

# Picture this.



## **You're a farmer or rancher.**

Large farm, small farm, doesn't matter. A string of crappy minivans raises a plume of dust as they turn from the rural lane into your drive. The vehicles stop and disgorge their occupants. You knew they were coming.

You're that farmer or rancher. *And you're smiling.*

These vehicles aren't filled with dread or fear. Not bankers nor gub'mint agents. Instead, they are filled with hope—half a dozen energetic and energizing young scientists who are not scientists, at least not based on a traditional definition. They may not have an advanced degree in soil science, botany or entomology. But they care about your farm, just as they care about the other farms they have already visited that day, that week, that month.

This enthusiastic bunch isn't there to tell you how to grow crops or animals. "Knowledge speaks, but wisdom listens."\* They want to hear your stories

and see your farm, they want to hear how long you've been farming, why you farm, how and where you sell the food you are growing.

Their interest, their questions, their patient listening, offer you hope because you realize that someone actually cares about the effort you put in to produce the food that feeds your family, your community and, ultimately, the world.

Stories told, the attention of these young scientists shifts. They are here for serious business. They hammer stainless steel probes into your soil, sweep the foliage of your field with insect nets, measure the vegetation—both crop and weeds—covering the soil, scan the field margin and fencerow for the presence of birds. The data they collect will tell about the health of your farm, adding to the picture they are painting of agriculture, not just its current practice but how it could be practiced in the future, using regenerative principles.

# “They are here for serious business.”



**This same scenario is playing out four to five hundred times this summer**, on 20-acre farms tucked away in the Applegate Valley of Oregon to 20,000-acre ranches in the Big Sky of Montana.

Many of the farms are owned and operated by women, others by underrepresented minorities. Each of those farms and ranches contributes to the massive database of this experiment that is one part simple and one part audacious. The simplicity is determining which farming practices offer incremental gains in the health of a farm’s soil and the farm’s profitability, offering a roadmap for growers to adopt regenerative practices that enhance the soil and the food the soil produces.

The audacity is conducting this experiment on a thousand farms across the country, to offer a vision for the future of agriculture and of production of healthy food from healthy soil on healthy farms, and to offer hope. The young agroecologists who descend on the farms nationwide represent hope to many growers, hope for the future of agriculture.

That is the work of the Ecdysis Foundation, with our teams of energetic and energizing young scientists. That is the work you are supporting, hearing the stories of growers and giving them hope.

**That is the future you are helping to create through your funding.**

*\* Quote attributed to J. Hendrix*



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