OK, so sustainable agriculture is the wave of the future. But what is it, exactly? In agriculture, sustainability is a complex idea with many facets, including the economic (a sustainable farm should be a profitable business that contributes to a robust economy), the social (it should deal fairly with its workers and have a mutually beneficial relationship with the surrounding community), and the environmental. "Sustainable" agriculture refers both to economic and ecological sustainability. Any farming system that is going to be truly sustainable must be so in both senses; a farmer cannot stay in the farming business if the farming operation is not economically viable, regardless of how fine it may be ecologically! While there is considerable debate about exactly what constitutes sustainable agriculture, in general it is defined in terms of practices that not only allow for quality of life Sustainable Agriculture: The Basics. Some Background. A Sampling of Perspectives. The Future of the Sustainable Agriculture Concept. Link to Related Terms. Link to For Further Reading lists and Indices (1999 and 2007). National Agricultural Library Cataloging Record: Gold, Mary V. Sustainable agriculture : definitions and terms. (Special reference briefs ; 99-02) 1. Sustainable agriculture--Terminology. I. Title NAL Call #: aS21.D27S64 no. 99-02. ISSN 1052-5368. Contents. Introduction. Sustainable Agriculture: The Basics. What is Sustainable Agriculture? The word sustainable has become very popular in recent years, and it is now used to describe a lot of things. But what is sustainable agriculture? Simply put, sustainable agriculture is the production of plant and animal products, including food, in a way that uses farming techniques that protect the environment, public health, communities, and the welfare of animals.