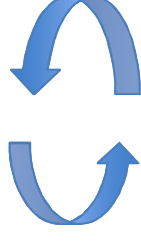


Summary & Challenge

Paul B. Thompson
Michigan State University

Sustainability
Is A Systems
Concept



Except
Sometimes It
Doesn't

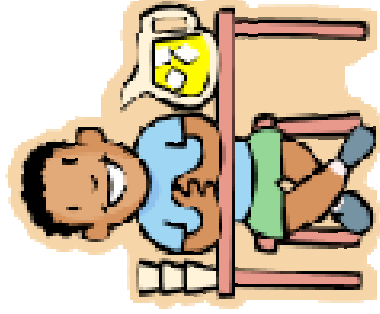
Dairy
Industry
USA

Ostrich
Industry
USSR

The ability to think usefully about sustainability will be correlated closely with the extent to which one can identify a system that might or might not be sustained over time, and in response to stresses or changes in the external environment.

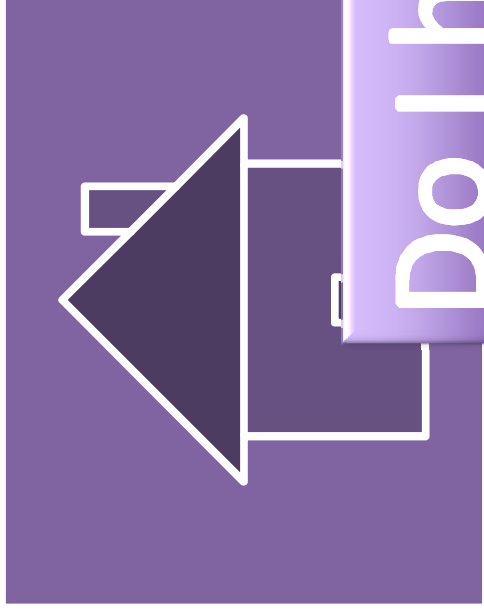
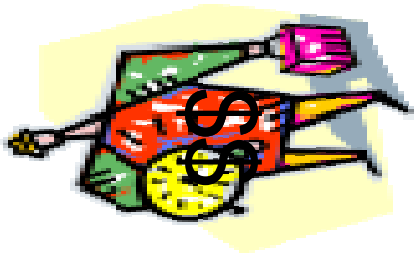


Why farmers are important for sustainability



The **ability** to think usefully about sustainability will be correlated closely with the extent to which one can identify a system that might or might not be sustained over time, and in response to stresses or changes in the external environment.

Why farmers are important for sustainability



For the average
salaried or wage-
earning
householder,
sustainability
comes down to...

Do I have a job?

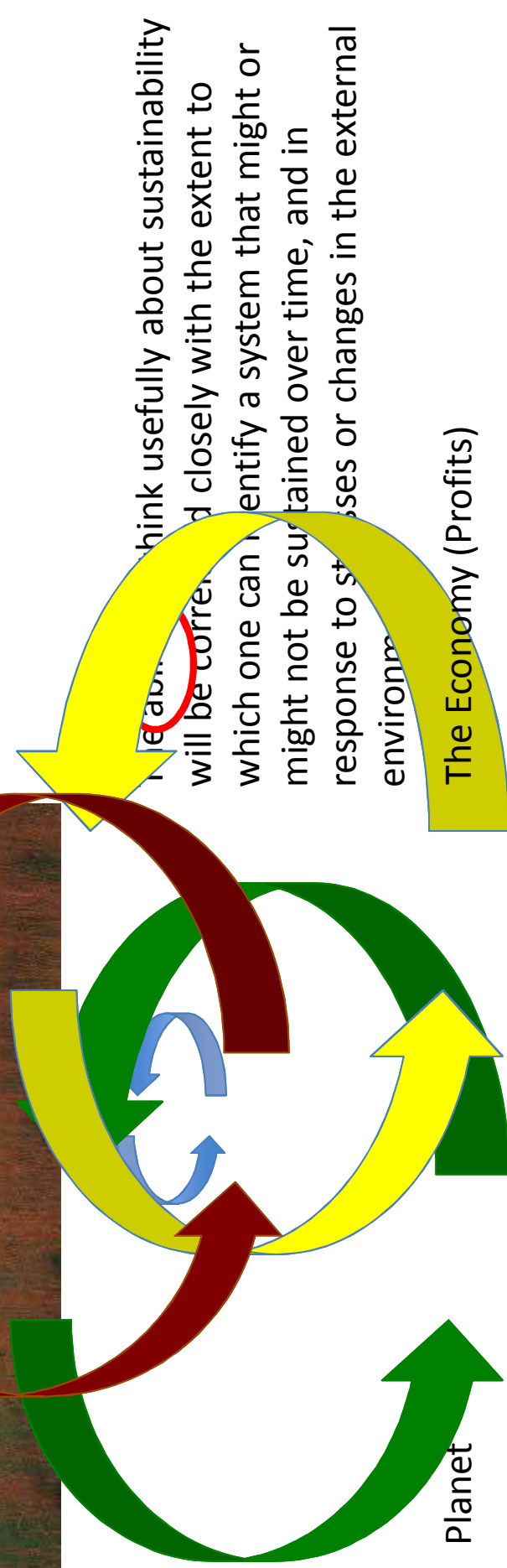
The ability to think usefully about sustainability will be correlated closely with the extent to which one can identify a system that might or might not be sustained over time, and in response to stresses or changes in the external environment.

