



Dry Farming Institute Strategic Vision 2026-2028

OUR MISSION AND VISION

Our mission is to empower growers to thrive with less water.

Our vision is that dry farming catalyzes agricultural resilience in all its forms.

The Dry Farming Institute (DFI) defines agricultural resilience as stable, economically viable farms operating with limited water, so that these farms can sustain growers, communities, and the natural world.

To us, resilience means a future where collaboration, skill sharing, and seed exchange bring growers into a web of interdependence and mutual support. To us, resilience means that farming and food production are accessible to all who want to engage in a relationship with the land.

Goals and Strategies 2026 – 2028

Goal 1: Outreach and Information

Invite growers and supporters to get excited about dry farming.

Strategies

- A. Work with our partners to develop a strategic outreach plan with a focus on small to mid-scale growers and those growing with limited water access in the maritime Pacific Northwest.
- B. Enhance and maintain the DFI website as a first stop for anyone interested in dry farming.
- C. Build the DFI community by engaging growers as subscribers or members.
- D. Build and maintain the Dry Farming Seed Directory on the DFI website in consultation with OSU Dry Farming Program and other research initiatives (see Goal #3.)
- E. Show up within and beyond agricultural circles as ambassadors for dry farming and the hopeful resilience it represents.
- F. Respond to interest from school gardens and other youth education partners who want to incorporate dry farming into their programs.
- G. Explore the potential to expand our services to all of Oregon or the Cascadia Bioregion.

Goal 2: Skills and Connections

With our partners, help growers incorporate dry farming and closely related water resilience practices, learn from one another and create an enduring community.

Strategies

- A. Offer training and tools to agricultural technical assistance providers so they can assist growers in implementing dry farming and closely related water resilience practices.
- B. Work closely with partners with expertise in other water resilience practices to direct growers to additional resources. (e.g. water storage, water quality, irrigation, etc.)
- C. Work with partners to showcase dry farming and related water resilience practices and learning through field tours, demonstrations, etc.
- D. Respond to and provide initial support for emerging dry farming communities of practice throughout our region.
- E. Connect with and learn from Tribal, immigrant, and underserved communities interested in dry farming.

Goal 3: Demonstrations and Research

Investigate and explore the potential for dry farming through land-based demonstrations and research partnerships.

Strategies

- A. Work with Oregon State University to continue our mutual support for dry farming through research, funding, student engagement, and community engagement.
- B. Actively participate in dry farming research, development, and demonstration by implementing land-based strategies on our own farm sites (e.g. crop variety trials, seed stewardship, economic comparisons, social emotional experience research, soil health, water conservation strategies).
- C. Connect with researchers and educators at academic centers throughout our region and beyond.
- D. Look into the costs and benefits including the research goals, capacity, long-term financial needs, and partnerships needed to sustain a land-based effort.

Goal 4: Fundraising

Inspire financial support to sustain DFI's work.

Strategies

- A. Continue to seek government and foundation grants that match our goals.
- B. Develop and implement a plan to increase contributions from individual donors.
- C. Assess the potential to seek funds for local agencies and special districts for activities around shared goals.
- D. Prioritize, then assess the financial potential of earned income strategies.

Goal 5: Building the DFI Team

Welcome and sustain the team, culture, and infrastructure necessary to realize our strategic goals.

Strategies

- A. Develop a plan and hire the staff (and/or contractors) we need to meet DFI's strategic planning goals.
- B. Ensure our structures and policies support organizational growth
- C. Develop the Board of Directors as champions of DFI.
- D. Foster a culture of care that includes our staff, board, and partners.



Water resilience and DFI

Why we focus on dry farming:

- Dry farming is a transformational rather than incremental approach. It moves from a narrative of "how can I reduce irrigation" to "do I need to irrigate at all?"
- Dry farming inspires people and gives a sense of autonomy, innovation, and possibility.
- Curiosity and learning about dry farming leads growers to using less water in general.

At the same time:

- Dry farming is not right for every grower or all the time. Determining the practices that work for a given site or grower requires experimentation.
- Many of the same practices that support dry farming also support general water resilience.
- Having a full toolkit of water resilience practices is important to growers, particularly those working on marginal land and without access to water rights.

Given all these factors, DFI will:

- Continue to offer dry farming as our core expertise, the focus of our research, and the leading attraction to our organization.
- Lead efforts that are focused specifically on dry farming.
- Offer additional water resilience information in the context of understanding where dry farming fits into a grower's operation.
- Partner with others who can provide additional water resilience support, including support around:
 - Water rights
 - Water storage
 - Water quality
 - Irrigation technical assistance
 - Advanced technical strategies
 - Water efficiency practices for larger/industrial scale operations