

Crop Highlights

Crop Diversification in Midwest

Led by the Sustainable Food Lab and Practical Farmers of Iowa, this event in Minneapolis provided networking opportunities with representatives of organizations like the Walton Family Foundation, Cargill, Walmart, PepsiCo, Smithfield Foods, Grain Millers and McDonalds. The information gleaned included potential and planned projects in Indiana to build sustainability into their supply chains.

November 30: CCSI-SARE Continuing Soil Health Training – Economics of Soil Health

- Just under 100 individuals attended this training (120 registered). The training was designed to focus upon capitalization and marketing opportunities as well as insights from farm managers and ag lenders.
- Speakers and panelists included:
 - Alan Weber, Farmer and Co-author of SARE Cover Crop Economics
Economic returns of soil health systems.
 - Pat Karst, Farmer and Vice-president Halderman Real Estate and Farm Management
Farm managers point of view on landowner desires – economic, environmental, legacy, etc. – with management of *how* their properties are managed.
 - Brenda Sermersheim, Farmer, Dubois SWCD Supervisor, and Vice-president of Agricultural Banking – German American Bank
Lenders point of view on soil health systems and how they can positively impact farmers' bottom lines, both annually and on a balance sheet basis
 - Ken Rulon, Rulon Enterprises
Short and long-term returns on investment and how the Rulon operation has leveraged the stability of the systems to market into the future.
 - Dan DeSutter, DeSutter Farms
How the farm's use of a mature soil health system provided a means to transition to a low/no-tillage organic system, including use of cover crops and grazing livestock – and how the return on investment has benefited their operation.

G1. Farmer Engagement and Involvement

1. Innovative and Visionary Farmers

Quarterly Target: 1 ride-a-long, shop visit, or other (Each - A, NPM, SPM)

Listening sessions with Innovative and Visionary Farmers. Use to help identify needed field day and training topics.

- 11/02 – Cameron Churchill (D)
- 11/03 – Ray McCormick (D)
- 11/10 – Mills (NA)
- 11/13 – Akron, IN Farmer (NEPM)

Conservative and Pragmatic Farmers

Meetings and other opportunities for listening sessions to gain perspective on adoption

issues/concerns of soil health practices. Use to help develop outreach topics and tactics.

Quarterly Targets: 1 ride-a-long, shop visit, or other (Each - A, NPM, SPM)

- 11/07 – Rochester Famer (NA)

Farmer Influencers

Quarterly Targets: 1 LLP per region adding an influencer to their outreach planning team or board. (Each - NPM, SPM)

- 11/15-16 – Representatives of Cargill, Walton Family Foundation, Walmart, PepsiCo, Grain Millers, Smithfield Foods, McDonalds – sustainability platform leads
- 11/16 – Noah Radde, ADM (D)

2. Presentations

Quarterly Targets: Average of 3 soil health presentations or demonstrations. (A)

- 11/07 – Carbon Field Day, U of Ill (SA)
- 11/13 – Montgomery County PARP (NA)
- 11/14 – MCCC Fall Cover Crop Training (NA)
- 11/27 – Halderman PARP (NA)

G2. Local Level Partnership Support

1. Facilitate and Support Local Level Partnership's Outreach and Education

Quarterly Target: CCSI as a group materially participate in / support average of 15 LLP Outreach Efforts groups (CCSI Team Goal)

Workshops Completed

- 11/15 Pike County Regenerative Ag Q&A Field Day, Petersburg
- 11/29 Regional Ag Forum, Princeton, 98 attendees

Workshops in Progress:

- 12/04 Data Driven Decisions, Jasper
- 12/04 SW NRCS Area Meeting, Vincennes
- 12/07 Shop Talk / Newton County PARP
- 12/07 Rush County PARP
- 12/07 Virtual – Manure Management
- 12/14 AGree Farmer Mentoring design
- 12/19 Grant County PARP
- 12/19-20 Indiana CCA Conference, Indianapolis
- 01/08-09 IASWCD Annual Conference, Indianapolis
- 01/09-12 National No Till Conference, Indianapolis
- 01/22-23 Indiana Hort Conference, Indianapolis
- 02/02-03 Northern Indiana Grazing Conference, Shipshewana
- 02/06 Annual Southern Region Soil Health Workshop, Salem
- 02/13-14 MCCC Annual Conference, Indianapolis
- 02/22 Ag Women Engage, Ft. Wayne
- March 2024 West Boggs Soil Health Event
- March 2024 – Howard/Tipton Workshop
- 08/09-10/2024 Manure Management Workshop

- 2021 – 23 – Kankakee Basin and WLEB series of events to support existing RCPP (WLEB) and proposed RCPP (Kankakee) (NPM)
- Summer 2024 – Vermillion-Parke Livestock Field Day
- 2024 – Ray Archuleta – Cass, Miami, and Fulton Counties
- November 2024 – Spencer County SWCD

2. Consistent Soil Health Messaging

Annual Target: Outlined in fall with training team.

