

Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)
February Regional Teleconference Notes
February 23 (NE, NW) and February 28 (SE, SW) 2022

Participants

Nellie Peffley, Dekalb County SWCD (NE)
Hans Schmitz, Posey County Purdue Extension/CCSI Agronomist (NE, SE)
Brad Kohlhagan, Adams County Purdue Extension (NE)
Andrea Baker, Fulton County NRCS (NE)
Walt Sell, Purdue Extension (NE, SE)
Reba Wicker, Steuben County Purdue Extension (NE)
Genny Helt, SE NRCS RMS (SE)
Lais McCartney, Indiana SARE (NE)
Scott Sanders, Decatur County SWCD (SE)
Jessica Hoehn, CCSI Southern Program Manager (all)
Lisa Holscher, CCSI Director (all)
Sheila Schroeder, CCSI Northern Program Manager (all)
Marc Roberts, Montgomery County SWCD & IASWCD (NW)
Jon Charlesworth, Benton & Warren County Purdue Extension (SE)
Robert Zupancic, SE NRCS Grazing Specialist (SE)
Mark Thomas, ISDA (SE)
Raquel Baker, Wayne County SWCD (SE)
Jennifer Rowland, ISDA (SE)
Don Donovan, Parke/Vermillion NRCS (SW)
Judi Brown, Dubois County SWCD (SW)
Sarah Hanson, Johnson County Purdue Extension (SW)

- **New CCSI Agronomist, Hans Schmitz**

- Currently ANR Educator in Posey until March 1. Been with Purdue Extension for 13 years. From family farm in Posey County. Will also still concentrate on climate and climate change. Currently on steering committee for National Extension Climate Initiative and North Central Climate Collaborative. Has office space in Vanderburgh County office, but will also travel quite a bit.

- **Partner Updates**

- **IASWCD**
 - IASWCD is working on a weekly April webinar series for districts. These will likely be held during the noon hour on Wednesdays, but that hasn't been determined for sure yet.
 - Stan Moore is the new representative on the CCSI oversight committee as Jamie Scott has stepped away from that role.

- **NRCS**
 - NRCS Equip apps being planned
 - NE SH team putting together trainings for NRCS to go over soil health kits
 - Most offices at 75% staffing. Changes are county based, so reach out to individual offices
 - Staff cannot visit any poultry farms due to Avian flu outbreak
 - 2 additional soil health trailers are being built; hopefully ready in 4-6 weeks; one will be stored in the northern part of the state, one in Indianapolis and one in Vincennes
 - Trainings will be held for new staff to learn about the trailers; will be available to partners as well

- **Purdue**
 - Jason Henderson, Director of Purdue Extension is expanding Extension's presence in soil health programs.
 - Partnered with Indiana Corn Mktg Council and Indiana Soybean Alliance to create a new position which was filled by Joe Rorick.
 - Will work alongside John Scott who has a background in digital ag and CCSI Agronomist Hans Schmitz
 - statewide outreach in soil health and build an on-farm research project to include conservation practices with a large emphasis is on soil health
 - New program leader for Ag and Natural Resources – Henry Quesada
 - started 2/14.
 - From VA Tech, Forestry and Natural Resources background;
 - working remotely and then moving to Lafayette in the summer.
 - Recognizes importance of partner relationships. Going to be a great fit
 - Soil Health Nexus
 - Pilot Soil Health Matrix tool pilot
 - Excel platform
 - enter current farming practices and then practices you're considering
 - Returns changes might look like if you change cropping systems.
 - Late March – Series on working with Amish and other Plain community populations in LaGrange
 - Manure management virtual workshops – have held 2 so far with final one coming April 7. Nearly 150 people attended each of the first two with more than half the states plus Canada represented by attendees
 - Jon Charlesworth, Benton/Warren Extension is working on a workshop for absentee landowners to provide information on cash rent and land value, determining productivity of ground, soil health friendly lease agreement ideas. Trying to get an attorney to speak about land ownership and succession planning
 - Indiana Small Farm Conference is virtual this year; early March
 - Follow Purdue Extension on Facebook as well as your local county extension for great information

- **ISDA**
 - Scheduling field visits;
 - Staff are attending SWCD annual meetings and field days as they can

- **Indiana SARE**
 - Advisory Council meeting too place last week; working on next POW
 - They are a behind the scenes partner; they have lots of bulletins for free and other resources that can be purchased in bulk and shared with farmers
 - Sometimes they have funds to help with outreach and education provided it fits into their POW
 - Lais McCartney contact info: lmccartn@purdue.edu
- **Other Partner Updates & Events**
 - Adams County SWCD purchased a roller crimper; they also have an interseeder they've been using; will use it to terminate cover crops this spring
 - Adams County planning a Conservation Soil Health Symposium in northern Adams County August 22, Barry Fisher to speak
 - Indiana Black Loam Conferences have taken place in Evansville and Ft. Wayne. Upcoming events will be in Gary, Bloomington and Indianapolis. The goal is to assist BIPOC farmers with information about available resources, with a focus on urban ag and soil health
 - Indiana Envirothon – 7 regional competitions around the state begin soon
 - Smithsonian Water/Ways on Main Street exhibit is currently in Wayne County; it will be in Benton County at Otterbein Library Oct 29 – Dec 11
 - Ripley County No-Till breakfast on Thursday 3/3
 - March 29 is a Cover Crop workshop at SEPAC
 - Will have field day at Roger Wenning's, late July/early August
 - Wayne County is planning a Conservation Focus Workshop in March. Joined with Purdue Ext. to plan that event
 - Soil health workshop in Orange County 3/1 featuring Dale Strickler from Green Cover Seeds
 - Pasture Project update – last team meeting was canceled. Wrapping up the project. Goal of the group is to try to get more grazing livestock in Blue River area, but everything they are doing can be expanded through Southern IN.
 - Warrick County hosting a soil health breakfast March 8 featuring Andrew Bernzott and Rodney Rulon
 - Byron Seeds will be hosting a Soil Health 101 for dealers and staff in April with a field day in the SW; Barry Fisher and Stephanie McLain working on this; soil health trailer will be there; some available space for other people who want to take the training

- **Trainings**

- Core Cover Crops & Core Soil Health Trainings
 - Tuesdays in April; 5, 19 and 26 are virtual; 12 is an OPTIONAL in person day at Beck Center near Purdue
 - Intended for partners who are newer to their positions
 - [Registration and information](#)
- Soil Health & Sustainability for Midwestern Field Staff (3-day soil health training)
 - Intended for those who have been through Core trainings and in their position for a couple years
 - June 21-23 at Beck Center in West Lafayette
 - Registration is not open yet
- Herbicide Webinars

- Stephanie McLain reached out to Lisa about sky-rocketing prices and limited availability of herbicides
- Fred Whitford and Bill Johnson involved as well as Stephanie and Tony Bailey
- Focus on herbicide efficacy and efficiency and alternative for glyphosate for termination for cover crops
- March 2 and 3, 9 am-noon

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- Adams County planning a Conservation Soil Health Symposium in northern Adams County August 22, Barry Fisher to speak
- Dekalb County SWCD held their annual meeting March 15 at winery with light appetizers and no speaker; went well
- Working on an invasive species program with extension – one in spring and one in fall
- Indiana Black Loam Conferences have taken place in Evansville and Ft. Wayne. Upcoming events will be in Gary, Bloomington and Indianapolis. The goal is to assist BIPOC farmers with information about available resources
- NACD meeting occurred in Florida in February; elected first ever female president elect – Kim LeFleur from Massachusetts; membership includes every state and a few islands; 44 of the 56 or so entities were represented this year at the conference
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