

Communication Network Conference Call - October 2, 2007

Communication Network Conference Call

Tuesday, Oct. 2, 2007 at 11 a.m. (eastern).

Call-in number: 765-496-3795

Participants:

Jeff McClellon
Randy Raper
Karen Scanlon
Russ Evans
Blair McClinton
Larry Wright

Agenda:

- * Update on network activities –
- * News from groups
- * Dec Meeting: decide on when and where
- * Discuss agenda for meeting

Summary:

Updates

CTIC's Purity Mason may be contacting network members and partners to provide information for the web site:

http://www.conservationinformation.org/?action=learningcenter_commnetwork

Doug McKell, executive director of the Soil Conservation Council of Canada, has indicated that he will join and participate in the network.

Mark Goodson, NRCS agronomist in Pennsylvania, has also joined the network.

News from Network

PNDSA – Starting a new program to calculate carbon offsets gained from direct seeding (no-till) and use of precision agriculture technologies. This is the first project of its kind in North America and participation is limited to direct seeders. PNDSA has identified a buyer for the carbon offsets, but the project is still under development, so full details will be released early next year.

SPARC – The statewide no-till conference for Oklahoma will be held Feb. 11-12, 2008. SPARC is the lead organization and is working with OSU, NRCS and ARS to organize the conference. The no-till wheat that SPARC is developing is now undergoing in-dept nutritional analysis. SPARC will supply Stillwater school district with all of its wheat; used for pizza crust, bread sticks, cookie dough, etc.

PANTA – This week and next providing no-till short courses for NRCS and conservation district personnel.

Randy Raper – Conducted a survey of Alabama farmers to determine educational/informational needs. As a result, will be offering 3 field days (cover crops) next summer and two workshops on conservation tillage in early Feb. 2008.

Possible dates/locations for in-person meeting of network

Those participating on the call agreed that the following timeframe and location will work.

WHAT: 2-day meeting of the Network

WHEN: Week of Dec. 10 (Dec. 10-14). Leaning toward Dec. 10-11 or 13-14.

WHERE: Calloway Gardens in Pine Mountain, Ga.

<http://www.callawaygardens.com/Callaway/index.aspx>

Group agreed that having a day of business followed by a field outing would be best. Randy advised that there are several options in and around Calloway Gardens: Providence Canyon, Kia factory under construction, FDR's little White House, etc. Karen will contact Jimmy Dean and others in Georgia to arrange for an educational and fun outing.

CTIC will have some funds available to support travel (up to \$1,000) for representatives from the organizations to attend this meeting. The funds are precious and will be spent only if the meeting is guaranteed to happen with a majority of the network members in attendance.

So far, this is the information I have regarding attendance at the December meeting:

YES – Organizations: Jeff McClellan, Blair McClinton, Sam Newsom (Dec 10-11), Jimmy Dean, representative from newly formed Alabama farmer organization (per Randy Raper).

Partners: Randy Raper, Sjoerd Duiker (Dec. 13-14)

NO-- Organizations: Larry Wright, Dean Graumann, Dick Wittman.

Partners: Mark Alley

I need feedback from the rest of the group BY FRIDAY, OCT. 5 so we can lock in the date and location and begin to make arrangements. If we don't have 10 organizations committed by Friday, we will cancel this meeting and reevaluate.

Possible agenda items

- o Name for the Network

- o Goals

- o Actions

- o Structure

- o Plan for addressing policy issues (Dick W's work)

- o Reach out to South America? Or stay within North America

- o Ask each group for 15 min presentation on state of no-till in your area. Get a feel for cropping systems in different areas. Plus how local organizations are working and what is being accomplished – vision of how to spread no-till.

- o Interest in a community of practice for extension on no-till. Extension is being promoted by the land-grant universities as an interactive learning environment to deliver the best, most researched knowledge from the smartest land-grant university minds across America. (suggested by Sjoerd)

- o Can we organize regional research projects on priority no-till topics? This would allow us to get support for our travels from our Colleges, would facilitate more frequent meetings, and would help us collaborate on research projects. (suggested by Sjoerd)