

Nature and Farming: Sustaining Native Biodiversity in Agricultural Landscapes. By David Norton and Nick Reid. 2013. CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, Victoria, Australia. 304 p. AU\$69.95. paperback. ISBN 978-0-6431032-5-2. (Also available as an e-book.)

Nature and Farming serves as an introduction to the interface between natural landscapes, with their particular biodiversity, and more intensively managed agricultural production sites. While works exist that are focused on the importance of preserving native species, and other works focus on farm species diversity and production, the authors have provided readers with both theoretical foundations and practical examples of the value of paying closer attention to the effect of higher intensity production on local diversity. Their approach balances the importance of biodiversity conservation and the needs of “production-dominated landscapes.”

The structure of the book is such that a wide audience can benefit from it. Producers will understand what biodiversity means in their particular ecosystem, and why it can and does change because of human activity. Conservationists will learn about the nature of production systems, and real examples of how agricultural systems can be used to promote biodiversity. Policy makers will learn foundational terminology and theory, as well as higher-level policy decisions that can result in biodiversity protection *and* producer commitment.

The text itself is full of photos of species mentioned, examples of activities impacting biodiversity, cropping techniques, landscape patterns, figures from research, and various tables. The tables in particular are quite informative in their own right and perform the service of connecting theoretical descriptions with both natural ecosystem and production system examples. For instance, a table titled “Farming systems classified according to the longevity, growth form and origins of the dominant plant species, and source of water for production” is an excellent synthesis of information that gives audiences a broad yet concise overview of kinds of agricultural production. Because the authors have extensive experience in Australia and New Zealand, their use of species from their respective regions may not resonate with readers outside those countries. It may have been somewhat helpful to reference the scientific names throughout the text, but it is doubtful that that inclusion would aid the majority of the possible readers of the book. The content and thrust of the book does not suffer if audiences are unfamiliar with the species that are referenced, in this reviewer’s opinion.

This book is equal parts policy education, conservation theory, and practical application. The latter part of the book consists of case studies under the headings “Programs and approaches for biodiversity conservation,” “Approaches to managing biodiversity on the ground,” and “Property case studies.” These sections move from broad categories of farm-related conservation to case studies of particular producers and practices from a variety of agriculture sectors.

The final chapters encourage implementation of the book’s ideas in a very encouraging manner. The authors call upon farmers to use their ability to innovate, their knowledge of locale, and their influence over the land to make a conscious decision to encourage biodiversity in their ecosystems. In a time when conservation issues are polarizing, the authors do a commendable job in communicating straightforward principles, reasons, and ways for the agricultural sector to play a key role in influencing biodiversity for good.

The book does reference rangelands, but the emphasis is generally more on cropping systems, and more intensively managed pastures. What *Nature and Farming* offers to range managers is a concise introduction to the management and recognition of biodiversity profiles for differing ecosystems as well as outlining the biodiversity-promoting activities and management practices that regularly occur on rangelands managed well.

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