

Alternative Visions of the Future: Using Land to Promote Regional Prosperity

**Mary Holmes
MKH Consulting**

This panel offers some relatively new ideas for how to create jobs and businesses, new housing, and stronger communities while at the same time preserving farmland, restoring water quality, and natural habitats.

Entrepreneurial Farmers As a Component of Regional Prosperity

**Amalie Lipstreu
Program Coordinator
The Farmland Center**

Communities that invest in agricultural entrepreneurs benefit by jobs, protecting local sources and saving farmland. Contrary to the idea that farmland in the region is past its prime, many people are seeing their future in farming that utilizes innovation, keen business skills and connecting with urban and suburban residents. By tailoring production to growing consumer demand for local and differentiated products, by adding value to agricultural products and diversification production, these entrepreneurs are increasing their profitability, keeping dollar circulating in their communities and keeping land in agricultural production.

The businesses that provide products and services for agricultural producers can stay profitable and employ local residents and farmers who diversify often add employees to their payroll. Consumers have an alternative to “factory grade” foods and agricultural products. The quality of life that open space and agricultural land provide is a component of prosperity not to be overlooked. In creating and maintaining a prosperous region our green infrastructure is a critical asset.