Biomass Standards

Workshop on Incorporating Bioenergy into Sustainable Landscape Design

4-6 March, 2014

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Background: International Standards

What is a standard?

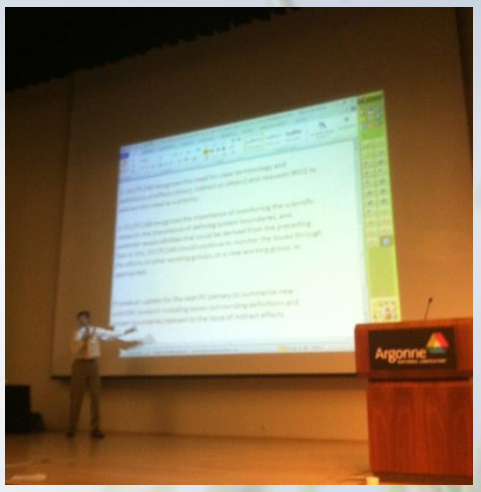
- A standard is a document that
  - Provides requirements, specifications
  - Sets forth guidelines
  - Can be used to ensure consistent and appropriate
    - Materials,
    - Products
    - Processes
    - Services

Why develop standards?

- Comparable assessment
- Help ensure products and services are "fit for purpose"
- Reduce costs by minimizing waste and errors; increasing productivity
- ***Facilitate free and fair global trade***
  - Access to new markets
  - Level the playing field for new entrants

Source: adapted from www.ios.org

Research challenges for consistent measures of LUC



- Accurate representations based on clear **definitions** for variables and conditions of concern:
  - land attributes
  - management practices
  - baseline trends and change dynamics
- **Causal analysis** that can be validated at multiple scales
- Adequate empirical **data** to test models and hypotheses
- Multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional **learning** and problem-solving approaches

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Thoughts on standards and certification

Can certification ensure sustainability?

***No,* <u>nothing can ensure</u>** sustainability and…

1. There are too many opportunities for substitution in biomass markets
2. Transaction costs for certification, monitoring and verification are too high relative to value of products
3. *Uncertainty:* is there political will and sufficient market premium to justify certification?
4. "Setting a bar" does not necessarily improve anything (e.g., wastes)
5. Even well-designed schemes can be too easily "gamed" and it only takes a few well-publicized cases to undermine credibility

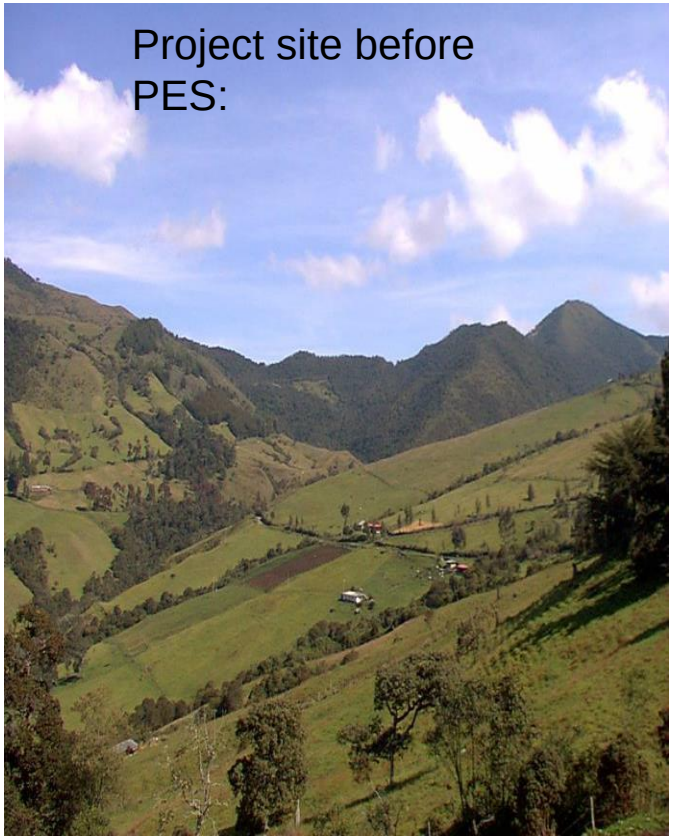

Photo: José Luis Gómez; Fondo Acción, Colombia

Slide adapted from Kline presentation for IEA Joint Task 38-40-43 presentation on LUC: http://ieabioenergy-task38.org/workshops/campinas2011

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Thoughts on standards and certification

Can a standard support more sustainable outcomes?