Foundational Soil Health Trainings / Awareness, Knowledge and Understanding of Soil Health Completed Trainings

- 11/14 MCCC Cover Crop Training, 40 attendees
- 11/17 ANR Retreat – Soil Health Demos

Trainings in Progress:

- 02/27 CCSI-SARE Intro to Soil Health
- Tuesdays in April 2024 – CCSI-SARE Foundations of Soil Health
- Soil Health Signature Program Curriculum Development – submitted to reviewers
- Soil Health PARP Regulatory Topic Development

Professional Development Opportunities

Annual Target: Outlined in fall with training team.

Advanced Soil Health Trainings / Applied Soil Health Knowledge and Skills

Completed Trainings:

- 11/30 – CCSI-SARE Continuing Education: Economics of Soil Health, 98 attendees

Trainings in Progress

- 06/11-13 Soil Health and Sustainability for Midwestern Field Staff (3-Day Soil Health)
- September 2024- CCSI-SARE-NWF: Engaging New Audiences

4. Messaging to/from Local Level Partnerships

Monthly Targets: 2-3 LLP visits. 1 Teleconference / Region (Each - NWPM, NEPM, SWPM, SEPM)

- Mondays – US Drought Monitor Coordinating Calls (SA)
- 11/3 – Purdue ANR Area X Meeting (NA, NWPM, NEPM)
- 11/08 – SWCD Region Meeting w/ Kylie Wheeler, ISDA (SEPM)
- 11/09 – Hoosier Chapter SWCS (NWPM, SWPM)
- 11/09 – Indiana CCA Board Meeting (NA)
- 11/13 – Vermillion-Parke (SWPM)
- 11/16 – DSS Region Meeting, Muncie (NEPM)
- 11/16-17 Purdue ANR Retreat (SA, NA)
- 11/17 – IASWCD Board Meeting
- 11/22 – Exploring STAR in Indiana (D)
- 11/28 - NW Area NRCS Meeting via Teams (NWPM)
- 11/28 – Solutions from the Land (D)

G3. General CCSI Outreach / Communication

1. Marketing and Messaging

Quarterly Targets: 3 Podcasts; 3-6 Blog Posts; 6 Newsletters; Use social networks and other media tools to deliver soil health messaging and information.

Completed Materials:

- Podcasts
 - Pete Huff, Wallace Center / The Pasture Project + Cameron and Dylan Churchill, Harrison County Farmers – Economic Benefits of Regenerative Grazing
- Social Media
 - Facebook: 3421 reach, 746 followers
 - Instagram: 115 reach, 313 followers
 - LinkedIn: building presence as replacement for Twitter
- Website: 715 users, 528 sessions

Completed Materials:

Materials in Progress:

- Regulatory Pesticide Considerations for Soil Health Systems, by Hans Schmitz, Ann Kline, Mathias Ingle, Ashley Adair, and Matt Pearson, OISC – PARP Regulatory Topic in draft status
- Indiana Prairie Farms Crops Corner (NA)
- Giant Ragweed and Waterhemp germination plots (NA)

G4. Research

Quarterly Targets: None

CCSI no longer leads research projects; CCSI provides connectivity between researchers and cooperators; potential research needs.

- Support - Indiana University SARE - Participatory Farmer Monitoring on Nitrate Loss (Yoder)
- Support – Purdue University SARE - Precision Winter Hardy Cover Cropping for Improving Farm Profitability and Environmental Stewardship (Armstrong)
- Support – Purdue University NIFA – Empowering Indiana’s Organic Farmers – Assessing Regional and Farm Scale Soil Health with a Farmer Network (Rui)
- Support – 1000 Farms Project, Ecdysis Foundation (Lundgren) – 2023 sampling coordination in W IN
- Support – Purdue Regenerative Ag plots at Purdue Ag Centers

- Purdue On The Farm led efforts:
 - Kingma – comparisons of weed pressures, disease presence, insects, and tissue samples
 - Scott – comparisons of three tillage situations for weed pressure, disease presence, insects, and tissue samples
 - Waterhemp and Giant Ragweed germination plots
 - 2024 – 60 on-farm trial sites

OTHER

Professional Development (*Training for CCSI Staff, Certifications*)

- 11/2-3 Midwestern Watershed Leadership (SWPM)
- 11/8-9 Hoosier Chapter SWCD (SWPM, NWPM)