

## **Regenerative Organic Principle: Context** *Working in the Grey* **Place-Based and Person-Based Considerations**

### Overview

The Context Principle acknowledges that each farm has its own unique and distinct circumstances and characteristics. Context includes production and financial goals and objectives, historical production factors, ecological parameters (both current and historical), community dynamics (family, neighbors, friends, vendors, lenders, etc.), and philosophical beliefs. It stresses the importance of tailoring decisions and practices to fit these specific conditions and goals. This principle highlights that regenerative organic agriculture isn't a black-and-white approach; it involves navigating the grey areas and adapting to the complexities of each unique situation. There is no single right way, just the way that is right for you. Farmers must consider both place based and person-based factors to support the health of their farm.

### Why Context Is Important

Understanding the Principle of Context in regenerative organic agriculture is crucial because it acknowledges the interconnectedness of various factors within an agricultural system. For example, crop(s) selection affects soil health, which in turn impacts farm productivity. By considering their specific circumstances, producers can make well-informed decisions that align with their individual goals and ensure that every aspect of their operations work together effectively, fostering a thriving and resilient agricultural system.

### Questions for Farmers to Determine Their Context:

#### Soil Health and Management:

- What are the key indicators of soil health I want/need to monitor, and how can I improve and maintain soil health to benefit both current crops and future generations?

#### Biodiversity and Ecosystem:

- How can I enhance biodiversity on my farm to create a balanced and resilient ecosystem, and what long-term strategies can I implement to support and preserve it?"

#### Climate Resilience and Adaptation:

- Which soil management practices will help my farm withstand changing weather conditions, and how can I adapt my farming practices to build and ensure resilience against future climate changes?

#### Farming Practices and Techniques:

- Which regenerative practices can provide immediate benefits while sustainably enhancing my farm's productivity over time?

#### Grazing and Livestock Management:

- How can I design a grazing plan that maximizes pasture recovery and soil fertility while maintaining land health and productivity in the future?

Crop Rotation and Diversification:

- What crop rotation practices can improve soil fertility and reduce pest issues while diversifying my crops to enhance the farm's resilience and sustainability?

Economic Goals:

- What are my financial goals to ensure my farm is profitable?

Community Dynamics and Support:

- How can I engage my community and build partnerships to promote regenerative organic farming?
- What capacity does my farm team have to implement new practices and support farm operations?

Personal Priorities:

- What decisions do I need to make to balance farming with maintaining a healthy family life?
- What should I consider given my current stage of life?

Example:

Farmer A: I use rotational grazing to improve pasture health, tailored to my livestock and land management style.

Farmer B: I don't have livestock, so I support soil health by spreading manure and compost, and I practice crop rotation to manage pests and improve soil structure, fitting my crop needs and available resources.

Sources

1. Knight, R. (2024). ROO Session 6 - Digging Into Metrics With Ruth (Youtube Video). Canadian Organic Growers. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8l71\\_NJmx4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a8l71_NJmx4)
2. Karas, S. (n.d.). Know Your Context. California State University Chico. <https://www.csuchico.edu/regenerativeagriculture/blog/context.shtml>
3. Ingleby Farms. (n.d.). Principles of regenerative agriculture. <https://inglebyfarms.com/farming-with-nature/principles-of-regenerative-agriculture/#principle5>
4. Understanding Ag. (n.d.). The 6-3-4TM Explained. <https://understandingag.com/the-6-3-4tm-explained/#:~:text=The%20Rule%20of%20Disruption%20refers,system%2C%20recipe%2C%20or%20formula.>
5. Williams, A. (n.d.). With Regenerative Agriculture, Context is Everything. Noble Research Institute. <https://www.noble.org/regenerative-agriculture/with-regenerative-agriculture-context-is-everything/>