

Appendix 1: “Take a Close Look” Worksheet

Nov 2025 revision

As you look at a farm, garden, or ranch (yours or of others), look for healthy plants and animals—both wild and domestic, as well as healthy soil, water, and ecosystem functioning. This checklist is an Appendix from the San Juan Mountain Watch and Exploring Foodshed Health [Field Guides](#), and list a few questions to get you started in exploring the health of your local and regional foodshed.

1. Do the crops look healthy and well-watered?
2. Are livestock healthy looking, able to be outdoors, and socializing?
3. Do you see a healthy level of plant complexity and diversity or mostly uniformity (monocultures)?
4. Is a rich diversity of wildlife present and healthy on and around the farm, ranch, or garden?
5. Can you hear or see bees and other pollinators and beneficials? Are there diverse nectar sources and nesting sites available for them throughout the growing season?
6. Do you see raptors, bats, and insect-eating birds at work? Are bird and bat houses and/or natural nesting sites, snags, and perches available?
7. Do you see field margins or hedgerows with native vegetation where beneficial insects, birds, bats, and other animals can live and forage? Are fences wildlife-friendly?
8. Are invasive weeds, shrubs, or trees prevalent?
9. Is most of the soil covered by vegetation?
10. Are there signs of soil erosion by wind (dunes, drifts, etc.) or water (gullies, silt deposits, etc)?
11. Are irrigation ditches flowing adequately, but not eroding?
12. Is there visible salt build-up on the soil?
13. Can you tell if the water leaving the farm, ranch, or garden looks as good, or even better, than when entering?

Appendix 2: “Eyes on the Broader Landscape” Worksheet

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This checklist is an Appendix from the San Juan Mountain Watch and Exploring Foodshed Health [Field Guides](#), and list a few questions to get you started in exploring the health of your local and regional foodshed on a larger scale.

Find a convenient vantage point to view the broader landscape and let these questions help guide your observations:

1. Do the watershed and ecosystems around the farms, ranches, and gardens appear healthy, well covered with vegetation, and not overgrazed or eroding? Are there abrupt differences at fence lines that indicate possible problems? Are there visible contaminants in rivers, ditches, or ponds?
2. Are birds prevalent, diverse, and moving freely across the landscape?
3. Are there suitable corridors around the food growing areas so that wildlife can travel across the landscape? Are fences wildlife-friendly?
4. Are there human activities on lands around the farms, gardens, and ranches that appear disruptive to water flow, soils, wildlife, air quality, or healthy food production?
5. Do you sense a level of coexistence and mutual dependence between the human-managed ecosystems and the wilder surrounding ecosystems or more of an imbalance?
6. What else do you see that you could ask growers and resource experts about?