

CCSI Action Plan

Goal #1 – Engage and involve farmers in building the adoption and promotion of soil health management systems on Indiana cropland.

| Strategic Priorities | Objectives | Tactics | Metrics |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>1. Develop and provide tools for Local Level Partnerships to continue the support and involvement of “innovative” and “visionary” farmers. (See image, p11)</p> | <p>a) Establish a Technical Advisory Committee that includes innovative and visionary farmers as well as ICP staff, researchers, and agricultural professionals that convenes annually at minimum.</p> | <p>Technical Advisory Committee serves to identify key areas of focus for training, research, and communications on soil health.</p> | |
| | <p>b) Establish a platform/mechanism to ensure innovative and visionary farmers are part of a two-way dialogue in development and technical transfer of proven methods.</p> | <p>Ensure farmers are involved in developing priorities of focus. Ensure farmers are well credited for tools/techniques developed and answers found.</p> | <p>Number of counties with at least one Top Soil Health Farmer serving as a mentor and guide.</p> |
| | <p>c) Innovative and visionary farmers are part of structured programs to reach other local farmers.</p> | <p>Innovative and visionary farmers to serve as mentors / coaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identify existing CCSI Farmers, SHP Farmers, NWF Cover Crop Champions, and NACD Soil Health Champions who may fit the criteria and their locations. ii. Help Local Level Partnerships in areas w/out “champions” to identify, network, and connect with top farmers in their regions. | <p>Changes in the adoption of key soil health practices as indicated by the Indiana Tillage and Cover Crop Transect.</p> |

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| <p>2. Develop and provide tools for Local Level Partnerships to meet “pragmatic” and “conservative” farmers (See image, p11) in improving their soil health management.</p> | <p>a) Determine and understand motivating factors for and against soil health practice and systems adoption.</p> | <p>Work with groups such as Purdue’s Natural Resource Social Science lab to identify and adopt methods to understand WHY pragmatic and conservative farmers use different practices (ex. Tillage).</p> | <p>Changes in the adoption of key soil health practices as indicated by the Indiana Tillage and Cover Crop Transect.</p> |
| | <p>b) Demonstrate the competitive advantage of soil health systems.</p> | <p>Work with groups such as Purdue’s Natural Resource Social Science lab to identify and adopt methods to determine what resources pragmatic and conservative farmers need to improve adoption success.</p> | |
| | | <p>Use pragmatic / conservative farmers who are adopting soil health systems to serve as mentors / coaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Reach out to Local Level Partnerships to identify pragmatic / conservative farmers who are successfully adopting soil health systems who may be willing to serve as a mentor / coach. ii. Provide support to pragmatic/conservative soil health coaches on presentations, etc. | |

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| Strategic Priorities | Strategic Priorities | Strategic Priorities | Strategic Priorities |
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| <p>3. Develop and provide tools for Local Level Partnerships to engage and involve “influencers” (landowners, lenders, agricultural retailers) to help advance the adoption of soil health practices and systems.</p> | <p>a) To ensure most effective use of available resources, develop prioritized list(s) of target demographics.</p> | <p>Work with advisors such as a Technical Advisory Committee to develop a prioritized list of influencers.</p> | |
| | | <p>Help Local Level Partnerships determine their own prioritized list(s) of target demographics.</p> | |
| | <p>b) Encourage Local Level Partnerships to include co-ops, commodity groups, others as members.</p> | <p>Work with groups such as Purdue’s Natural Resource Social Science to identify and adopt methods to engage influencers.</p> | <p>Percentage of Local Level Partnerships whose makeup includes “influencers” who are fully bought-in and engaged.</p> |
| | <p>c) Develop tools to begin conversations and/or engage with local “influencer” contacts.</p> | <p>Work with existing groups such as Women 4 the Land to engage and educate on soil health systems.</p> | <p>Number and types of groups engaged; number of individuals reached</p> |
| | | <p>Help farmers have conversations with landowners / examples of leases.</p> | |
| | | <p>i. Information to provide to landowners and land management companies on conservation leases</p> | |

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Goal #2 – Recommit CCSI to local working groups to build trust and buy-in to facilitate information transfer.

