

# Regenerative momentum

## How should the organic sector respond?

Paul Holmbeck

World Board member,

IFOAM - Organics International

**IFOAM Organics Europe Meets Business**

November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022



**REGENERATIVE ORGANIC FARMING PROJECT**

We are growing the regenerative organic farming movement in the UK with research, testing and education.



**PepsiCo's Positive Agriculture Ambition Aims to Deliver Impact for the Planet & People by 2030**



Healthy soil grows sustainable ingredients, which improve livelihoods



**REGEN AGRICULTURE**



**REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE**

Living soils for healthy food

# REGENERATE AMERICA ™

SOIL IS OUR COMMON GROUND



# Scaling Regenerative Food Systems as a Climate Solution

Saturday, November 12 | 14:00–15:30 EET  
Food Systems Pavilion



United Nations  
Climate Change



BMW Foundation  
Herbert Quandt

## REGENERATIVE INNOVATION TO HELP ADDRESS CLIMATE CRISIS

12 November 2022

UN Climate Change Global Innovation Hub (Blue Zone)

## REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE SOLUTIONS DAY 2

A MULTIPURPOSE SOLUTION FOR  
CLIMATE, HUNGER, BIODIVERSITY  
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

NOVEMBER 13, 2022

17.00-19.00 Networking & Dinner  
19.00-21.00 Solutions Dialogues



By invitation.  
RSVP to apply.

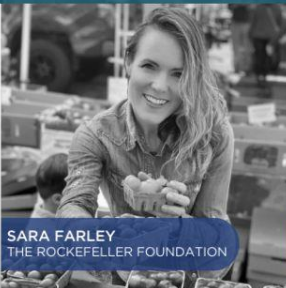
[www.futureeconomy.forum](http://www.futureeconomy.forum)



MARTINA FLECKENSTEIN  
WWF INTERNATIONAL



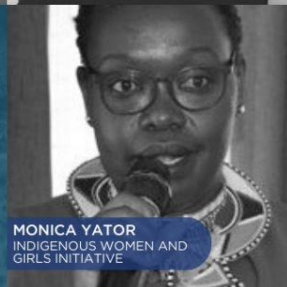
SASWATI BORA  
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY



SARA FARLEY  
THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION



LEE RECHT  
ALEPH FARMS



MONICA YATOR  
INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND  
GIRLS INITIATIVE



ERTHARIN COUSIN  
FOOD SYSTEMS  
FOR THE FUTURE



JOSEPHINE OKOJIE  
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE WRITERS  
ORGANISATION OF NIGERIA

DANI  
FOOD

COP27 EVENING SOLUTIONS DIALOGUES  
SHARM EL-SHEIKH, EGYPT



# Regenerative Agenda setting: Agribusiness Task Force 2022

- 12 leading food sector actors including Mars, Pepsico, Bayer and the Sustainable Food Trust
- Goal: make regenerative the predominant agricultural system globally
- Effort to align philanthropy, government policy, finance sector and all actors in supply chain to make regen lucrative for farmers
- Action plans for all these actors
- “No time to wait for a definition.”
- No transformative agenda.





And now  
....regenerative products

Foto: civileats.com



**NETFLIX**

# KISS THE GROUND

## Kiss the Ground

2020 | TV-G | 1h 24m | Documentaries

Science experts and celebrity activists unpack the ways in which the earth's soil may be the key to combating climate change and preserving the planet.

