

## **Conservation Agriculture Systems Alliance**

Conference Call

Monday, Feb. 23, 2011

at 11 a.m. (eastern)

### **Participants:**

Brian Lindley, No-Till on the Plains

Glen Shaw, Soil Conservation Council of Canada

Don McCabe, President SCCA

Jeff Mitchell, No-Till Working Group

Theodor Friedrich, FAO

Karen Scanlon, CTIC

### **Agenda**

- CASA members commit to support and contribute to this effort.
- Soil Conservation Council of Canada board considers working with US CASA partners on the proposal. The board meets early March.
- Organize proposal committee. So far the committee includes Brian Lindley, Wade Thomason, Bill Kuenstler, Jerry Hatfield, Karen Scanlon. We'd like at least one more producer group representative to join the committee, along with Canadian and Mexican partners.

### **Discussion**

Glen Shaw: executive conference call and showed interest. March 9-11 meeting full council will consider proposal opportunity. Raised idea to federal department of agriculture. Would require Minister of ag decision and sponsorship would require specific deliverable (proceedings, etc.). Challenge is timeline and that event would be in 2014. Potential for industry sponsorship.

Brian Lindley: talked with Jill Clapperton and others about proposal. Everyone cautious but supportive. Better served to go to industry and foundation for help, rather the government.

Jeff Mitchell: CASA well positioned to pursue. 2014? California work group would endorse and support wholeheartedly. Location?

Theo Friedrich: 2014 is proposed date, on three-year rotation

Don McCabe: interest, but concern about funding. Will be exercise in fundraising, but strong opportunity. Last year, CAAPAS met in Brazil and meets again this year. Will be submitting abstract. Working with World Bank recently. Worth asking WB for funding – to help export knowledge to other places.

TF: \$50,000 contribution to fund participants from developing countries. For India WCCA, got NEPA grant, but that might be difficult for US/Canada to get same. Sponsorship from commercial sectors.

DM: if FAO committed, easier to go to government to get similar support. Don't know longevity of Global Research Alliance. US and Canada are members (Mexico?). Possible participation from that group.

TF: UNEP and other UN organizations may be potential funders.

THEME for 6<sup>th</sup> WCCA?

GS: who is target audience? Has to appeal to producers.

TF: mix of producers, scientific community and political community. Address farming sector but also international movement and policies.

BL: "it's the soil that unites us" healthy ecosystems, healthy food, healthy people

TF: mankind survives on soil; if we don't treat it well, we won't survive

DM: agree

JM: compelling theme. Farmer involvement is important.

GS: important to get politicians to understand value of soil

Ray Weil, Univ of Maryland, global perspective on soil health

Jill Clapperton, Canada/Montana

- How water infiltrates into soil
  - Hands-on demonstrations possible
- Soil structure – aggregation
  - Soil scientists
  - Microbial experts
- How to create and maintain healthy and productive soil
  - Apply the principle of soil health/conservation ag under existing conditions
- Innovations improve soil health
  - Industry participation
  - Producer testimonials
- Benefits of healthy soil
  - Carbon/nitrogen sequestration
  - Market advantages of healthy soil/healthy crops
    - Farmer groups – Shepherd’s Grain – selling no-till product for premium price
    - Walmart, Nestle establishing value chains with sustainability

#### **LOCATION?**

Toronto

Calgary

Winnipeg, Manitoba – cheap facility, opportunity for field trips, industry partners

Chicago, IL

St. Louis, MO

3 stops to program

Move speakers and program across NA, rather than participants, Canada, US and Mexico. Same presentations, different field trips/tours at three locations.

Virgin Airlines provide complimentary air travel

Opportunity to tag along to other big farm shows, e.g. Farm Progress Show (US)

#### **ACTIONS**

Brian draft theme around soil health. Will distribute before March 9. Out March 9-27<sup>th</sup>.

Glen and Don meet with Council March 9-11 and send note to CASA afterward.

Jeff draft list of professional organizations

Karen distribute proposal outline and notes

March 16<sup>th</sup> @ 11 am