| Strategic Priorities | Objectives | Tactics | Metrics |
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| <p>1. Facilitate and support Local Level Partnerships’ efforts to deliver soil health messaging.</p> | <p>a) Ensure Local Level Partnerships are aware of and understand available CCSI services and tools.</p> | <p>Recommunicate CCSI’s role to all Local Level Partnerships.</p> | <p>Number of Local Level Partnerships actively working with CCSI</p> |
| | <p>b) Encourage Local Level Partnerships to serve as the sponsor-inviter-coordinator-owner of events.</p> | <p>Reinforce Local Level Partnerships’ leading role in defining local priorities and topics.</p> | <p>Number of events/attendees impacted through partnerships.</p> |
| | <p>c) Help Local Level Partnerships utilize the most effective workshop/meeting configuration for the audience and information (round tables vs. traditional workshop template).</p> | <p>Provide coordination and logistical support and (if needed) guidance.</p> | |
| | | <p>Provide assistance to help determine which type of event best suites the need.</p> | |
| | | <p>Provide event templates (Ex: meetings in a box). Provide facilitation assistance with round tables to start pieces of the conservation system (ex – Why till?). Document, reproduce and widely share successful events.</p> | |
| <p>2. Ensure a consistent soil health, as identified by the ICP Soil Health Philosophy, is being conveyed to, and by, Local Level Partnership members.</p> | <p>a) Ensure Local Level Partnerships have a foundational awareness, knowledge, and understanding of soil health.</p> | <p>Use committees (such as a Technical Advisory Committee) to identify and guide messaging</p> | <p>Tracking of ICP staff who have received foundational training.</p> |
| | | <p>i. Identify committees and potential members. ii. Set regular meeting dates, action items</p> | |
| | | <p>Basics of soil health training, including connections to soils science</p> | |
| | | <p>3 Day Soil Health trainings Core Cover Crop / Soil Health Systems trainings</p> | |

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CCSI Action Plan – Goal #2

| Strategic Priorities | Objectives | Tactics | Metrics | |
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| 2. (cont) Ensure a consistent soil health, as identified by the ICP Soil Health Philosophy, is being conveyed to, and by, Local Level Partnership members. | b) Ensure training is comprehensive and <i>ongoing</i> for Local Level Partnership members. | ICP leadership supports and compels attendance at training events. | | |
| | c) Increase the awareness and understanding of soil health principles “outside” Local Level Partnerships. | Speakers at events like the Indiana CCA Conference and other training opportunities | | |
| | | Include NGOs, Ag Nutrient Taskforce members in trainings. | | |
| Work with ag media and others to publish stories that highlight soil health. | | | | |
| 3. Provide professional development opportunities for Local Level Partnership members. | a) Provide trainings to cultivate and advance applied soil health knowledge/skills. | Work with Technical Advisory Committee to identify training needs and development plans. | Tracking of ICP staff and others who have completed training/certification levels. | |
| | | Advanced Cover Crops / Soil Health Systems trainings | | |
| | | Technical trainings | | |
| | | Encourage staff to pursue professional certifications such as the CCA Sustainability Certification. | | |
| | b) Provide supportive training opportunities. | Presentation and Media Skills training | | |
| | | Training on setting up effective demonstrations | | |
| | | Training on round table facilitation | | |
| | c) Provide methods for staff to document professional development achievements. | Provide certificates of completion for soil health trainings. | | |

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| Strategic Priorities | Objectives | Tactics | Metrics | |
|--|--|---|---------|--|
| 4. Enhance, develop and utilize messaging and information delivery mechanisms to/from Local Level Partnerships and other stakeholders. | a) Ensure two-way messaging mechanism is in place to help identify local needs, problems, and farmer-proven solutions. | Regional teleconferences | | |
| | | Listening sessions, meetings with Local Level Partnerships | | |
| | | Take-aways, needs from round-tables and other events documented and shared. | | |
| | b) Improve outreach to other associations and businesses – from top level to grassroots/field level. | Continue dialogue with Indiana Agriculture Nutrient Alliance. | | |
| Work with Local Level Partnerships in their efforts to involve local/regional ag retailers. | | | | |

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CCSI Action Plan – Goal #3

Goal #3 – Outreach: Effectively communicate the CCSI mission, strategy, available resources, and needed tools.

