

Conservation Agriculture Systems Alliance

Conference Call

Tuesday, August 10 at 11 a.m. (eastern)

Participants:

Sjoerd Duiker, PANTA

Tim Healey, Agrotain International

Karen Scanlon, CTIC

AGENDA

Other proposals including support for CASA

Karen to contact Jason Bergtold about Kansas State University's proposal to NIFA on sustainable bioenergy.

CASA proposal template development?

What is the need?

SD: Need for CA needs to be emphasized – environmental benefits (erosion control, water use efficiency, infiltration improvements, evaporation reduction, organic matter and carbon content improvement of soil, carbon sequestration), crop diversity (reduces use of herbicides), economically producing food, feed, fiber and fuel.

Other conservation approaches introduce inefficiencies on the farm (CRP takes land out of production), but CA contribute to environmental improvement while keeping land in production. Barriers to adoption of CA include....

TJH: other benefits are GHG emission reductions (CO₂); fuel savings and fewer diesel fuel emissions; N₂O emission reductions. USDA ARS in Fort Collins doing more research on GHG emission reductions through no-till.

TJH: The CASA network serves as a support group for new adopters and helps them to overcome the adoption barriers.

SD: Include economic analysis comparing CASA versus government payments showing benefit of CASA. For example, \$20/acre to use CA, 300 million acres equals \$6 billion. CASA funding requirements are much less.

How will CASA meet the need for more CA?

SD: 66% respondents very likely to talk with experienced farmers, followed by very likely to consult retailers (Iowa Dept of Agriculture survey; also in extension literature)

Farmers much more likely to adopt by learning from other farmers. CASA is conglomeration of no-till farmer organizations. Using this tendency of farmers to predominantly follow adoption of other farmers is good strategy to inspire change. Other options are regulation or subsidy. CASA is different approach – working through experienced farmers and helping to teach other.

CASA Activities

- CASA meeting annually (jointly with CAAPAS every other year)
- Grow CASA network (more members within existing CASA groups), attract other groups not yet involved, and help build other CASA groups where none exists today
- Web site
- Facebook page
- Brochure
- Publish articles in journals, e.g. SWCS Journal, CCA publication, to reach farmer advisors
- Reach out to policy makers to education about CA
- Support for regional field days to offer more opportunities (at lower cost) for people to attend CASA. Could take place more frequently (and make national meeting every 3-4 years).

Karen will draft, and Bill, Brian, Susan will help also.

Member Update

Pennsylvania No-Till Alliance: Holding *Farmer to Farmer* event at Ag Progress Days next week where no-till farmers will discuss topics and meet with other farmers. New tillage survey came out from NASS. Compared to 2009, decline in no-till acres (small grains decreased), but still more than 50% no-till. Working on professional crop producers conference for next year. Joint event with corn, soybean and forage producers in Feb. 2011.

Agrotain: been hot and wet, but crops look good in Missouri. Not complaining about business.

CTIC: survey of cover crops and fall application of N in partnership with Howard G. Buffett Foundation; Indian Creek watershed project starting in Illinois; Great Lakes Restoration Initiative new grant to get 15,000 acres of cover crops in IN, OH, MI; become a friend of CTIC on Facebook, go to www.ctic.org and click on Facebook and Twitter links at the bottom right corner

What's next?

Brian Lindley to share information about CA certification project when available.

Karen draft proposal template and send for review.

Next teleconference topic: CA certification; Facebook page for CASA; invite EPA Region 7 to discuss EPA's spray drift and NPDES permit language

Next call:

Tuesday, September 7, 2010 at 11 am (eastern)