

Resilient Agriculture: Cultivating Food Systems for a Changing Climate

Laura Lengnick

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Climate change presents an unprecedented challenge to the productivity and profitability of agriculture in North America. More variable weather, drought, and flooding create the most obvious damage, but hot summer nights, warmer winters, longer growing seasons, and other environmental changes have more subtle but far-reaching effects on plant and livestock growth and development.

Resilient Agriculture recognizes the critical role that sustainable agriculture will play in the coming decades and beyond. The latest science on climate risk, resilience, and climate change adaptation is blended with the personal experience of farmers and ranchers to explore:

- The "strange changes" in weather recorded over the last decade
- The associated shifts in crop and livestock behavior
- The actions producers have taken to maintain productivity in a changing climate

The climate change challenge is real and it is here now. To enjoy the sustained production of food, fiber, and fuel well into the twenty-first century, we must begin now to make changes that will enhance the adaptive capacity and resilience of North American agriculture. The rich knowledge base presented in *Resilient Agriculture* is poised to serve as the cornerstone of an evolving, climate-ready food system.

Laura Lengnick is a researcher, policymaker, activist, educator, and farmer whose work explores the community-enhancing potential of agriculture and food systems. She directs the academic program in sustainable agriculture at Warren Wilson College and was a lead author of the report *Climate Change and Agriculture in the United States: Effects and Adaptation*.



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