| Strategic Priorities | Objectives | Tactics | Metrics | |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| <p>1. Develop a marketing campaign and branding strategies for both internal and external purposes.</p> | <p>a) Develop and implement a marketing and communications plan.</p> | <p>Formal communications plan and budget</p> | <p>Changes in number of Local Level Partnership engagements with CCSI.</p> | |
| | | <p>Develop a professional marketing front for both internal and external purposes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Use professional marketing firm ii. Professional website | <p>Changes in CCSI “brand” recognition.</p> | |
| | <p>b) Create a broad ICP brand and a public brand.</p> | <p>Develop communications tools to use with Local Level Partnerships, ICP Leadership, and other partners.</p> | <p>Develop marketing tools to use when communicating to potential funders, financial partners.</p> | |
| | | <p>Information Campaigns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Advertise soil health principles and practices in Ag Media ii. Informative articles to general public media | <p>Identify and fully utilize Local Level Partnerships; make sure they understand the mission of CCSI and the resources available to them.</p> <p>CCSI Staff, Oversight Committee Members, ICP Leaders promote role of CCSI and the resources available to Local Level Partnerships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develop resources and materials to help communicate CCSI role and resources to other partners. ii. Include KPIs, statistics, and graphics in reports to partners to more easily communicate CCSI accomplishments. | |
| | <p>c) Ensure every Local Level Partnership fully understands CCSI resources available to them.</p> | | <p>Identify and fully utilize Local Level Partnerships; make sure they understand the mission of CCSI and the resources available to them.</p> | |
| | | | <p>CCSI Staff, Oversight Committee Members, ICP Leaders promote role of CCSI and the resources available to Local Level Partnerships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Develop resources and materials to help communicate CCSI role and resources to other partners. ii. Include KPIs, statistics, and graphics in reports to partners to more easily communicate CCSI accomplishments. | |

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| <p>1. (cont) Develop a marketing campaign and branding strategies for both internal and external purposes.</p> | <p>c) (cont) Ensure every Local Level Partnership fully understands CCSI resources available to them.</p> | <p>iii. Develop “newsletter” pieces for ISDA, IASWCD, others to communicate CCSI accomplishments – where CCSI has provided support – and make part of a regular communications delivery.</p> | |
| <p>2. Enhance, develop and fully utilize social network and other media tools to deliver soil health messaging and information.</p> | <p>a) Utilize traditional outreach tools such as printed materials and websites.</p> | | <p>Number of publications, newsletter articles. Number and type of website of visits, hits, and downloads.</p> |
| | <p>b) Enhance social media presence.</p> | <p>Information what CCSI is doing – successes and opportunities Use as tool for regular communication with ICP</p> | <p>Changes in Social Media impressions, followers</p> |
| | <p>c) Vet other platforms (such as podcasts and forums) for outreach and education purposes.</p> | | |

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CCSI Action Plan – Goal #4

Goal #4 – Review, decide, and act on CCSI’s role in research related to soil health and soil health systems.

| Strategic Priorities | Objectives | Tactics | Metrics |
|---|---|---------|---------|
| 1. Review current obligations and make recommendations on continuing projects after present commitment periods are completed. | a) Establish a research committee. | | |
| | b) Review all current projects – collaborative and lead; Make recommendations as to the future role of CCSI within those projects. | | |
| 2. Develop and execute an action plan specific to research. | a) Identify tactics to end or continue current research projects; Make recommendations as to the future role of CCSI within those projects – including timelines. | | |
| 3. Develop a vetting system for future opportunities. | a) Work with a Technical Advisory Committee to develop and revise research priorities. | | |
| | b) Develop an efficient system to identify and vet potential projects for CCSI involvement. | | |

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Goal #5 – Attain a financial stability that will allow CCSI to support its mission and achieve the goals outlined in this plan.

| Strategic Priorities | Objectives | Tactics | Metrics | |
|--|---|---------|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Develop minimum (what CCSI needs to remain highly effective) and maximum (allowing delivery on all program objectives) operating budgets. | a) Identify annual operating budgets. | | | |
| | b) Identify projected operating budgets. | | | |
| 2. Develop a capital structure plan that takes into account long-term, non-operating needs. | a) Identify <u>operating reserve needs</u> to withstand temporary cash flow fluctuations, unplanned reductions in revenue, or increased demand for programs/services. | | Operating reserves accumulation. | |
| | b) In addition to operating reserve needs, identify asset purchases (like equipment) and funding program/management initiatives (like pilot programs or staff capacity building). | | | |
| 3. Develop a funding model that identifies and pursues specific sources of funding that are a good match to support the work of CCSI. | a) Identify ranges and quantity of donations/grants required to meet funding goals. | | Amount of funding secured. | |
| | b) Review, revise (as needed) the CCSI donation policy | | | |
| | c) Identify and pursue specific sources of funding. | | | |
| | d) Develop marketing tools to use when communicating to potential funders and financial partners. | | | |