Starring: Woody Harrelson







**BEFORE**

Jan 2021



NEW BREAKTHROUGH  
**A CURE FOR  
CLIMATE CHANGE**



**AFTER**

Jan 2022

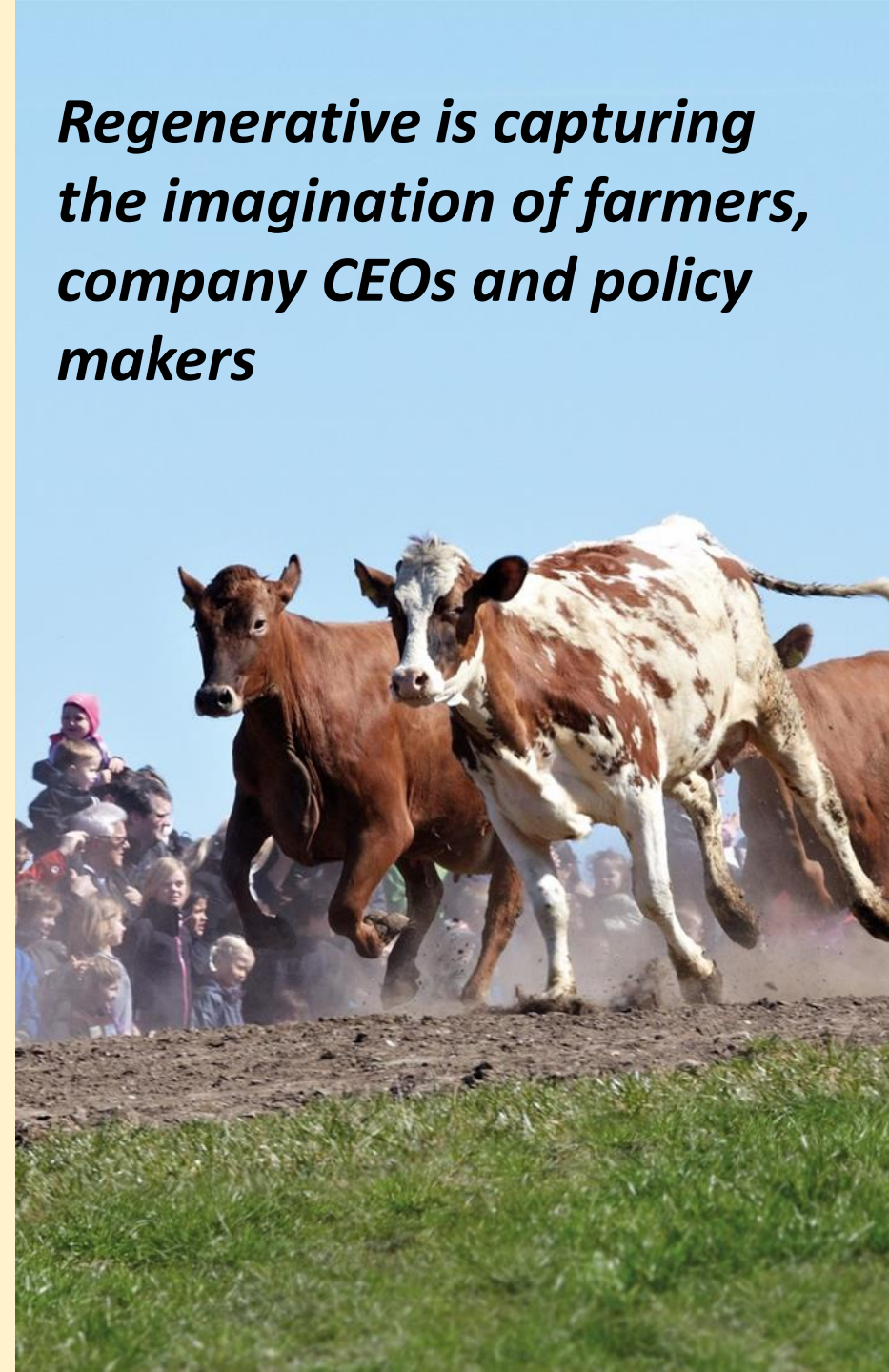
## Nestlé unveils plans to support the transition to a regenerative food system



# A Stampede: Why does regenerative have momentum globally?

- ✓ Regeneration feels right. Goals and craftsmanship targeting soil health, natural grazing, biodiversity and carbon draw-down resonate with farmers.
- ✓ Lack of clear definitions make it easy for corporate interests to re-brand and take steps for sustainability without changing too much.
- ✓ Carbon credit gold rush as model for eco-payments
- ✓ Science: many practices **are** helpful in addressing crises in climate, biodiversity. Positive focus on **outcomes**.
- ✓ Strong communication, emotionally and aesthetically – focused on planetary renewal & climate in balance

