

## **Conservation Agriculture Systems Alliance**

Conference Call

Tuesday, April 05, 2011

at 11 a.m. (eastern)

### **Participants:**

Glen Shaw, Soil Conservation Council of Canada

Paul Thoroughgood, Soil Conservation Council of Canada

Doyle Wiebe, Saskatchewan Soil Conservation Association/SCCC

Don McCabe, Soil Conservation Council of Canada

Sjoerd Duiker, Pennsylvania State University/PANTA

Bill Kuenstler, USDA NRCS

Tim Healey, Agrotain

Chuck Chaitovitz, Global Environment Technology Foundation

Randy Raper, USDA ARS

Karen Scanlon, CTIC

### **Agenda**

- Financial info from Theo
- Timing (winter vs summer)
- Location of 6<sup>th</sup> WCCA

### **Discussion**

Reviewed past WCCA financial/attendance records provided by Theo.

Registration costs? We want lower fee than 5<sup>th</sup> WCCA so we attract more farmers. Perhaps offer different events to make more affordable. Include farmer registration rate, student registration rate, etc.

#### Timing?

BK: to show off CA in North America, event should be during a growing/cropping season. To see CA in Canada, has to be in summer. May make sense to stay in Canada.

DM: SCCA discussed yesterday. Narrowed to Winnipeg, Manitoba. Offers diverse systems and soil conservation techniques with challenging soils. Sask next door has large rates of no-till adoption. Field trips to US from Winnipeg. Endorse summer timing – see first-hand on the land. Can use industry facilities in area.

GS: can't see much in winter and there are a lot of meetings already planned.

PT: last half June and July is more desirable. August may have some harvest.

RR: farmer participation can be better during winter; but understand not ideal in northern climates. Also better to show technology. Between spring and harvest is best to demonstrate technology to audiences.

DW: earlier in season is better to see impacts to soil, which is theme of conference. Late June, after Canadian Farm Progress show, 3<sup>rd</sup> week of June.

#### Location?

SCCC presented Winnipeg as preferred location.

BK: crops?

PT: wheat, canola, soybeans, corn

DW: diversity of minor crops: sunflowers, flax, dry bean, and more, potatoes under irrigation

GS: ag Canada research station not far with largest variety of crops grown in Canada

PT: some forage seed production in area as well

BK: cover crops? Not going to see in growing season, but can we talk about it used in these systems?

GS: North Dakota doing work on cover crops, which is close/feasible for tour.

PT: Richardson farms incorporated alfalfa in short-term rotation as water management tool. UM scientist promoting cover crop of red clover and sweet clover. Not adopted at field scale yet.

BK: Ontario researchers working with cover crops.

PT: wet heavy clay with hi organic content; moving west (2 hours) see more kinds / mixtures of soil with high organic matter (sand, loam, clay); fragile soils in Sask. (long field trip)

PT: spoke with grower groups and small companies in area and received interest of in-kind support for event.

DM: WCCA needs to be showcase for North America. University research networks tie in Univ in Canada to Midwest US Univ; exploit that as we move forward. Use similarities in climate/latitude to facilitate global conversations.

TH: fine with Canada

BK: Canada location good and ground work done.

Could we have a field trip into US from Winnipeg?

DM: border crossings can be good or bad, depending on conditions at border. Inform customs well in advance, understand logistical issues and required documentation.

MANDAK has new manager

TH: target attendance # and types of people. If we want majority to be farmers, how do we get them there?

DM: how will organization and financials be handled?

We want this to be a North American showcase. Will need private sector involvement.

BK: wealth of knowledge throughout NA in CA systems.

### **NEXT MEETING**

Karen ask Theo for proposal deadline

SCCC look at ideal dates for Winnipeg

Wednesday, April 27 @ 10 am eastern

Time -- Winter event

Pros: farmer participation likely higher; piggy back on existing event (national no-till conference)

Cons: weather events prohibit travel; no field trip

Time – Summer event

Pros: field trip possibilities better

Cons: farmer participation lower; weather problems

Susan: will financial considerations help drive decision on time/location?

Dick: build it and they will come. Winter timing will be negative for international audience. If goal is to attract time of year that makes it attractive to those outside US/Canada.

Glen: Canadian producers visiting South America got most value from field trips.

Doyle: CA is not just no-till

**What will you take away from today's conversation?**

Dick: focus on target audience; desire to make event producer friendly and balanced with science/research community; strong arguments for winter vs summer; consensus to not pair with commodity conference but could pair with no-till conference

Glen: favor summer conference not piggybacked with another event; don't hear consensus on location, need more work that

Doyle: ditto Glen

Susan: look at who attends and what place is easy to get to from there; focus on content being a great draw; farmers come for field trips and would vote for that

Sjoerd: vote for integrating with no-till farmer conference;

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