

**Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)  
May Regional Teleconference Notes  
May 27 (NE, NW) and June 1 (SE, SW) 2020**

## Participants

Tony Bailey, NRCS State Conservation Agronomist (NW)  
Andrea Baker – Kosciusko County SWCD (NE)  
Sara Day – NRCS, Huntington Co. (NE)  
Don Donovan –NRCS Parke/Vermillion NRCS (SW)  
Curt Emanuel, Purdue Extension ANR Educator, Boone County (NW)  
Laura Fribley – ISDA District Support Specialist (SE)  
Kameron Garlitch – ISDA Resource Specialist (SE)  
Susanna Hinds – NRCS Area Grazing Specialist (NW)  
Jessica Hoehn – CCSI Southern Program Manager(all)  
Lisa Holscher – CCSI Director (all)  
Frank Jones, NRCS, Planning Team Leader (NE)  
Michele Jones- Purdue Extension ANR Educator, Morgan County (SW)  
Brad Kohlhagen – Purdue Extension ANR Educator, Adams Co. (NE)  
Dave Lefforge – ISDA Resource Specialist (NE)  
Sarah Longenecker – St. Joe County SWCD (NE)  
Lisa MacPhee- Morgan County SWCD (SW)  
Stephanie McLain, NRCS State Soil Health Specialist (NE, NW)  
Troy Manges – NRCS Marshall County (NE)  
Martha Miller- Monroe County SWCD, IDEA President (SW)  
Austin Pearson, Purdue Extension ANR Educator, Tipton County (NW)  
Kim Peterson, Lake County SWCD & IASWCD (NW)  
Joe Rorick – CCSI Conservation Agronomist (NE, NW)  
Melissa Ruschau – Dubois County SWCD (SW)  
Hans Schmidt – Purdue Extension ANR Educator, Posey County (SW)  
Sheila Schroeder – CCSI Northern Program Manager(NE, NW, SE)  
Walt Sell – Purdue Extension Asst. Program Leader for Soil Health (all)  
Mark Thomas – ISDA Resource Specialist (SE)  
Kristi Todd, IDEM Watershed Specialist (NE)  
Danielle Waldschmidt, NRCS Area Conservationist (NW)  
Robert Waller – Purdue Extension ANR Educator, Jennings County (SE)  
Tara Wessler-Henry – ISDA District Support Specialist (SE)  
Stacy White – Randolph County SWCD (NE)  
Amy Work – IASWCD Communications and Member Program Manager (NE)  
Robert Zupancic – NRCS SE Area Grazing Specialist (SE)

## Back-on-Track Guidance / Re-opening Indiana

CCSI will work to keep everyone safe as we support in-person events. When working with multiple partners, CCSI will follow the partner with the most strict guidelines. Acknowledging that much of our

target audience is in the at-risk category, this is about keeping everyone safe and not becoming a vector of the virus.

### **Purdue Extension**

Starting July 1, Purdue Extension will adhere to Indiana's [Back on Track](#) plan, the social distancing and public health/safety guidelines of Purdue University, and recommendations from state and local health authorities regarding in-person events. County 4-H fairs can occur after Purdue University restrictions on face-to-face events end June 30 — contingent on a county having reached stage five of the Back on Track plan and adherence to best practices at these fairs to minimize the spread of COVID-19. The health and safety of our stakeholders, staff and volunteers continues to be our top priority. Through June 30, in-person events remain either postponed or offered virtually.

In-Person events: Additional specifics

- Extension staff and volunteers will wear face masks, wash hands frequently and disinfect items often
- All people in attendance will maintain social distancing
- People will be screened prior to entering the event
- A list of participants and their contact information will be generated and maintained to provide to local health departments
- A health/safety plan will be submitted for approval 3 weeks prior to the event
- All food will be prepackaged into individual servings
- Consider hosting programs and events virtually

The Purdue Ag Center Field Days as well as many other field days will be virtual events

County 4-H events may be held in person providing all criteria are met, otherwise they may be virtual events

Purdue is working on virtual PARP credits. The cost will likely go from \$10 to \$15 due to event fees.

### **Purdue Campus**

Campus is moving toward making everything student and essential research focused. Staff are encouraged to telework and they are trying to move about 1/3 of employees off campus.

### **CCSI**

Posey County has a Soil Health Breakfast scheduled for July 9<sup>th</sup>. This may be the 1<sup>st</sup> in-person event in the State for all ICP partners. As an organization of the Indiana Conservation Partnership CCSI will respect ICP guidelines and will be following the strictest set of guidelines from the partners involved in an event, as well as local health departments. Planning committees should consider having the local health department involved when planning in-person events. State of Indiana's Back-On-Track stages will help guide the processes as well, this helps determine where we are and how we can proceed. As of today, we are in stage 3 which allows for 100 people max with social distancing guidelines. Venue square footage may limit total number of people allowed at the event. When looking at total numbers, don't forget to include agency/partner staff, venue staff, caterers, etc.

