

**Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative (CCSI)**  
**September Regional Teleconference Notes**  
**September 26, 2022**

## Participants

Lisa Holscher, CCSI Director (all)  
Sheila Schroeder, CCSI Northern Program Manager (all)  
Jessica Hoehn, CCSI Southern Program Manager (all)  
Walt Sell, Purdue Extension (all)  
Hans Schmitz, Purdue Extension/CCSI Agronomist (all)  
Jenny Rowland, ISDA (S)  
Judi Brown, Dubois County SWCD (S)  
Jennifer Kipper, NRCS DC, Scott County (S)  
Missy Elgin, Orange County SWCD (S)  
Scott Sanders, Decatur County SWCD (S)  
Mark Thomas, ISDA (S)  
Sarah Brackney, Purdue Extension-Daviess County (S)  
William Fett, NRCS (all)  
Sarah Hanson, Purdue Extension- Johnson County (S)  
Jon Charlesworth, Purdue Extension- Benton/Warren County (N)  
Jamie Perry, Urban Soil Health (N)  
Stacy White, Randolph County SWCD (N)  
Lais McCartney, SARE/Purdue Extension-Hancock County  
Kerry Nielson, NRCS DC, Pulaski County (N)

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## • Partner Updates

### ○ CCSI Trainings

- **CCSI-SARE Intro to Soil Health** is a very basic course designed to provide a general understanding of soil health systems and the fundamentals of crop production. This training is geared toward newer staff and those who do not have a background in agriculture. Training will take place February 28, 2023. Virtual
- **CCSI-SARE Core Cover Crops & Core Soil Health** is a train-the-trainer event series to provide a foundation for understanding how soil health practices such as no-till and cover crops may be incorporated into Midwestern cropping systems, including considerations for changes in nutrient and pest management; as well as understanding how these cropping systems that can lead to improved soil health. Target audience for this training includes Indiana Conservation Partnership (Indiana NRCS, Purdue Extension, Indiana SWCD, ISDA, IDEM, IDNR, SSCB, Indiana FSA) staff, farmer-mentors, agronomists, and other ag professionals who have not attended advanced trainings or are looking for a refresher. Training will take place Tuesdays in April with April 4, 18 & 25 being held virtually and April 11 in-person.
- **Soil Health & Sustainability for Midwestern Field Staff** is designed for staff who have completed both the Intro to Soil Health Training and the Core training series, or undergraduate level soils

courses. This is an in-depth 3 day training held at the Beck Agricultural Center at the Agronomy Center for Research and Education (ACRE) in West Lafayette. Students will learn to teach others about soil health, its importance, and diagnosis, along with practices to improve soil health. This training event occurs June 27-29, 2023.

- **Grow More** is a conservation communication program that a handful of Indiana ICP staff attended a pilot event for earlier this month. This pilot was led by the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and is a collaboration of the Indiana SARE Program, Linda Prokopy (Purdue University), and CCSI. NWF has been conducting workshops like this through their **Grow More Program** since 2019. Geared towards conservation professionals, the focus is on introducing behavior change and communication principles. As with the pilot held this month, 2023 trainings will be interactive, with a mixture of presentations by NWF staff with backgrounds in social science and communication, breakouts, and group discussions. The goal is to introduce some basic concepts, facilitate discussion and co-learning among participants, all with the aim of improving outreach to non-adopters of conservation and soil health practices. Dates for Grow More events will be forthcoming.
  
- **Purdue Extension**
  - Webinar: *Manure Management and Utilization Technologies – Anaerobic Digestion Topics Part 1* Thursday October 20, 2022, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM (EST Time)  
Register: <https://ccsin.info/manure-102022>  
See attached flyer for details
  - United Soybean Board has funded a waterhemp survey that the Purdue Weed Science group will be conducting this fall. They aim to collect seed from female plants to screen for resistance to 2,4-D, dicamba, and glufosinate (Liberty). The goal is to collect seed from 2 fields per county and a minimum of 20 fields overall. If you know of fields with waterhemp plants that are sticking above the crop canopy at the current time, and you and/or your farmer are willing to help with this project, they simply ask that you contact Julie Young and she will schedule a time to come to your area and do the weed seed collection. You are more than welcome to help with the seed collection if your schedule allows or you can just provide an address and they can collect the seed. If you are not able to meet Julie at the field, it would be helpful if you would let the grower know when they are collecting seed from his or her field.  
Julie's contact info: Email – [young294@purdue.edu](mailto:young294@purdue.edu) or Cell number – 618 713 6472
  - Watermelon/Cover Crop Study: With canola planting dates, it may be too late to get in, but worth a mention for it or future studies. Zeus Mateos Fierro, a postdoc in the Department of Entomology at Purdue University, is working with Ian Kaplan and Ashley Leach on a watermelon cover crop research project. They are interested in using a flowering cover crop mixed with rye to look at the effects of traditional windbreak crops with those that may enhance natural enemies and wild pollinators. Their field trials are planned for 2023 in commercial watermelon fields. The treatments include:
    - i) rye cover crop and standard insecticide spray program
    - ii) rye + canola cover crop and standard insecticide spray program
    - iii) rye cover crop and IMP spray program
    - iv) rye + canola cover crop and IMP spray program

4 fields per grower, 20 acres is ideal size.

Seed purchase is covered by study.

