

CASA Conference Call - February 4, 2008

Conservation Agriculture Systems Alliance Conference Call Tuesday, Feb. 5, 2008 at 11 a.m. (eastern)

Participants:

Karen Scanlon
Brian Lindley
Brian Noyes
Peter Gamache
Randall Reeder
Randy Raper
Larry Wright
Russ Evans
Jimmy Dean
David Brandt
Jason Bergtold
Blair McClinton

Agenda:

- o Operations Committee
- o Message Committee
- o Funding opportunities
- o Next steps

Operations Committee Report

Will distribute a letter to other groups to request information.

1. How does your organization fund its day-to-day operations?
 2. Does your organization have by-laws and operate within a formal structure? If so, what is that structure.
 3. What is your organization's vision or mission statement?
 4. What is your organization's definition of Conservation Agriculture?
- Recipients will be Rolf Derpsch, Roberto Peiretti, Augustine Bianchini, Carlos Crovetto, plus Australian groups and others.

Will present proposal to CTIC board next week to continue support of CASA. An excerpt:

CASA requests that the CTIC Board of Directors agree that CTIC continue to facilitate and support the development of this new and important network for the next 2 years. After two years, CTIC and CASA will evaluate the network and determine if/when it should become an independent organization.

CTIC will:

- Continue to organize and facilitate monthly teleconferences
- Maintain the CASA web page on the CTIC web site
- Monitor and maintain the Discussion Forum on the CASA web page
- Coordinate, when possible, meetings (via teleconference or in-person) of CASA committees
- Assist with the development and submittal of proposals to support the activities of CASA

CASA members will:

- Become members of CTIC (membership level TBD)
- Actively participate in monthly teleconferences
- Actively participate in and contribute to CASA committees
- Assist with the development and submittal of proposals to support the activities of CASA

Message Committee Report

Been pulling together sources from what other folks are using.

Funding Opportunities

Randy Raper contacted Jill Auburn at SARE who likes the idea of CASA and indicates that SARE may be supportive. Opportunities exist for national or regional funding. Karen will prepare rough outline of funding needs and send to Randy. Randy will forward to SARE and seek feedback.

CTIC will be submitting CIG proposal for project to provide technical and social support for producers to transition to continuous no-till using cover crops. Welcomes partners.

Randy Raper will be submitting national CIG to assist (with regional agronomists and field days) different regions that have trouble with cover crops.

No Till on the Plains also will submit CIG proposal with component for cover crops.

Jason Bergtold mentioned hearing that ethanol plant will come on line with source of cellulosic biomass (use corn stover). With that coming on line, and with prices for corn stover, cover crops becomes more important. Already seen that farmers will radically change operation and rotation to take advantage of economics. Conservation may take back seat if producers can get high profits from harvesting corn stover, especially when costs are increasing.

Peter: Can CASA pull together different perspectives of cover crops value and use?

Randall: Ohio's Conservation Tillage Conference group (extension and agency people) wants to get involved in CASA.

Brian Noyes: We've decided to use the pledge as the qualifier of groups coming in to CASA. Karen will redistribute the draft pledge to all. Comments are to be sent to Brian, who will revise the pledge and present to the Operations Committee.