holistic systems that aim to measurably improve biodiversity, soil health, and farmer profitability.²

More nutrient-dense soil leads to more nutritious food, and when certified as USDA organic, farmers can command higher prices in the market. Major brands, like General Mills and Kellogg's, have taken note as consumers lead the way demanding healthier foods. Greater demand for organic products supports more farmers to make the transition and starts the virtuous circle again.



The concept of long-term planning, a concept we use frequently with our clients, has been known by farming communities with a deep appreciation for sustainable agriculture. It feels fitting to conclude with the following quote used by Iroquois Valley Farmland REIT:

“In every deliberation, we must consider the impact on the seventh generation”

Iroquois Confederacy, Great Law of Peace³

Iroquois Valley Farmland REIT BY THE NUMBERS

CROP DIVERSITY

as of 2020 crop year

Multi-Year Crop Rotations..... 76%

Includes grains, legumes, and hay

Pastured Dairy..... 14%

Fully grass-fed; some grain feeding

Pastured Livestock 7%

Produce + Specialty Crops..... 3%

Hazelnuts, elderberries & aronia berries

CONSERVATION

data represents survey of 15 farmers
in the IVF portfolio in 2020

Cover Crops..... 100%

Tracking Soil

Organic Matter..... 100%

Practiced Reduced / No Till ... 80%

FARMERS

Women Farmers..... 71%

Women involved in farm decision-making

Repeat Investments..... 54%

Repeat investments within IQVF leased
and mortgage portfolio

Millennial Farmers..... 56%

Invested \$46M in young farmers, providing land
access to 6,603 acres.

Generational Support 40%

Farmers working with the next generation to
directly support farmland transfer.

Impact Story

Janie's Farm

Harold Wilken is a 4th generation farmer in Iroquois County, Illinois, and a 1st generation organic farmer. Harold began farming conventionally but switched to organic after he developed health problems that led him to reconsider the use of chemicals on his farm. Janie's Farm is now one of the largest diversified organic farms in Illinois.³ Harold's son, Ross, has joined him in the operation where they grow a wide variety of edible and heirloom grains and beans interplanted with cover crops.

When Harold successfully transitioned his existing operation to organic, he began looking for additional acreage to expand. He has diversified his operation over the years, partially by working with the University of Illinois to conduct on-farm research of ancient and hybrid wheat breeds. Some of these varietals have proved viable, and Harold introduced them to his rotation. Chicago-area bakeries took notice and began sourcing flour from Janie's Farm. With the support of bakeries, Harold built a mill to process organic grains, which began operating in 2017. Janie's Mill is one of the only organic flour mills in its area and serves as important infrastructure for the growing population of organic farmers in the region.

How Iroquois Valley Farmland REIT Helped Janie's Farm

Harold is Iroquois Valley's first farmer. He brought the first land opportunities to the company in 2007 and helping them with their mission to provide secure farmland tenure a reality. Iroquois Valley has since reinvested in the Wilken family by purchasing additional acreage for both Ross and Harold. Reinvesting has allowed them to continue growing and diversifying their operation.



Impact Investing Services

North Berkeley Wealth Management works with clients to align their financial lives and investment portfolios with their values. We offer multiple impact oriented strategies, and consider the social, environmental, and corporate governance (ESG) criteria of investments alongside returns. These services are part of the personalized and progressive wealth management experience that supports our clients.

Visit Our Website

northberkeleywealth.com

Sources

- ¹ Soil Wealth: Investing in Regenerative Agriculture across Asset Classes. [Croatan Institute](#)
- ² Soil Health. [Iroquois Valley Farmland](#)
- ³ How the Iroquois Great Law of Peace Shaped U.S. Democracy. [KQED](#)
- ⁴ Regenerative Agriculture Takes Root Among Food Manufacturers. [Proxy Preview](#)
- ⁵ Janie's Farm Profile. [Iroquois Valley Farmland](#)