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**Farming with the Wild: Enhancing Biodiversity on Farms and Ranches.**

Text by Daniel Imhoff, design by Roberto Carra. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2003. 182 pp. Photographs, map, bibliography, notes, index. \$29.95 paper.

Cross a grain crop with a wild perennial, and we frequently get a big, bold plant that combines many of the best features of its parents. *Farming with the Wild* is a cross between a coffee-table book, a travelogue, and an agroecology textbook. A big, bold hybrid, its layout and photography are elegant and striking. The text is information-dense, yet largely free of technical jargon. Unlike its cousin, editor Andrew Kimbrell's *Fatal Harvest* (2002), this is an upbeat book focusing on success stories rather than the grim global outlook for both agriculture and wildlife.

The first sections chronicle Dan Imhoff and Roberto Carra's search for wildlife-friendly farmers and ranchers in twenty U.S. states, Mexico, and Chile. Chapters provide case-studies of about three dozen such producers, cooperative ventures, or research organizations. From beef produced by pulsed grazing in the Southwest, to salad greens grown in passive solar organic greenhouses in the Northeast, Imhoff and Carra discovered examples of landscapes providing both habitat and human food.

Of particular relevance for the grain-growing regions of the Great Plains, several case studies reveal that even carving out slivers of cropland for native vegetation benefits wildlife. The tilled acreage that remains can also support a surprising amount of biodiversity, provided steps are taken to reduce tillage, increase crop diversity, improve soil quality, and restrict the use of pesticides. Pockets of the Great Plains remain as rangeland potentially invaluable as wildlife habitat. Profiled in the book are innovative ranchers whose cattle operations are compatible with wildlife, including "predators."

Hybridizing literary forms, like hybridizing plant species, can be exciting and can generate something novel, like *Farming with the Wild*. The old forms exist, however, because they are well adapted for some particular niche. What is this book's niche? Despite its "Getting Started" final section, the book is not detailed enough to serve as a manual for actual farmers, but not glossy enough for most coffee tables. Academics will find editors Dana Jackson and Laura Jackson's *The Farm as Natural Habitat* (2002) a more rigorous scientific treatment of the principles involved in wildlife-compatible agriculture. A textbook? The literature is sparsely cited and there are few statistics or diagrams. A tool for persuasion? Perhaps, but "hard-headed"

economist types who view wildlife as irrational and unnecessary may not be convinced; it helps to come to the book already believing in the intrinsic value of wildlife.

*Farming with the Wild* is a visually compelling, readable volume that clearly and broadly surveys the innovations of optimistic and nature-loving farmers and researchers. I want to recommend it; I'm just struggling to identify exactly to whom. **David L. Van Tassel**, *The Land Institute, Salina, Kansas*.