Is there a mis-match or an alignment between urban farmers’ perceptions of their farm’s environmental sustainability and its actual environmental impact?

**Project Approach:**
- Interview process
- Data Analysis
- Soil and Water Testing
- Determine overall “Sustainability Score”

**Hypothesis:**
“Irrational Rationality”
Practices not aligning with ideals

**Irrational Rationality**
The use of contradictory logics to retrospectively defend and sustain practices that violate one or more of those logics

“Our urban farm uses 1/10 or one percent the water of a conventional farm.’ They’re comparing their hydroponic lettuce farm to like, a field operation growing avocados.”

**Sustainability Score**
Each factor is rated on a scale of 1-3

1 - not sustainable
2 - undetermined
3 - sustainable

**Factors:**
- Location
- Farm Type & Size
- Crop Type & Number
- Water Source & Use
- Irrigation Method, Timing, & Frequency
- Pesticide Use
- GMO Use
- Fertilizer Type & Application
- Livestock
- Fuel-powered Equipment

**Provisional Findings:**
- Claims to be organic but use synthetic fertilizers
- Use of city water
- Growing crops not native to the desert climate
- Suspected overuse of synthetic fertilizers

“I like to grow bananas... I grew up in the tropics, I miss the tropics. So I liked to look for plants that reminds me of a tropical place. And then that reminds me of home.”

1 - not sustainable; although tropical plants may thrive in hot climates, they require a lot of water which is scarce and expensive in the desert

**Going Forward:**
- Soil and water testing to compare farmer perceptions to physical environment
- Determine the overall sustainability score for each farm