Yes, *if* it –

1. Is developed with users to meet their needs
2. Provides science-based tools that promote learning
3. Creates incentives that shift production toward more sustainable paths
4. Is adaptable to changing contexts and priorities
5. Encourages all to participate
6. Can be implemented on a "level playing field"
7. Is transparent and easily adopted.

Photo: José Luis Gómez; Fondo Acción, Colombia

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Can landscape design principles be applied to help meet requirements for “sustainable feedstock?”

Thank you!

CBES

Center for BioEnergy Sustainability

http://www.ornl.gov/sci/ees/cbes/

Acknowledgements

Collaborators include
LM Baskaran, VH Dale, M Davis, B Davison, LM Eaton, RA Efroymson, C Farley, NA Griffiths, M Hilliard, H Jager, S Kang, PN Leiby, M Langholtz, LR Lynd, G Marland, A McBride, S Nair, GA Oladosu, ES Parish, RD Perlack,, T Wilbanks, SB Wright, LL Wright

DOE OBP staff –
A Goss-Eng., Z Haq, K Johnson, A Lindauer, P Grabowski

Other labs and organizations –
H Chum, D Inman (NREL), M Wang (ANL), MTU-PIRE Research Collaboration Network and others

Research supported by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) under the Office of the Biomass Program and performed at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL). Oak Ridge National Laboratory is managed by the UT-Battelle, LLC, for DOE under contract DE-AC05-00OR22725.

The views in this presentation are those of the author who is responsible for any errors or omissions.

How to effectively involve society?

Stakeholder engagement in process: define problem, goals and priorities, assess options, and validate proposed solutions

- How does society define the problem?
- What are priority objectives?
  - Define spatial and temporal scales
  - Consider constraints and opportunities
- Apply tools to obtain range of solutions
- Analyze trade-offs and complementarities
  - Use of indicators to measure change
  - Monitor to guide continual improvements
- Extract general rules, guidance for decision makers

Win-Win Opportunities

Improve soil & water management	• Precision management and nutrient recycling • Reduce disturbance/tillage intensity • Crop mix, rotations, cover crops • Land restoration • Technology (seed, microbe, equipment)
Increase Efficiency	• Reduce inputs/increase ***yields*** • Open, transparent markets • Minimize transaction costs • Prioritize, incentivize, measure
Diversify	• Uses and markets • Substitution options • Bases of production
Adopt Systems Perspective	• Multi-scale • Long term and adaptive • Integrated land-use plans

