Social rewards

Social rewards are intangible benefits that farmers can gain by adopting carbon farming practices. Based on cultural and social contexts, these benefits strengthen bonds between farmers, facilitate knowledge-sharing networks, and promote social recognition of sustainable efforts. Additionally, practices like maintaining healthy soils can improve landscape appeal, fostering opportunities for rural development and agrotourism.

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REWARDING MECHANISM: SOCIAL REWARDS

Tier 1	Supportive
Tier 2	**Social rewards**
Tier 3	
Description	Social rewards refer to the intangible benefits perceived by farmers because of engaging in sustainable agricultural practices. These rewards are often associated with the influence of opinion leaders, such as farmers who adopt innovative, sustainable practices, such as carbon farming. By visibly demonstrating the benefits of climate-smart agricultural practices, these farmers gain credibility, playing a role model, inspiring others to follow (Barnes A. et al., 2022). This influence contributes to the broader diffusion of sustainable farming practices, fosters social participation, and reinforces community-based networks that support collective environmental stewardship.
References	- Buck, H. J., Spera, S., Thompson, A., & Dooley, K. (2022). *Soil carbon sequestration as a climate strategy: What do farmers think? Biogeochemistry*, Springer Science and Business Media LLC. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10533-022-00948-2 - ICOS. (2023). *Carbon farming – A path to more sustainable agriculture*. Retrieved from https://www.icos-cp.eu/fluxes/2/carbon-farming-path-more-sustainable-agriculture - Hameed, T. S., & Sawicka, B. (2017). *The importance of opinion leaders in agricultural extension. The Scientific World Journal*, 76, 35–41.

Advantages	**Disadvantages**
Farmers are more likely to adopt sustainable practices when they see respected peers doing the same successfully (Barnes A. et al., 2022).	Hard to measure and track impact—what counts as a "reward" can vary greatly between individuals and cultures.
Encourages collaboration and collective action toward shared environmental and social goals (Buck, H. J., et al., 2022).	Social norms and peer influence take time to develop and might not produce quick results (Rodriguez, J. M., et al., 2009).
Farmers gain respect and prestige, which can lead to opportunities (e.g., training others, community leadership).	Recognition and influence might concentrate around a few individuals, potentially reinforcing existing inequalities in the community (Rodriguez, J. M., et al., 2009).

Example Social rewards: Peer to peer recognition

Tier 1	Monetary	Supportive	Regulatory
Tier 2	**Social rewards**		
Tier 3			
Example	Peer to peer recognition (opinion leader farmer)		
Summary	Opinion leader farmers are influential members of agricultural communities playing a vital role in bridging the gap between research and practice by promoting the adoption of new technologies and farming methods. These farmers are often early adopters with an innovative mindset and can be perceived as role models for their peers. Their credibility is rooted in shared experiences and a deep understanding of local agricultural realities, which fosters trust among fellow farmers compared to external advisors or technical experts, who may be viewed as less empathetic to farmers' needs[1]. In addition to their leadership, these farmers are skilled communicators, capable of translating complex information into accessible terms and effectively sharing their experiences, concerns, and successes to other farmers. By participating in external workshops and events, they bring valuable knowledge back to their communities, facilitating the broader adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.		
Type of climate action	**Carbon removal**	**Emission reduction**	**Climate adaptation**
Appropriate for: Who can benefit from this type of rewarding mechanism (in the agricultural sector?)	- Farmers		
Source of rewarding mechanism: Who provides the rewarding mechanism?	Public	Private	Public-Private
Rewarding method: What is the reward based on?	Peer recognition and trust reinforces motivation by acknowledging the farmers' effort.		

1 Rust, N. A., et al. (2021). Have farmers had enough of experts? Environmental Management, 69(1), 31–44. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-021-01546-y

Type of on-farm action: What is the recipient obliged to deliver in return?	Adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices that demonstrate an active commitment to improving crop yields while addressing the long-term sustainability of the farming system in a holistic manner.
Governance: Who manages the programme, provides the reward, and where does the money come from?	Opinion leaders (farmers who adopt innovation in their practices) disseminate knowledge in their networks, promoting the adoption of climate smart farming practices.
References:	- Hoffmann, V., Probst, K., & Christinck, A. (2007). *Farmers and researchers: How can collaborative advantages be created in participatory research and technology development?* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-007-9072-2 - Rust, N. A., Echeverría, D., Jacobson, C., & Shankar, B. (2021). *Have farmers had enough of experts? Environmental Management.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-021-01546-y - Skaalsveen, K., Ingram, J., & Urquhart, J. (2020). *The role of farmers' social networks in the implementation of no-till farming practices. Agricultural Systems*, 182, 102824. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.agsy.2020.102824 - Feder, G., & Savastano, S. (2006). *The role of opinion leaders in the diffusion of new knowledge: The case of integrated pest management. World Development*, 34(7), 1287–1300. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2005.12.004