

POLICIES & REGULATIONS FOR A THRIVING CANADIAN AGRI-FOOD SYSTEM

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Poster 1

DOES ECONOMIC VALUATION OF ECOSYSTEMS SERVICES PROVIDE USEFUL INFORMATION TO HELP GUIDE AGRICULTURAL POLICIES?

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Ecosystems are under constant pressure from competing landscape uses such as agriculture, urban sprawling and industrial development. Much hoped has been placed in the ability of ecosystem service valuation (ESV) to provide economic rational to help identify optimal landscape allocation. However, it has been shown that ESV have rarely been used to help guide landscape management decisions. This could be explained in part by the complexity of ESV data. We seek to communicate key information necessary to adequately identify the context in which this data can be applied and the extent on which it could be relied upon. We consider three of the common economic values found in ESV studies: consumer surplus, replacement cost and damage avoided. These are analysed to provide the following information (i) an interpretation of the item being valued (ii) the level of accuracy including the sources of uncertainty and (iii) the geographical scope of their application.