

Conservation Agriculture Systems Alliance

Conference Call

Tuesday, August 16, 2011

at 11 a.m. (eastern)

Participants:

Bill Kuenstler, USDA NRCS

Karen Scanlon, CTIC

Glen Shaw, SCCC

Jodi DeJong-Hughes, Regional Extension Educator, Univ of MN Extension

Randall Reeder, OSU Extension

Jerry Hatfield, USDA ARS

Agenda

- * WCCA proposal: progress in obtaining funding to send a CASA member to present at 5th WCCA in Australia
- * Update on cover crop / insurance issue: Led by Eliav Bitan, National Wildlife Federation
- * CASA member updates

WCCA proposal

GS: requested funding from Agriculture and Agrifood Canada for Don McCabe to travel/attend 5th WCCA in Australia. Seemed supportive, but need to get approval. \$7-8,000 needed for full conference, tour, registration and travel. Requested 75% funding; SCCC will provide 25%.

Tourism Winnipeg will provide materials to use in presentation. Assume we will need PowerPoint presentation.

Anyone else planning to attend WCCA?

RR: hosting group of Australians on Aug 23-24 for brief visit.

Cover Crop/Insurance

BK: NRCS developed information on cover crops and benefits and management and provided materials to Risk Management Agency. To help RMA modify rules in regions. Not sure of RMA plans/actions.

Member Updates

RR: Dave Brandt and NRCS hosting field day at Brandt farm with 50 people (NRCS employees) to learn about cover crops. Tomorrow same presenters with 100+ farmers. Hosting Australian farm group next week; they are touring U.S. then Mexico before returning. Annual no-till field day Aug. 31; annual no-till conference in December.

Randall will retire Aug. 31.

JDH: Sept 12 and 13 soil quality workshop sponsored by SARE (7.5 CEUs) in Morris and Waseka at research and outreach centers. Compaction field day Sept 1 near Fergus Falls, MN. Conservation Tillage Conference Feb. 7 and 8 Rochester, MN.

GS: SCCC Board revising mission/goals in strategic plan; updating web site. National advisory committee set up to address nutrient management issues.

BK: NRCS will sponsor drainage summit in Bloomington, MN, on Oct. 11 and 12. Focus is upper Midwest and promotion of drainage water management as water quality protection tool.

JH: implementation of CIG project in Illinois and working with The Fertilizer Institute on another project (IL and IA); preparing for national climate assessment project. US Global Change Research Program (out of white house) started project assess state of climate. Leading ag portion and Midwest effort. Must consider conservation practices to protect soil in extreme storms that come with climate change.

CTIC: CIG in Illinois for monitoring tile outlet

Next call Sept 7 @ 11 am (eastern)

Agenda:

Update on WCCA presentation

Cover crop / insurance update outcome

Drainage Water Management – Harold Reetz (invite)

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;

April 5 @ 11 am eastern