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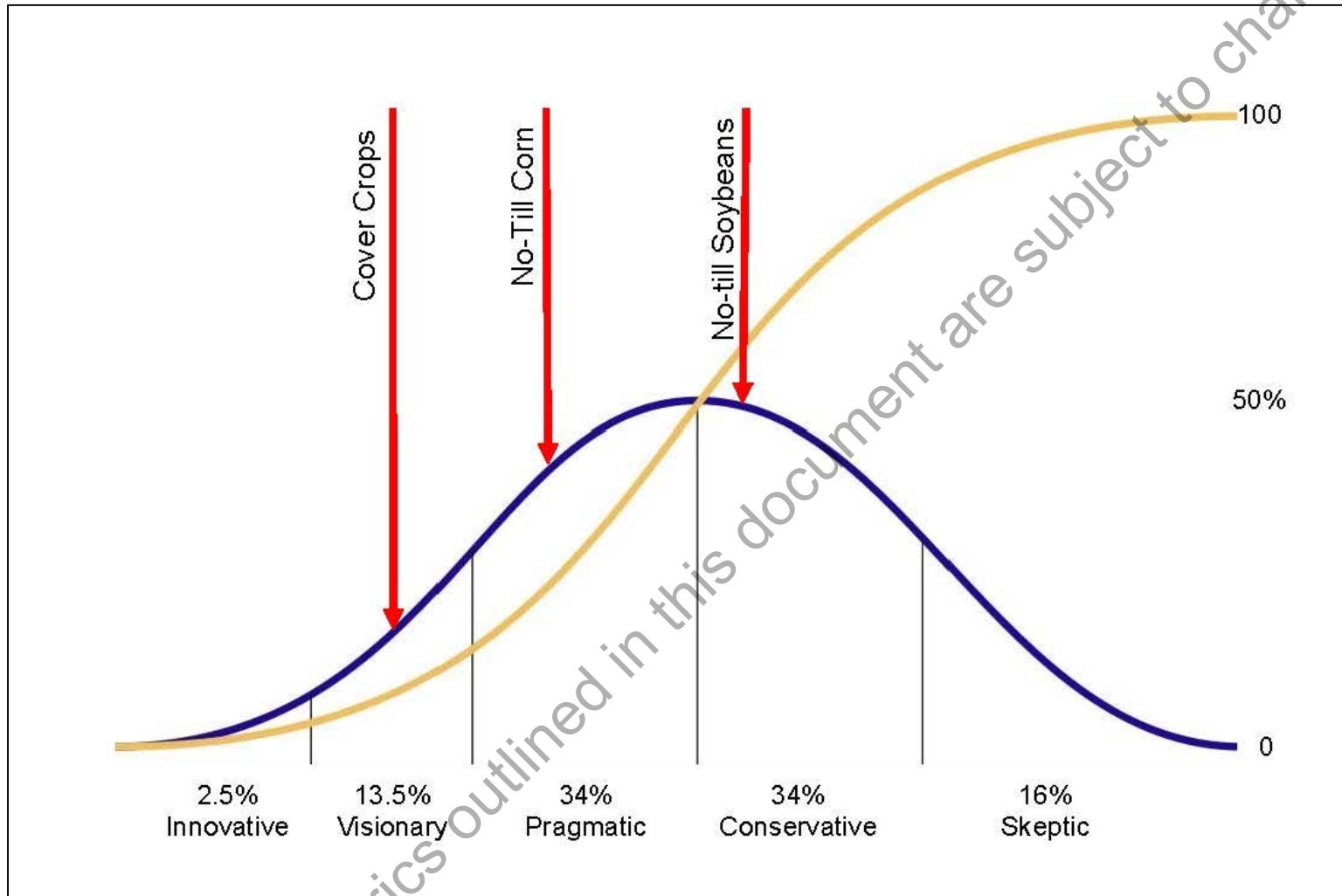


Figure 1 Based on Everett Rogers Diffusion of Innovations theory, successive groups of adopters may be placed in five major categories. With successive groups adopting new technology (blue), its "market share" (yellow) will eventually reach the saturation level.

Levels of Cover Crop, No-Till Corn, and No-Till Soybean adoption (red arrows) were sourced from the Indiana Tillage and Cover Crop Transect <http://www.in.gov/isda/2383.htm>

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