**SILT**

The **Sustainable Iowa Land Trust** (SILT) has a creative economic plan that enables men and women who want to grow food but can’t afford to buy farmland, to lease farms that retiring farmers donate to a land trust.

“**In just 8 years, SILT has protected 16 farms totaling 1,200 acres across Iowa**. SILT farms grow shiitake mushrooms, fresh vegetables, organic hay to get grass-fed animals through the winter. Some grow organic corn and soybeans on long rotations that give the soil a chance to regenerate. A few have beehives and others grow herbs, nuts or fruit. They give next generation farmers a chance to get into the game. *They give their communities local, healthy, fresh food, jobs and a new way to look at the world*.

“**On donated farms***,* SILT offers *long-term leases that farmers can pass on to their children* *and grandchildren*, so long as they want to farm the land sustainably. The farmers earn equity in the house, barns and business they can cash out when selling to the next farmer for that land.

“***On farms protected by land protection agreements***, known as conservation easements, families retain ownership of their land. Future farmers have the opportunity to purchase the land at nearly half of its value on the market, because it comes with *sustainable food production requirements that SILT monitors* and enforces for generations to come.

“**These farms give next-generation farmers a chance** to get into the farming and agriculture game. Sustainable farming brings countless benefits to communities including a locally-sourced, healthy, fresh food supply, jobs, and a stronger understanding of the farm-to-table process.

Shari Moore, human resources consultant for SILT, earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration at California Polytechnic State University and an MBA at Yale University. She served on the Dean’s Advisory Council for the School of Business at Cal Poly.

For a better understanding of the SILT endeavor to support sustainable food production around Iowa’s cities, watch this 90 second video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4hP_7F6JBMk>.

Or visit <https://silt.org/>.

**Is there a sustainable land trust near your city that enables farmers to grow food? If so, how might you support it? If not, might you share this possibility in your community?**