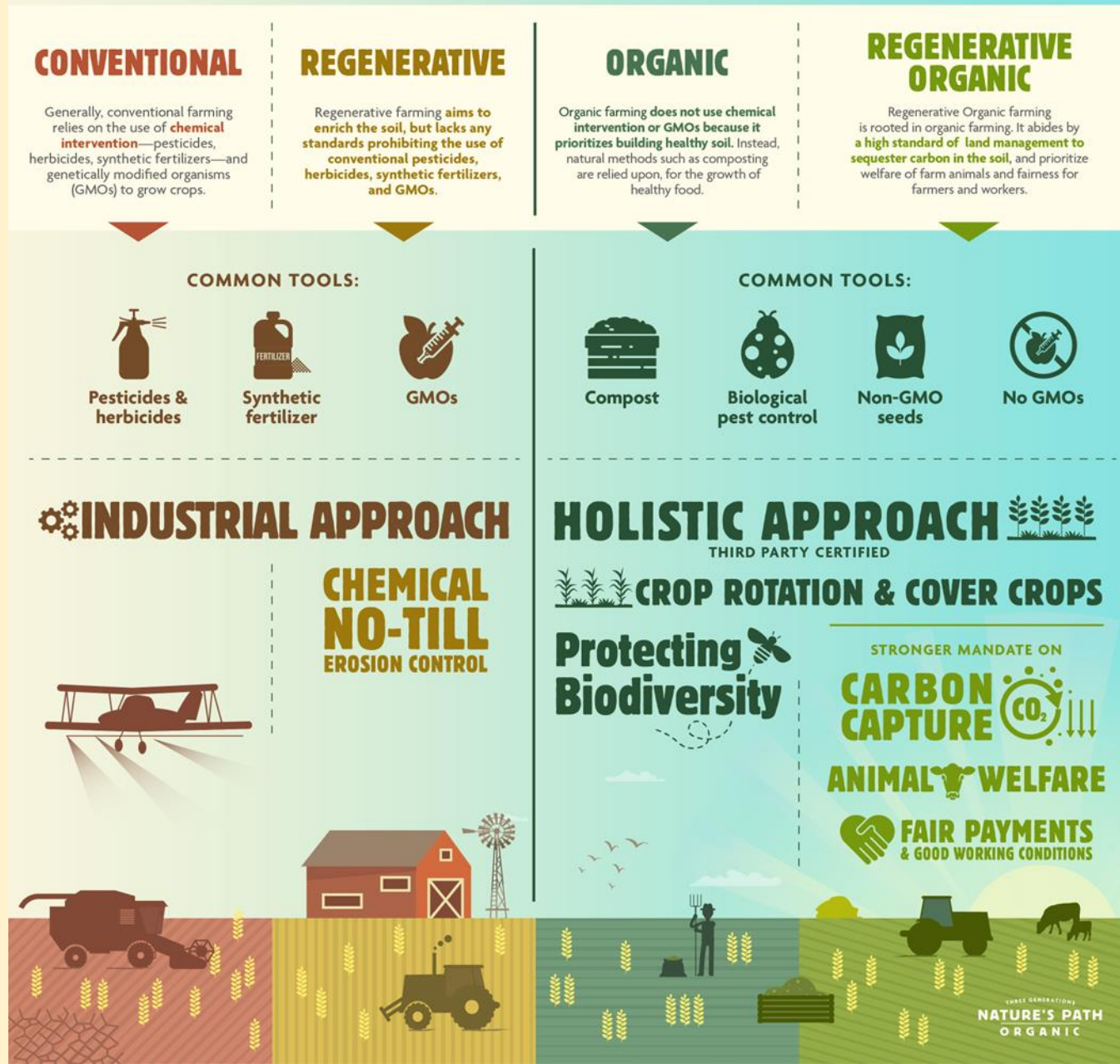
*Regenerative is capturing the imagination of farmers, company CEOs and policy makers*



# “Regenerative” also has some serious problems

- ❖ Lack of definition allows greenwashing: exploiting ambiguity, continued use of pesticides and misleading narratives
- ❖ Bad company – firms risk loss of goodwill due to less credible actors
- ❖ Challenges with communication to consumers – and perception of value.
- ❖ False claims of “beyond organic” – based on comparing regen *aspirations* to organic *minimum standards*.

## DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO FOOD AND FARMING



# Is regenerative a problem for organic?

- Not the people. We should embrace serious regen actors as allies, working for the same goals of healthy soil, C-drawdown, biodiversity.
- Not the practices.
- But regenerative competes for the “sustainable alternative” space in retail, food companies and among philanthropists and -- increasingly -- policy makers. This is a problem.
- Organic is the first and only legally defined regenerative farming system.