If health screening is a requirement, CCSI can financially support soil health events by hiring a medical professional (LPN, EMT, etc.) to do those screenings. CCSI can also provide facemasks. CCSI Program managers are compiling a list of local distilleries that are producing sanitizer and will make that list available to partners. Anyone who knows of a local hand sanitizer source can forward that information to Sheila ([Sheila.schroeder@in.nacdnet.net](mailto:Sheila.schroeder@in.nacdnet.net)) or Jessica ([jessica.hoehn@in.nacdnet.net](mailto:jessica.hoehn@in.nacdnet.net)). CCSI is also developing a document to step through all the guidelines and considerations when planning an in-person event.

Registration will be required and contact information (email and phone number) will be collected for contact tracing. An exception will be Amish communities where not everyone has a phone number or email. For those communities, an email and phone number for an individual that can be used in order to contact registrants will be used.

Discussion was also had on insurance and COVID. It is best to contact your insurance company to see where they stand with covering any claims related to a COVID outbreak related to an event.

### **FSA/FPAC**

Guidance has been provided by leadership and opening USDA Service Centers will occur in 4 phases, with opening to the public occurring in phase 4. There will be at least 2 weeks between each phase. Each phase allows an increasing number of people in office, different requirements for social distancing, etc. Opening will depend on conditions locally.

### **Trainings**

The Purdue Diagnostic Training Center has cancelled all events through mid-August. The CCSI-SARE 3-day Soil Health training (August 25-27) is currently still on. Guidelines from organizations with possible attendees is being collected to see what might work for an in-person training. It is not feasible to move that training to a virtual format.

Soil Testing 2.0 is being planned. Partner leaders have been sent dates October 13, 14, and 15 for concurrence.

### **IDEA**

The IDEA Fall Conference is still on. A final decision will be made at the end of June as weather to host that conference as usual.

### **IDEM**

Most staff are still working from home and they are scheduled to start coming back to the office a few days per week on June 8<sup>th</sup>. Sampling has resumed. Watershed specialist are still doing virtual visits. Section 319 and 205j grant Notice of Intent are due June 1.

### **IASWCD**

Amy Work and Joe Schmees are still working remotely and probably will through the end of June. The district staff and supervisor trainings that are normally held in August will occur in 3 independent virtual sessions on Thursday evenings this year (August 25, September 1 and September 8). Each session will have an independent topic and staff and supervisors can attend 1, 2 or all 3 of the sessions.

## ISDA

There is no out-of-state travel and no (costly registration) training due to budget cuts. ISDA is trying to maintain staff.

ISDA DSSs are hosting CWI work sessions in June.

## Virtual Meeting Platforms

CCSI has Zoom (licensed), WebEx and teleconference lines available for planning meetings. If any partners are interested in using one of those platforms, contact Sheila or Jessica.

When using Zoom, a meeting room is as required for USDA security compliance. During events hosted on CCSI accounts, CCSI staff work behind the scenes to cross-reference that those logging in are registered and legitimate attendees.

Note: Many are using MS Teams with success. However, MS Teams tends to require a lot of bandwidth and there is often a lot of lag for those who do not have a good, strong connection. Consider this when choosing your virtual meeting platform.

## #lovINsoil

CCSI has launched the campaign #LovINsoil to provide awareness and education about soil health for everyone across our state. Visit the webpage at <https://www.ccsin.org/lovinsoil>. More will be added to the page as the campaign develops. As part of the campaign, 16 billboards will be put up across Indiana for 1 month each. Four have already been put up and are located in Dubois, Jackson, Cass, and Randolph County (1 each). As you make soil health-related posts on social media, please tag CCSI (@conservationcropping for Facebook; ccsi\_in for Instagram and Twitter) and use the hashtag #lovINsoil.

## Soil Health Q&A

Lisa has been working with Jamie Scott and a small group of farmers to host a “Farmer Q & A” to troubleshoot problems in the field through the Zoom platform. Jamie is in his field with an iPad explaining some cover crop termination issues. He has intentionally sprayed test strips of annual ryegrass when it was cool to demonstrate how the cover crop was hurt and not killed. He was able to show what to look for through video. Jamie was also able to show green streaks where cover crop was able to take up the 2 by 2 fertilizer because it was too cool to terminate. This platform will be great to invite new cover crop/soil health system farmers to ask questions to experienced farmers. Lisa is working on editing that video and put on YouTube to share with those interested.

## Other

- Walt Sell will be serving as temporary part-time ANR Educator as well as still serving as Assistant ANR Program Leader. Purdue is limiting hiring to high priority positions.
- Pathway to Water Quality sign-up will begin June 1. Information on sign-up can be found at <http://icp.iaswcd.org/volunteer-at-pathway-to-water-quality/>.
- It's been very wet in the Ripley County area. Approximately 30 % of Ripley Co. farmers haven't planted a seed yet. Crops look good in much of the rest of the state.

- Some SWCD are still in limbo about having SWCD meetings. Some are hosting meetings virtually and some have even hosted in parking lots.
- When hosting an event, consider advertising attendee limits and social distancing plans. Attendees may choose to register if they know there are a limited number of attendees permitted and there are social distancing plans in place.