The Components of Sustainable Agriculture
1. Economic sustainability

- The challenge of farm economics as we enter the 21st century is to help farmers build a more sustainable agriculture.

- The environmental and social benefits of sustainable production methods do not always translate into economic gains.

- It depends on the farmer’s management strengths or weaknesses, decision making abilities, and marketing skills.
• Economic sustainability requires selecting profitable enterprises and doing comprehensive financial planning.
Indicators of economic sustainability

The family savings or net worth is consistently going up and the family debt is consistently going down.

- The farm enterprise is consistently profitable from year to year.
- Purchase of off-farm feed and fertilizer is decreasing.
- Reliance on government payments is decreasing.
The important criteria of economic sustainability:

✓ The profitability of farming cannot be sustained through exploitation of the land or exploitation of other people.

✓ It must conserve and protect the natural resources upon which its long run productivity must depend.
It must contribute to the social and cultural quality of life for farm families and rural residents as it provides an adequate supply of safe and healthy food and fiber for society in general.
Trade-offs between environmental and profitability effects offer a helpful way to think about environmental values without relying on direct monetary measures.

Environmental-profitability trade-off analysis involves two measures:

- An **environmental one and a profitability one**. Usually the environmental measure is in physical units (e.g., mass or density units), while the profitability one is in monetary units (e.g., revenues, costs, or net returns).
Mapping alternative practices or policies by these two criteria can show which ones are "efficient" in the sense of giving the best profitability for a given level of environmental performance, or the best environmental outcome at a given profitability level.
2. Social Sustainability

- The farm supports other businesses and families in the community.
- Money circulate within the local economy.
- The number of rural families is going up or holding steady.
- Young people take over their parents' farms and continue farming.
- College graduates return to the community after graduation.