**Regenerative  
Organic  
Certified™**



**RODALE**  
INSTITUTE™

**patagonia®**



**Farm like the world depends on it.**



Regenerative  
Organic  
Certified™

# Brands Bringing ROC™ to Consumers



# IFOAM Organics Europe: *Regenerative goals and practices are at the heart of organic*

- ❖ Seek collaboration with serious regenerative actors, with shared goals.
- ❖ Call out greenwashing in regenerative claims (in market, media & policy circles)
- ❖ Position organic in the market as *the* alternative to conventional food
- ❖ Advocate for use of “regenerative” for systemic change only, not just practices
- ❖ In the market, use of “regenerative” should have organic standards as minimum
- ❖ Better communication on *values and aspirations*, not only *standards* of organic



# IFOAM Organics Europe:

- ❖ Continuously develop organic practices and include best regenerative practices
- ❖ Explore and promote more *outcome-oriented, practical documentation tools* for organic benefits, as a basis for payments for farm eco-services and as a tool for organic farm improvement, communications and policy initiatives
- ❖ Increase focus on the organic principle of Fairness, which is lacking in RA, to improve food sovereignty, cooperative ownership, and a fair sharing of risks and rewards of organic production



**ORGANIC  
A PART OF  
THE SOLUTION**

## **Be First**

**With policy and  
partnerships in retail  
& supply chain**

## **Be Partners**

**Work together with  
serious regen actors**

## **Be Fair**

**Launch new tools for  
fair pricing/risk sharing  
differentiating organics**

## **Be Proud**

**Speak up about the  
regenerative value of  
organics**

## **Be ambitious**

**Develop organic  
production for  
climate, soil, nature**

## **Be inspiring**

**Communicate with  
heart about what we  
are FOR**

**All have a role  
to play --  
To keep  
organic in  
front**

# Regenerative as inspiration for organic *communication*



**A landscape aesthetic**

# A soil aesthetic



**And a soil story.....**

***REGENERATIVE organic farming helps build healthy soil which is one of the most effective ways to fight climate change, all while providing people with healthy nutritious food.***

***For us the solution is in the soil.***





# A2/A2 ORGANIC MILK

A2/A2 Organic Milk From  
America's First Certified Regenerative Dairy

[OUR STORY](#)

## OUR COMMITMENT TO HEALTH STARTS IN THE SOIL

When it comes to growing quality grass, 'nourishing the soil that nourishes us' is our first priority.

[LEARN MORE](#)

**Organic producer speaking about soil.....**

**Our climate efforts start in the soil. And our health.**

**“Nourishing the soil that nourishes us”**

# Simple messaging and graphics

Alexandre  
FAMILY FARM™

A2/A2 ▾

**CARBON SEQUESTERING MIRACLES OF GRASSLANDS AND RANGELANDS**

Grass and vegetation pull carbon from the atmosphere during photosynthesis, storing it in a biomass made up of leaves, stems, and roots.

As plants grow taller, their roots grow deeper and carbon gets stored deeper into the soil.

When plants are grazed, the roots slough off and decompose, storing atmospheric carbon as particulate organic matter in the soil.

Carbon sequestration greatly improves the soil quality over time. Because tilling the soil releases carbon back into the atmosphere, this process is most effective when you allow cows and other animals to graze the grass.

Alexandre  
FAMILY FARM™

Explaining how grass and grazing turns hated CO<sub>2</sub> into an ally.

Helping the climate.

Giving a soil that can withstand heavy rain and drought—something we will have more of with climate change.

Some call it regenerative.  
We just call it organic.




**Take the soil agenda to journalists and buyers  
—showing what organics does for healthy soil.  
And what it means for climate.**



An aerial photograph of a lush green landscape featuring terraced rice fields. The terraces are arranged in a stepped pattern across a hillside. Some terraces are covered in vibrant green rice plants, while others are in different stages of cultivation, including some with white plastic mulch and others with rows of young plants. A few small, traditional houses with tiled roofs are scattered throughout the fields. The overall scene is a mix of natural greenery and human agricultural activity.

There is transformative power in the  
“regenerative” idea and mindset  
“We” understand organic as  
regenerative. Others see regenerative  
as a new thing.

Foto: Ivan Bandura



**There is a real risk that leading corporate, NGO and philanthropic interests set (co-opt) an attractive but diffuse “regenerative” agenda drawing farmers, policy, funding streams and market focus away from real food systems change.**

An aerial photograph of a terraced coffee plantation on a hillside. The terraces are arranged in a grid-like pattern, with rows of coffee plants and paths. The background shows a dense forest of trees. The text is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image.

**We must set a  
*transformative*  
organic agenda**



Promote organic as the most credible foundation for regenerative farming, policy, corporate branding *and* product claims

Support widespread use of regenerative *practices everywhere.*

Insist that the term “regenerative *agriculture*” requires systemic change—including fairness--and not just farm practices.

In policy, market and philanthropic arenas where “regenerative” has momentum, ensure inclusion of organic as regenerative

Foto: Thisse



*Thanks for  
Listening!*