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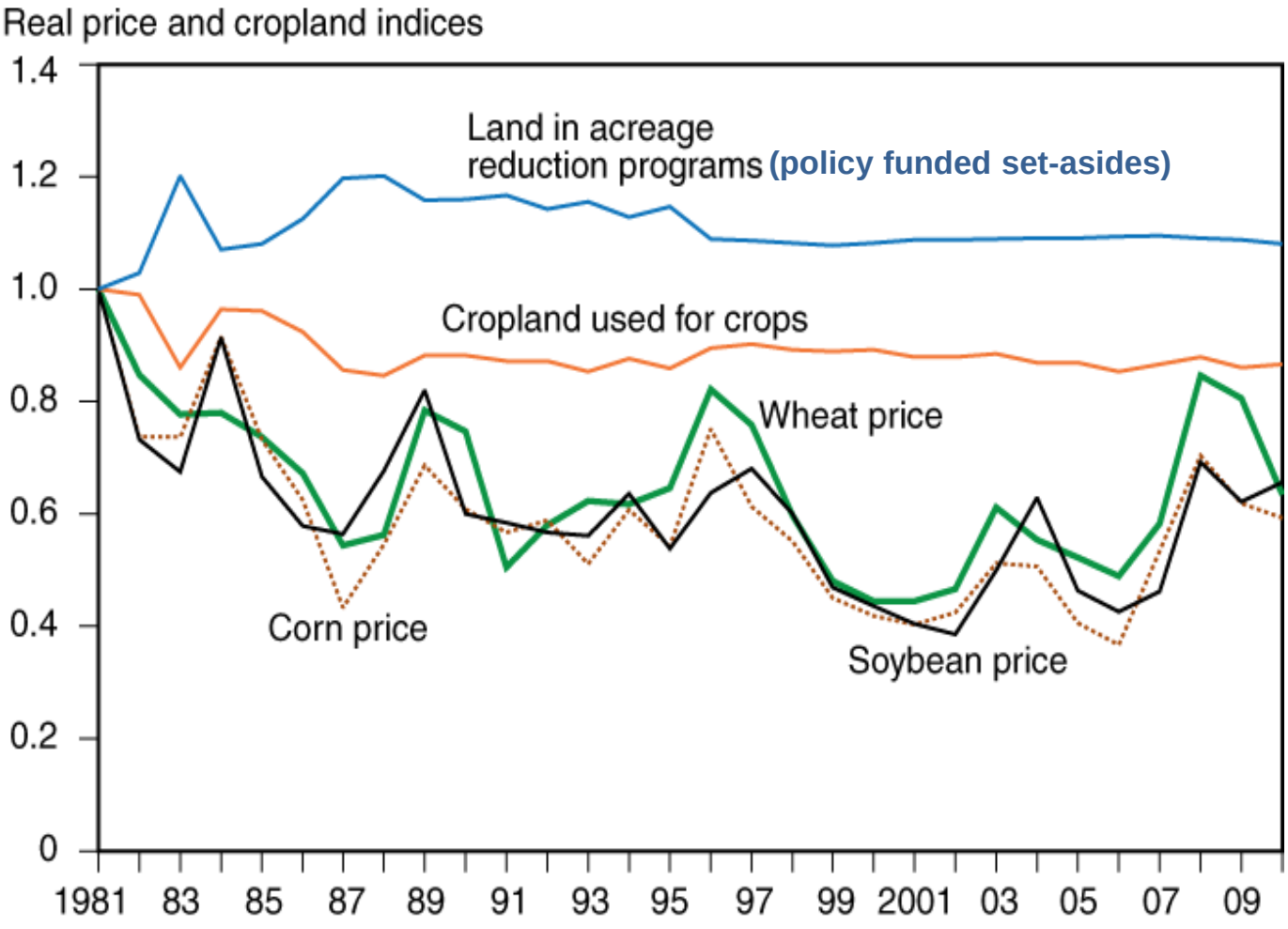
Check assumptions about price-driven LUC