Why farmers are important



Question #1: Do dairy farmers and industry leaders see these systemic linkages?

Question 2: Is there any chance that the third "P" might be added to their perspective?



Consumers
(People)

A sustainable food system needs to produce broad awareness of the vulnerabilities, challenges and requirements of food production as one of its outputs.

Because that awareness is needed as an input for creating the political environment for sustainable farms and sustainable agriculture

Question #1: Do dairy farmers and industry leaders see these systemic linkages?

Question 2: Is there any chance that the third "P" might be added to their perspective?

Question 3: In what sense can we understand the third "P" as a system?



What I like about Michael Pollan...

Why the local food movement is important to farmers (even dairy farmers) ...



Some themes we've

Feeding 9
billion
people...

Sounds
suspiciously like
a ready-made
rationale for
more of the
same

Type II
diabetes

Especially given
the job we are
doing with feeding
our own urban
poor


Urban
“food
deserts”

Childhood
obesity

Wasting 30% of what
we currently produce....

#1 These points suggest that we in the agricultural sector do not really walk the walk when talk about feeding the world. In fact, we feed those who can pay.

#2 We should question whether there are structural links between a large scale production sector and a large retail sector that has led to this broken system.



Especially given
the job we are
doing with feeding
our own urban
poor

Why farmers &

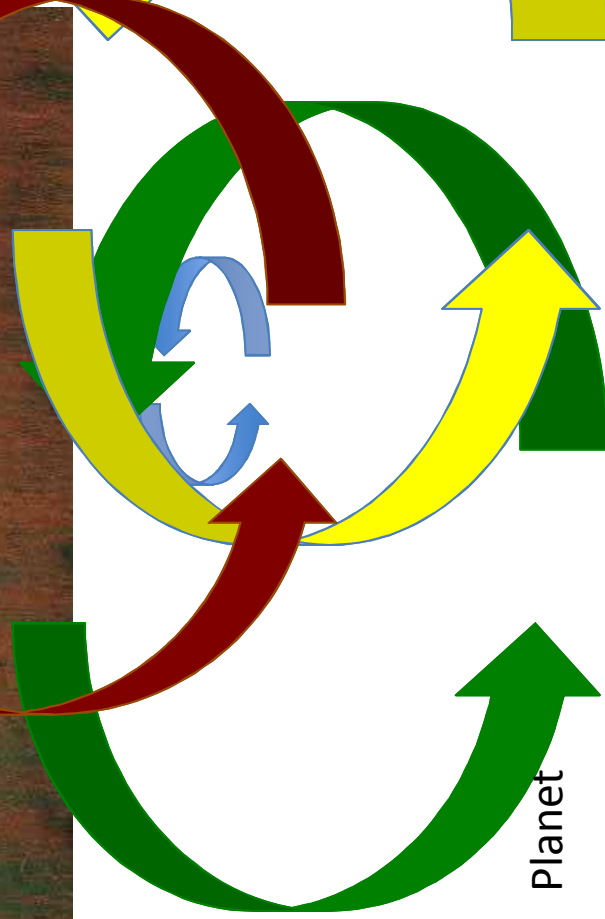


Not to overstate the obvious, including all the dimensions of even just two of the three P's and trying to reconcile tensions among the various systems and subsystems will indeed be a "challenge": it will be a wicked problem.

Understanding the world as a system?

It will be correct to identify a system that might or might not be sustained over time, and in response to stresses or changes in the external environment.

The Economy (Profits)



How do we sustain the
energy and high level of
critical inquiry achieved
at this meeting?