Zeus is interested in being contacted with information on possible participants. He can give additional details. His contact information is: [zmateosf@purdue.edu](mailto:zmateosf@purdue.edu) or (765) 409 8274.

- Indiana Watershed Leadership Academy: A great opportunity to increase watershed knowledge and network. Series of trainings runs January-May 2023. Registration ends November 4. For more information: [Indiana Watershed Leadership \(purdue.edu\)](https://www.purdue.edu/watershed/)
- Indiana Small Farms Conference: March 2 & 3 @ Hendricks County Fairgrounds, Danville. <https://ccsin.info/ISFC2023>
- **Women4TheLand**
  - Women4theLand is hosting Discussion Leader training Oct 20<sup>th</sup> and any female ICP staff interested in being a discussion leader should contact Heather Bacher ([hbacher@women4theland.org](mailto:hbacher@women4theland.org)) for more information.
- **NRCS**
  - Staff are currently wrapping up the federal fiscal year. Many out conducting CRP checks. They are also moving through process in accepting CSP and EQIP program applicants. Hope to have EQIP deadline within the next month.
  - NW area will be hosting soil health trainings for that area. At this point, restricted to NRCS employees. Once NRCS employees are comfortable with material, then may open it up to the partnership.
- **ISDA**
  - Virtual INFA Q & A Session on October 6<sup>th</sup> @ 1:00 PM Eastern. Contact Trevor Laureys ([Tlaureys@isda.IN.gov](mailto:Tlaureys@isda.IN.gov)) for more information.
  - SSCB will have CWI grant discussion at next meeting on October 25<sup>th</sup>.
- **SARE**
  - CCSI has given a lot of great activities for 2023-2024 Plan of Work.
  - There are lots of SARE grants that are currently open. <https://northcentral.sare.org/grants/> Please reach out for support / questions to Lais [lmccartn@purdue.edu](mailto:lmccartn@purdue.edu) or 317-919-2691.
- **Urban Soil Health**
  - Urban Small Farms has been conducting training for conservation staff across the state.
  - Hosted a soil health event in Adams Co targeting Amish and Mennonite communities w/ Dan Perkins – about 50 in attendance.
  - Finished shooting video in Giving Gardens in Columbus City. The videos will be posted to Facebook and also presented at their monthly update meetings.
  - Partnering w/ Parkview Hospital in Ft. Wayne to establish soil health farm to augment their existing greenhouse.
- **Other Partner Updates**
  - **Benton/Warren County** During Seeger High School soil judging contest, the host farmer, David Taylor (River Friendly Farmer), offered to give tour of field that had been planted in wheat and now

had 8-way cover crop mix planted in it. Students (about 10-12) were very interested in learning about the cover crops.

- **Orange County** Will host a Beef Tour on Saturday, October 1 in Eckerty.
- **IDEA** Fall Conference will be held in Brown County October 25-27.
- **Dubois County** Youth soil judging recently. Have fields at VU LSI planted in Cover Crops that are currently 9 ft tall. The goal is to build OM. The fall cover crops were planted into standing summer cover crops. They plan to host a field day Mid-November.

- **Ag 101/CAMP Training**

- Based on the last CCSI training committee meeting, NRCS will be taking lead on this training for employees who don't come from an ag background. It will be available for all partners. Watch for more information in the coming weeks and months.

- **NRCS Resources for Working with Beginning Farmers**

- NRCS will be holding a Working with Beginning Farmer Training in December. It will have a cap, but is open to conservation partners. Beginning farmers have priority consideration for funding, will rank higher, can receive 15% higher cost share and are eligible to receive advanced payments. FSA has loan programs that are targeted to beginning farmers and have a loan-finder tool. There are also beginning farmer benefits through RMA (crop insurance), including discounted rates. Through Rural Development, there is a value-added product program to provide assistance to beginning farmers. Also have a parallel program for Veterans that have similar considerations, advanced funding priority, etc. If there are questions, people want information, can direct to Will Fett, Indiana NRCS Outreach Coordinator, to help make connections. ([William.fett@usda.gov](mailto:William.fett@usda.gov)) Anything Will can do to help – please send his way. See attachment for more info.
- The **Agribusiness Initiative** can also help people that are in early farming stages or those figuring out how to sell and 'get out'. Any type of farmer can fill out a form— producing flowers, vegetables, milk, eggs, meat, grain, etc. <https://isbdc.org/agribusiness-initiative/>

- **Discussion on change in composition of attendees at events this year**

- Didn't see a big shift in NW/NE.
- Kind of an odd season after COVID – maybe a bit of a younger crowd
- Depends. Similar field days to that past---some numbers were higher. But some that were similar to the past—lower or noticeably lower. Trying to figure out what the future of programming looks like.
- Numbers were down. Attendance at indoor meetings was down.
- Decatur SWCD/Roger Wenning event was tremendous. Had 60 RSVPs and nearly 100 showed up. If we could change anything, it would be to have more LOCAL producers. Had a lot of out of state / out of county. Had some younger guys.
- Had about the same numbers at the Ripley No-Till Breakfast in March.
- May be due to PARP cycles. Also seeing more beginning farmer programs – thanks to Amy Thompson w/ Purdue Extension.
- School related events like Envirothon seem to have lower attendance, but all other events seem to be normal capacity.

- No change in composition. Expected a flood back of attendance, but struggle to get attendance.