

Highlights

OUTREACH EVENTS

- Since its official inception in January 2010, CCSI has participated in some 630 events, reaching over approximately 37,650 attendees.
- In 2020, CCSI materially participated in 38 events, reaching approximately 4650 individuals. Of note: Due to Covid-19, only one live event was held after March 11th, and two events were hybridized to maintain social distancing and safety standards.

PIVOT TO VIRTUAL

- In spring, CCSI quickly pivoted to increase its capability to produce innovative virtual events.
- “Virtual Field Day Kits” were assembled and made available to partners for their outreach events as well as CCSI-led webinars and virtual field days/shop visits. Kits include tripods, Bluetooth headsets and lapel mics, adapters for phones and tablets, gimbles, and portable chargers. Event support funding also enabled CCSI to pay for both outgoing and return shipping.

TRAINING

Due to Covid-19, the full scope of CCSI-SARE Soil Health Trainings was reduced.

- Advanced Soil Health – Specialty Crop Track focused upon hemp production and was held in conjunction with the 2020 Hort Congress; 15 attendees
- Core Cover Crops and Core Soil Health Systems Trainings were combined and converted to a series of 3 virtual events. Total attendance was up significantly – 68 total attendees.
- Soil Health and Sustainability for Midwestern Field Staff (3-Day Soil Health Training) was converted to a hybridized training: 2-1/2 days virtual, one day in-person. Attendance was limited to 25 participants to maintain social distancing.
- Advanced Cover Crops Training was converted to a single webinar; 91 attendees.
- ICP Nutrient Management Training (Virtual); 50 attendees
- ICP Ag 101 (Virtual); 50 attendees
- Soil Health Demo Kits: Using funding from an NRCS Agreement and coordinating with state NRCS staff, CCSI procured equipment to ensure that all 92 of Indiana counties had a complete soil health demo kit. These kits are available for use by ICP partners, farmers, and others promoting soil health. Planned training for use of these kits was delayed to 2021 due to Covid-19

PODCASTS AND WEBINARS

- In the third season of CCSI-Hoosier Ag Today Soil Health Podcasts, a baker’s dozen (13) were produced, with another already recorded. A second line of topics focusing on soil health in specialty crop production were added to the lineup. They may be found on the CCSI website ccsin.org/podcast along with links to subscribe on a variety of platforms.
- A pair of virtual farmer roundtables were piloted, using the Zoom Meeting platform and CCSI Virtual Field Day Kits. The team looks forward to hosting more virtual roundtables in 2021. One recording may be found on the CCSI website www.ccsin.org/tools

- Pilot Webinar / Virtual Field Visit. Using CCSI Virtual Field Day equipment and the Zoom Webinar platform, a virtual field visit was piloted. The featured speaker was broadcasting live from a field in Western Kentucky and videos/imagery that complimented his presentation were played remotely. The recording may be found on the CCSI website www.ccsin.org/tools
- 2021 Webinars and Virtual Shop/Field Visits are being organized. January and February events are scheduled with others to come. Registration is available on the CCSI website www.ccsin.org/registration-other-events
- **WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA AND OTHER OUTREACH**
 - A new website www.ccsin.org was launched in January 2020. Revamped and reorganized, the site provides a one-stop shop for:
 - Soil Health information
 - Events calendars and registration portals
 - Resources such as photos, videos, and landowner outreach tools
 - The Root Project www.ccsin.org/root-project is a graphics project illustrating a variety of cover crop species, including their rooting structure. Since its launch in late October 2020, over 425 unique individuals across the globe have downloaded graphics directly from the website, including many university-based persons.
 - A series of 12 billboards with 4 unique designs were rolled out over the courses of the summer focusing on the benefits of soil health. The rollout included a social media campaign: #LovINsoil

FINANCIAL AGREEMENTS

- An agreement with USDA-NRCS was entered, providing 5 years of full funding for the Director position, and 50% funding for the Agronomist Position.
- Purdue Extension agreed to fund 50% of the Agronomist Position.
- A grant was awarded by the National Association of Conservation Districts to fund the Program Manager activities for approximately 1 year.
- Indiana Corn Marketing Council and Indiana Soybean Alliance increased financial support, especially for activities such as podcasts that provide wider opportunities for outreach.
- A donations portal was incorporated into the website ccsin.org/donate, providing an easy way for users to make tax deductible donations.

OTHER SUPPORT

In addition to CCSI's core mission, staff began providing support to partners in spring to help enable them to continue holding board meetings and other critical work. CCSI staff set-up and made a "Burner" Teleconference line available specifically for this use. They also set-up and hosted a number of Zoom Meetings for SWCDs and other partners for board meetings, interviews, etc.