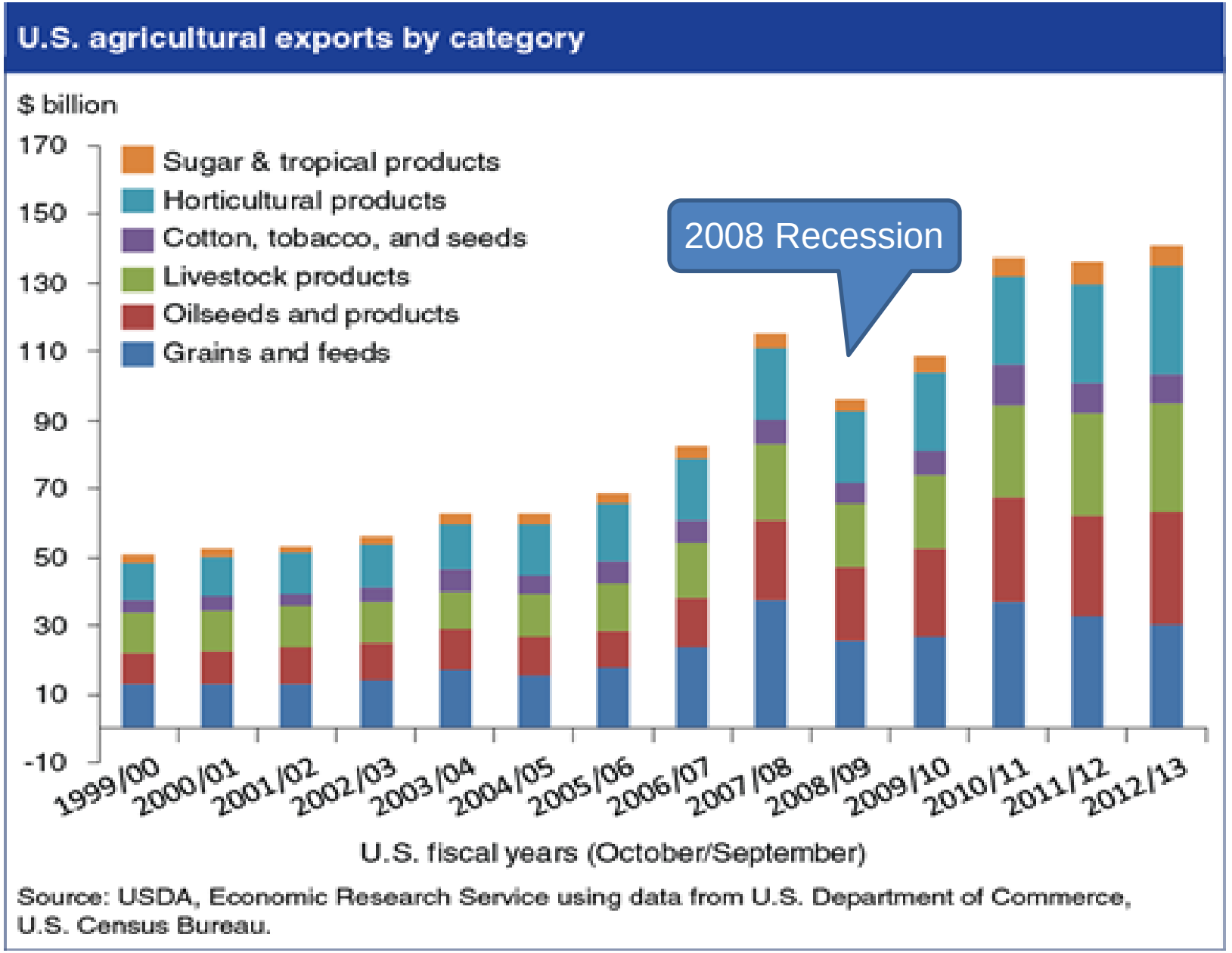
Figure 6
U.S. cropland used for crops and commodity prices of key crops



Source: USDA ERS 2011. http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/eib89/

Contrary to some modeling assumptions, in the US, expectations of commodity prices and risk affect choices of *what* to grow on previously defined agricultural landscapes, not *how much* total area is dedicated to agriculture

U.S. agricultural exports nearly tripled from 2000 to 2013



http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/chart-gallery/detail.aspx?chartId=43538&ref=collection

Bioenergy assessment depends on estimated "land-use change" (LUC) effects

Issues that influence estimated LUC:

1. Economic decision-making assumptions
2. Conceptual framework for drivers of 'land conversion'
3. Land supply and management specifications
4. Assumed land use dynamics (ref. scenarios, baseline choices)
5. Modeling yield change
6. Issues of time, scale
7. Fire and other disturbances
8. Differentiate correlation versus causation
9. Attribution among different drivers of change
10. Representation of bioenergy/policy in model specifications
11. Data issues related to all above, to test hypotheses

It depends

See IEA Joint Task 38-40-43 presentation on LUC: http://ieabioenergy-task38.org/workshops/campinas2011 on CBES website

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